

Cupido, baby!

By Miles Millikan

A SEARCH FOR THE WHY'S OF YOUNG LOVE AND YOUNG SEX

milesmillikann@gmail.com

4242705805

milesmillikan.com

Epigraphs:

“To have her here in bed with me, breathing on me, her hair in my mouth—I count that something of a miracle.”
— Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

“It would be perfect if everyone who makes love, is in love, but this is simply an unrealistic expectation. I'd say 75 percent of the population of people who make love, are not in love, this is simply the reality of the human race, and to be idealistic about this is to wait for the stars to aline and Jupiter to change color; for the Heavens to etch your names together in the sky before you make love to someone. But idealism is immaturity, and as a matter of fact, the stars may never aline, Jupiter may never change color, and the Heavens may never ever etch your names together in the sky for you to have the never-ending permission to make endless love to one another. And so the bottom line is, there really is no difference between doing something today, and doing something tomorrow, because today is what you have, and tomorrow may not turn out the way you expect it to. At the end of the day, sex is an animalistic, humanistic, passionate desire.”
— C. JoyBell C.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

“I was like, Am I gay? Am I straight? And I realized...I'm just slutty. Where's my parade?”
— Margaret Cho

Character

Cupido, 17, any gender. *The kid who did none of the homework but aced all the tests, and who really liked English class*

The Little Stardusts

BEN, 20. Says fuck it and goes, because staying and healing would mean addressing the wounds

JESS, 21. Fighting her whole life for the independence from her past, a big people's person; everybody loves Jess

DUSTIN, 20. The guy who you assume has no heart, who believes he has no heart, who falls in love harder than anyone else

JAMIE, 19. Is always on the right side, makes sure she's orderly and proper at all times unless she's drunk or tired

AMY, 19. Unaware of how quiet she is. Instead, she watches, processes, and falls deeply over and over for the world around her. She has never *fallen* in love before, it's terrifying

MAXWELL, 19. Fun idiot of the group, overlooked. Doesn't realize that's the role he plays. Thinks his friends are just swell people

SETTING

2019, Boston

THE SET

The set is one room; a collage of all of the different rooms that are used in the play. It exists slightly outside of realism. There's a lot going on. Clashing decorum, big leather armchairs next to folding beach chairs, etc. Could be neat, could be messy.

Along the back wall of the room there are several doors, again slightly outside of realism. Characters use the door corresponding to the room they are in, or just walk in from the wings.

NOTES

A // indicates the next line to begin.

If you're looking to direct this, feel free to take or leave everything I suggest in this script. All I ask is you make it the story you'd like to tell.

ACT I: Intoxicated Starlit Waltzes

Scene One. Cupido

A spotlight center.

CUPIDO climbs over the back wall. It's not easy. He's also in a diaper with wings clipped to his back.

He lands on a sofa, walks out into the spotlight.

CUPIDO

Funny, isn't it? Some bloke in a diaper onstage in front of you. Go on and laugh and point at the fool subjected to this torment, but do you know who I am? No no--I mean *really* know? Cupido. And not Cupid. Cupido. Big difference between the two, okay? Cupid is some fairy tale creature you people have spun about a young boy in a diaper shooting people with arrows causing them to fall head over heels in love. It's sick. The origin? The truth behind all the gossip talk? Cupido. And Cupido doesn't stand for love. Cupido stands for lust. That's true. That's science. I was never the love baby. I was the sex baby...well...whatever, you get me! But the question remains. Are the *arrows* real? Well, yes and no. Is it an arrow?

A big inflatable hammer is thrown onto the stage.

CUPIDO

No. It's a big inflatable hammer. It's funnier that way. Saves some class. But then you ask, 'Cupido! If you're not causing people to fall in love, what *are* you doing?' It's quite rich, in fact. You see I'll pick some friend group--some ordinary group of people--and I'll study 'em. I'll watch their dynamics, who's already falling for who, whose fantasizing what, all the noise.

All the other characters come marching out onstage in a line. He turns Ben to look at Jess.

CUPIDO

And then, I'll line them all up, pick my targets, and give them a bop. And what does that bop do, you ask?

Cupido whacks Ben on the head.

Ben's breathing gets heavier, eyes get slightly wider. He's in it.

CUPIDO

I give them a dream in which they fuck their friend...Right?! That's *me*! Isn't that fucking hilarious? You've all had them. You wake up having just fucked your friend and now you've got this weird crush on them, and you know you didn't *really* sleep with them, but you can't shake this fuzzy feeling in your core? Big time. But! The funnier ones, in my opinion, are when you *don't* remember the dream. I mean you forget most of the dreams you have anyway, it's pretty

much luck of the draw as to whether you retain it. So, essentially what happens in those situations is I've planted a little seed so that the next time you're around them or see a picture of them on Instagram or hear them laugh at your joke, you'll notice this deep churning warmth coming from inside of you And that, my playmates, is Cupido, baby.

Cupido begins going around and hitting all of the individuals onstage:

Jess looking at Ben.

Dustin looking at Ben.

Jamie looking at Maxwell.

Amy looking at Jamie.

Maxwell looking at Amy.

CUPIDO

Now, of course people can feel attraction and love *without* me, that's nature. But you'd have to decipher what is human nature and what is me? Am I hitting a person a year or 50 a second? Am I the whole truth, the inner workings of this reality or the defective bug who infests? That's the answer you'll never know--never ever ever. What people do with my little gift is entirely up to them; that's character. The takeaway is this: I cause life, I cause change, I cause love, and I cause chaos. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the fireworks. I know I do.

Transition.

Scene Two. Jess and Ben

A bedroom in an apartment in Boston. Warm and enticing. A nice bed, only slightly nicer than average. The kind of bed that a friend sees for the first time and thinks how nice it would be if they had that bed. A small bubbler on a windowsill with a lighter and a grinder next to it. Clothes scattered about the floor. There's muffled talking from outside (i.e. they shouldn't yell this just so that the audience can hear it).

JESS

Jesus, finally.

BEN

I feel like I'm gonna pass out. Should I put these--?

JESS

Yeah, you can just put 'em by the door.

BEN

Perfect. Do you have a bathroom?

JESS

Yeah, right through there.

BEN

Awesome awesome, thank you.

JESS

Yup.

*A pause. JESS opens the door, enters, and closes it behind her. She's 21, wearing a big winter coat and something like a jean jacket or a flannel and a white tank top. Acknowledges the room. Acknowledges he's about to come into this room and who knows WHAT'S gonna--oh jeez, I'm getting in my head. She drops the coat, kicks the clothes to the corner of the room, and half-ass makes the bed (i.e. just spreading the comforter out over the mattress). She looks at her bubbler. Is about to go and use it, when--
A knock. She jumps the slightest bit. She opens it. BEN's there.*

JESS
Hello there.

BEN
I truly thought you left me alone in your apartment.

JESS
Oh, no sorry just came in here.

BEN
No, it was sick, I was basically gifted a new apartment.

JESS
Oh, I'm sorry, did you want the place?

BEN
I mean I don't know how your roommates would feel about it.

JESS
No no, did you not know I'm actually my own landlord?

BEN
Roommates won't mind?

JESS
Fuck 'em. I'll give you the whole place, every room.

BEN
Finally, you picked up on my signals.

JESS
Yeah, no, take the place, please. Actually. I'll//just show myself...yeah...no really it's my pleasure...alright well you just give me a shout when...yup...pleasure.

BEN
Are you sure?...wow no that's really so nice of you...thank you...certainly will do...thank you--pleasure doing business.

Jess has put her coat back on. They shake hands. It's a haha kind of shaking hands, but they also touched each other. Jess leaves. Ben's alone. He smiles. He's happy.

BEN

Hmm.

Jess knocks on the door.

BEN

Good evening, who's there?

JESS

Yeah, hi, I'm looking for a place to stay!

BEN

Oh, tough times, the economy is in the toilet!

JESS

Please, sir! I just ran into a bit of trouble!

BEN

Oh no, don't tell me--

Ben opens the door.

BEN

Did you just give your apartment away to your friend?

JESS

(coming in)

I just gave my apartment away to my friend!

BEN

I HATE when that happens!

JESS

And he just TOOK it!

BEN

Well, jesus, what a fucking asshole.

JESS

I know, who just takes something like that?

BEN

Yeah, especially when it is literally handed over to you?

JESS

What a dick.

BEN
What a dick.

They've landed standing in front of each other. Ben reaches out and holds her pinky while still looking at her. She reciprocates while still looking at him. They're holding hands. Pulsing.

BEN
Hmm.

JESS
Yeah.

BEN
Alright.

JESS
Crazy.

BEN
Crazy night.

JESS
Big dick universe energy.

BEN
Good phrase.

JESS
We watched a duck attack a man in a kilt.

BEN
And then it poured rain for what would you say? 20 seconds?

JESS
20 seconds.

BEN
Big dick universe energy.

JESS
I like it.

BEN
Thank you for letting me come in.

JESS
Thank you for asking to come in.

BEN
Obviously...How are you?

JESS
Um...good. Very good right now.

BEN
Haha. Nice.

JESS
You?

BEN
Nervous.

someone said it, thank god.

JESS
Yeah.

BEN
Yeah?

JESS
Yes, duh of course.

BEN
I didn't know if we were on the same page!

JESS
You held my pinkie a second ago.

BEN
Could have been a cute friend pinkie thing...//hated that.

JESS
Friend--? HAHA. No I loved it. Friend pinkie!

BEN
:O

JESS
Hello?

BEN
(Walks away)
So sorry I was trying to be cute!

JESS
No no! I said it's fine!

*She runs and hugs him from behind. Boom. He holds her hands. Their eyes are closed. They're touching.
She runs her hands up his back, on top of his shoulders, down his arms, squeezes them. Ben takes his things out of his pockets--wallet, phone, earphones--and puts them on her desk. He leans his head back onto her.*

BEN
Hi.

JESS
hi

BEN
how are you

JESS
Fuk.

BEN
Hahahaha tell me.

JESS
(distracted on and off)
Yeah, pretty okay. I feel like I'm slipping into some sort of like depression which is not amazing, but we're monitoring it. End of fall, here comes winter depression type ish.

Ben turns around, head against her. This isn't neglectful, he still is very much listening.

JESS

:)...Classes are fine. I feel like I'm not doing a shit ton right now, but that always happens at the end of the semester so I know it'll pass. Just gotta get through the end.

BEN

Very much hear seasonal depression on the horizon. Sorry it's a little wonky.

JESS

I'll survive. This is really good. You're really good.

BEN

Kinda came out of nowhere.

JESS

You think so?

BEN

Oh wow, we're just talking about it.

JESS

we don't have to!

BEN

No! Um, yeah like we're us with each other//like we're friends

JESS

We are indeed

BEN

But yeah, just today...

JESS

Yeah, I don't know.

BEN

I'm glad whatever it was...was whatever it was

JESS

I think I just like you.

BEN

I think I just like you.

JESS

I don't remember if you're that type of person, but I am really happy the cold is back; it's good holding person weather.

BEN

Very much that type of person. My room is always very cold so that I can warm up under covers.

JESS

You just won major points in my book.

BEN

:) Supposed to snow pretty soon, I think.

JESS

Yeah, next Saturday it's supposed to start.

BEN

Ohh, she checks her weather app.

JESS

Needed to know when to ask you to hang out.

BEN

Saturday?

JESS

Maybe. Throwing a lil party.

BEN

I'm invited?

JESS

Maybe.

BEN

Maybe.

JESS

Maybe.

It's the moment where they decide what kind of a night it's going to be.

BEN

...I have to go to the bathroom.

JESS

You literally just went.

BEN

I know, but that was like...when you go to the bathroom to like make sure you look okay, but now I'm like nervous nervous and actually have to go to the bathroom.

JESS

Hahaha okay, yeah. You know where it is.

BEN

Mhmm.

They get close. They can feel each other's breath.

JESS

Do you smoke?

BEN

I do indeed.

JESS

Would you like to?

BEN

(ohmygodohmygodohmygod)

Yes please. Ahem, sure, chill.

JESS

Go pee.

BEN

Kay.

(leaving)

Holy shit.

JESS

;)

Ben leaves. She rests in it for a few seconds. Turns on a bluetooth speaker. Puts on a playlist, skips through a few songs. "Justin Scott" by Big K.R.I.T. comes on. She nods her head. It's a thing now.

She goes over to the bubbler; it's already been packed and had one hit taken out of it. She takes a hit, which Ben comes back in the middle of.

BEN
She has started without me.

JESS
(on the exhale)
Oh i'm sorry did you want me to wait?

BEN
No no, you're totally good. May I?

JESS
It would be very strange if you didn't.

BEN
) Thank you thank you.

He takes it from her, takes the hit. She just watches him. Smiles. Gets up and moves a little. He breathes out, coughs. Tries not to, coughs more.

JESS
Big guy okay?

BEN
Big guy took too much.

JESS
Do I have to catch up now?

BEN
No no hahaha no, I'm...fine.

JESS
(come dance with me)
okayyy.

They dance. It isn't a lot of 'dancing' at first as it is coming into their bodies, stretching and moving. They start looking very animal-ly. They notice it, embrace it, it's on and off animal and dancing for a second. Play.

A Note: There's a really weird part at the end of the song where people just are talking, it's jarring. If it comes on before Ben changes the song, the following lines are exchanged and then the dialogue is resumed:

BEN
Oh?

JESS
The ending is weird.

BEN
I'm into it. You have really good taste in music.

JESS
Thank you. I pride myself on my Spotify playlists.

BEN
Oh, trust me, I stalk them.

JESS
I did not know that. I think I have to stalk yours now.

BEN
Oh god I really gotta step up my game now.

JESS
Maybe.

BEN
Lemme ask a silly question.

JESS
No one else is home, no.

BEN
She knew.

JESS
I think we're on the same page.

It starts pouring torrential rain outside. We hear it hitting the window.

BEN

It's back.

JESS

Big dick universe energy.

BEN

I may ask if I could stay over now.

JESS

I may be extremely grateful you asked.

BEN

Can I kiss you?

JESS

(just a moment of hesitation)

Mhmm.

BEN

...Can I?

JESS

Yes.

BEN

What's up?

JESS

Nothing....I'm nervous.

BEN

So am I.

JESS

yeah

BEN

whats up

JESS

im um, really scared of it

BEN

me?

JESS

No. no. the whole thing. doing stuff. sex. love. past stuff, nothing to do with you

BEN

heard. should i go?

JESS

What?

BEN

Should I go?

JESS

No. no no no. I mean it *is* pouring rain.

BEN

It is.

JESS

And I would like it if you stayed over, regardless of what happens.

BEN

So would I.

JESS

Cool. Thank you.

BEN

:) Can i do a song?

JESS

Please. Passcode is...um...482253

BEN

Does that stand for something?

JESS

Um...hubble.

BEN

:)

JESS

What?!

BEN
you're really very cool I think

Ben puts on "Lingerie" by Lizzo. They look at each other.

Jess: ohmygodohmygod

Ben: ;)

JESS
You listen to Lizzo?

BEN
I am a sane human being, yes.

JESS
you're awesome

BEN
Thank you

Jess gets closer to Ben. Big.

JESS
Big dick universe energy.

BEN
You okay?

JESS
I am. I'll tell you if I'm not.

BEN
I might keep asking, if that's okay with you.

JESS
That's really nice, of course it's okay...thank you.

BEN
Yeah.

They dance through the rest of the song. Around the 2 minute mark, when the song picks up, they kiss for the first time. They do a combination of dancing and kissing. At 2:50, the song slows down. Transition into the next scene through the end of the song.

Scene Three. Jamie and Maxwell and Amy

Jamie's dorm room. Night. String lights hang around the room. It's well kept, bed is made, even the desk is organized. A motivational poster or pillow somewhere, but not cheesy; something from Martha Graham or Kristin Linklater. It's dark.

The door opens. JAMIE comes in, behind her is MAXWELL. Both ddrunk, not really looking at each other; this is more out of insecurity than not liking other. They're both trying to be smooth; it's that droopy-eyed, messy kind of smooth. The kind that's embarrassing to observe.

It's 2 in the morning, but neither of them know that.

Maxwell removes his shoes and socks while Jamie plugs in her string lights.

MAXWELL

I'm gonna pee.

Jamie looks, processes, nods, goes over to her record player.

Maxwell leaves.

Jamie puts on an Ella Fitzgerald record, gets comfortable. She's scared underneath the drunken eyes. She fixes herself in the mirror. It only freaks her out.

Maxwell comes back in.

He starts laughing. She laughs too. It's sweet.

'What the fuck is happening?!'

JAMIE

What?

MAXWELL

This.

JAMIE

Hmm, yeah.

MAXWELL

I'm gonna regret it.

JAMIE

I'm not this kind of a person.

MAXWELL

I am not either. I am very much not that guy.

JAMIE

Did people come in?

MAXWELL

Like come into the room we were in? I think someone got a coat maybe, but I don't think so.

JAMIE

Okay....I just thought I saw like people.

MAXWELL

We weren't being that loud.

JAMIE

....

MAXWELL

Were we?

JAMIE

Yes.

MAXWELL

Oh....Really?

JAMIE

Yes!

They laugh again and shush each other. Sweet

MAXWELL

Who is this?

JAMIE

(starting to dance with him)

Ella Ella.

Maxwell cannot dance, but he does try.

MAXWELL

Wow.

JAMIE

Hmm.

MAXWELL

This is crazy. Amazing. You're amazing. You're so amazing oh my god.

JAMIE

Hmm. You're....hmm....yeah....haHA!

Jamie really starts laughing. It's a cackle.

JAMIE

People saw us! Fucking! And I don't even care!

MAXWELL

Yeah?

JAMIE

Yeah! Like I should care so much! I should care SO much! But look! I don't! You're here! You're so good at....ah....you're SO good....

MAXWELL

Really?

JAMIE

People have told you that before.

MAXWELL

Never.

JAMIE

Are you always that good?

MAXWELL

Yeah, I don't know. hahaha. i don't know.

JAMIE

What?

MAXWELL

No, I just. I didn't know. hahaha I didn't know that it was that good, you know?

JAMIE

Oh, yeah. Yeah, I thought you were gonna tell me that was your first time.

MAXWELL

Gotcha.

JAMIE

Which I'd be like 'nope!' literally nope hahaha nope! Motherfucker liar you are!....No way....no WAY! Hahahaha this is CRAZY! Isn't this crazy?!

He kisses her. She melts immediately.

MAXWELL

You're such a good kisser.

JAMIE

Don't even start.

She takes off his shirt. Looks at him. Can't stop touching him.

JAMIE

Where have you been

MAXWELL

Right here.

JAMIE

Where the hell have I not seen you, jesus

A tentative knock.

JAMIE

Shit

*Jamie takes the record player needle off. She throws Maxwell's shirt at him.
She opens the door just a bit. AMY's there.
Pajamas.*

JAMIE

Hey.

AMY

Hey, I just wanted to--oh, hey. Max.

MAXWELL

Hi there. How are you?

AMY

I'm good. I'm good....umm. Sorry. I just....sorry. You just hadn't responded. Are you okay?

JAMIE

Yes. Did i like wake you up?

AMY

How drunk are you?

JAMIE

What?

AMY

Are you okay? Can we talk?

JAMIE

Not right now. Um. Okay. You okay?

AMY

....yeah

JAMIE

Cool. Do you need anything?

AMY

Um....okay. g'night. have fun.

JAMIE

okay....?

A moment. 'Please say something more'

Amy walks away.

Jamie closes the door.

Maxwell is out of his element.

JAMIE

That was weird.

MAXWELL

You okay?

JAMIE

That was weird. Why....she said have fun? Why the....why would she say that?

MAXWELL

Well I mean she saw me.

JAMIE

Yeah, but like “Have fun”? What was that--what does that mean? Ew. I didn't like that.

MAXWELL

Sorry. Are you okay?

JAMIE

Yeah....that was just shitty--and there's stuff going on between us anyway.

MAXWELL

We can just go to bed if you want. We....like I'm fine just going to bed, we've like....

JAMIE

What?

MAXWELL

Like we've already like....had--done a lot tonight so it's not like i'd feel deprived.

JAMIE

okay....

MAXWELL

Sorry. Was that weird?

JAMIE

It's a weird night.

MAXWELL

Right. I agree.

JAMIE

That was weird.

MAXWELL

Do you want to go talk? I can go back to my--I only live two floors up.

JAMIE

No. No. You're fine. I'll talk to her later. Seriously, you're fine. Can you just....

She walks up to him, touches his chest. They kiss.

MAXWELL

Is it okay that we're drunk?

JAMIE
What?

MAXWELL
Like I--I know it's--like I don't want you to regret or anything, like I want this to be good and not bad in the morning.

JAMIE
I'm okay. Thank you. I'm glad I went tonight.

MAXWELL
Me too. I like you.

She looks at him. That's new.

JAMIE
What?

MAXWELL
Oh, sorry, was that//too much?

JAMIE
No no....Thank you. That's really sweet. You like me

She buries her head in his chest.

JAMIE
Ugh you're sweet too. I like you. I like you!

MAXWELL
let's go to bed.

JAMIE
Okay....don't worry about me.

MAXWELL
What?

JAMIE
Just like....im like. I can handle myself

MAXWELL
Hahaha I have noticed that, don't worry

JAMIE

Don't worry about me.

MAXWELL

You'll tell me if you're not okay?

JAMIE

Mhmm, I've got me. I've got this

She starts to walk away, he doesn't let go of her hand. She comes back. He kisses her goodnight. Ella comes back in when they kiss, leading to the transition.

Scene Four. Ben and Dustin and Maxwell

The next evening. A dorm-suite common room. Quaint and simple, dashes of personality in posters, a blanket, a single pillow from childhood. A plain couch given by the college. A coffee table in the center with a laptop charging, a full ashtray, a cherry coke can, and a half-full bacardi bottle.

"Super Rich Kids" by Frank Ocean is playing from the speaker.

DUSTIN, a 20 year old college student comes out dancing to the music. He's dressed simply, jeans, a t-shirt, and maroon converse, but he looks like...pretty good in it. He has a slice of pizza in his hand; dances and eats.

After a moment alone, he places the pizza on the table, wipes his hands on his jeans, sits down on the arm of the couch and begins the process of rolling a joint. He continues this through the scene.

Ben comes in the door, wearing the same thing as the scene prior. He walks across the room, taking his earphones out of his ears. The two nod at each other. A moment later, Ben comes back out and sits, gets comfortable.

DUSTIN

Welcome home. Haven't seen you all day.

BEN

I spent it with Jess.

DUSTIN

Cool.

BEN

How was the party last night?

DUSTIN

Crazy. Shut down really early though.

BEN

At Al's?

DUSTIN

Yeah, which is weird, cause he lives in Ashmont so like not great neighborhood, right?

BEN

(not anticipating having to answer)

Mhmm.

DUSTIN

So it's like parties should be a pretty good norm in that building, but he said the cops came like 3 separate times.

BEN

Got it.

DUSTIN

I think he's fucking with us though.// Like I

BEN

Yeah?

DUSTIN

Yeah, like I think he just didn't like the vibe because Max was fucking Jamie in his room and no one could//get them to stop

BEN

Max? Like our Max?

DUSTIN

Yeah. Maxwell.

BEN

Holy shit, is he home?

DUSTIN

Nah, I think he went over to her dorm after. Haven't seen him all day either.

BEN

So you think Al just made everyone leave because he didn't want them fucking?

DUSTIN

Well it had become like a spectacle so I think//he was just trying to de-escalate it

BEN

Wait like people walked in on them doing it?

DUSTIN

Oh, yeah, well, cause like I don't know if um....they're both like....*loud*.

BEN

Max?

DUSTIN

I know right?! So first off everyone at the party heard them, but then someone had to go in to get a coat and left the door open and then everyone could *really* hear them and people would just walk in to look and it became this like *thing*.

BEN
And they didn't stop?

DUSTIN
Why would they stop?

BEN
Because people were just walking in.

DUSTIN
No no no, they were like *in* it.

BEN
Did you walk in?

DUSTIN
Duh. It was fucking Max.

BEN
Dustin! You didn't like stop him? That's our suitemate!

DUSTIN
I don't know if you've ever tried to stop people from fucking, but--first off I don't think you're picturing how like crazy it was, like--Ben, they were fucking so hard they had to shut a party down.

BEN
Yeah! But like, you could've closed the door or something.

DUSTIN
I doubt he even minded.

BEN
That might've been his first time.

DUSTIN
....what

BEN
I don't think he's had sex before.

DUSTIN
He's a king.

BEN
That's gross.

DUSTIN
You didn't see it.

BEN
No, it's weird to call him a king.

DUSTIN
If that was genuinely his first time then every guy trying to get some on campus is fucked.

BEN
Stop.

DUSTIN
...I'm just saying.

BEN
Yeah, I gotcha. He hasn't come back?

DUSTIN
Nope. I've had the whole place to myself. Dustin's day.

BEN
Okay, just wondering.

DUSTIN
How was your night? You said you spent the day together too?

BEN
Yeah, it was really sweet.

DUSTIN
Jess?

BEN
(ah, don't know how much can be said)
Yeah.

DUSTIN

You two hook up?

BEN

Yeah, it was cool.

DUSTIN

Fuck?

BEN

I don't uh, I don't really know how much I should like//share about it if you know--like you're good, I just don't feel great talking about it like that.

DUSTIN

Oh, totally. Totally fine....Heard loud and clear.

BEN

But it was really good. We might be a thing.

DUSTIN

Oh? Oh?! Like a relationship thing? That was quick.

BEN

Yeah. I know. But. I don't know.

DUSTIN

No...that's awesome. Good for you, man, happy for the two of you.

BEN

Yeah. It's very scary but also very fun. Could be. Anyway, what're you doing for the rest of the day?

DUSTIN

Not much, might smoke in a second if you wanna join.

BEN

Sure, probably--Jess is throwing a party next Saturday. You wanna go?

DUSTIN

Like together?

BEN

I mean I would probably already be hanging out with her also hahaha, but like yes like you coming to a party with me.

DUSTIN

What are you doing?

BEN
Inviting you to a party....what do you mean?

DUSTIN
What, are we gonna like dance?

BEN
I'm sorry?

DUSTIN
Like is there dancing there?

BEN
Or are you like asking me to actually dance?

DUSTIN
Just like will there be dancing?

BEN
It's a party....probably yeah, you good?

DUSTIN
Like a big party?

BEN
Maybe; like 20 or 30 people. Depends on who shows up?

DUSTIN
Will you text me the details?

BEN
Sure--you hate dancing.

DUSTIN
Could be fun.

BEN
You threw a chair at me when I pushed you//into a dance circle at Christian's.

DUSTIN
OKAY WELL THAT WAS CAUSE YOU FUCKING//PUSHED ME INTO A DANCE
CIRCLE DUDE.

BEN

OKAY I'M JUST SAYING YOU DON'T LIKE DANCING.

DUSTIN

I didn't even say I *wanted* to dance, don't have to ride my dick about it.

BEN

Just sounded like it, I guess.

DUSTIN

Not like you'd be any fun now that you're in like a relationship.

BEN

I mean Jess and I are poly.

DUSTIN

What?

BEN

Polyamorous.

DUSTIN

Right....Since when?

BEN

Me since always? Her, i don't know but we talked about it today. It's like new, but yeah

DUSTIN

(eyes literally light the fuck up)

oh. cool.

A meaty pause. Ben watches the fuck out of Dustin.

BEN

What was that?

DUSTIN

What?

BEN

What was that? In your eyes.

DUSTIN

In my eyes? What?

BEN

Why do you care that I'm poly? What are you doing?

DUSTIN

I personally don't care. Just means we can still go out and be wingmen now.

BEN

We've never been wingmen for each other?

DUSTIN

What's up with you?

BEN

No no no no. what's up with you?

DUSTIN

Fuck you.

BEN

Fuck me.

A pause.

DUSTIN

Fuck you.

A longer pause.

BEN

Fuck me.

A longer pause.

BEN

Fuck me.

A longer pause.

BEN

What?

DUSTIN

Nothing.

BEN

You're acting weird.

DUSTIN

I'm not, you're staring at me.

BEN

It's your turn....It's your turn to say fuck me.

DUSTIN

I'm not saying it.

BEN

Shame.

DUSTIN

Holy shit, dude.

BEN

I'm saying it.

DUSTIN

Yeah, chill! You always do this.

BEN

I'm waiting.

DUSTIN

I'm gonna smoke.

BEN

No.

DUSTIN

What?

BEN

Finish the conversation first.

DUSTIN

Don't tell me what to do.

BEN

Oh my god, he's backing out.

DUSTIN

I'm not backing out, you're just fucking crazy right now.

BEN
I'm saying the thing.

DUSTIN
I know what you're doing.

A pause.

BEN
You think you know what I'm doing?

DUSTIN
Holy shit, yeah, now I *definitely* know what you're doing

BEN
Glad we're on the same page.....you thinking about it?

DUSTIN
No.

BEN
Relax. Maybe you should.

A pause.

DUSTIN
Fuck you.

BEN
(smallest corner smile)
Fuck me.

DUSTIN
Damn.

BEN
I'd do it. Right now?

DUSTIN
Holy shit, chill.

BEN
Too quick for you?

DUSTIN

Aren't you the guy who always asks before kissing someone?

BEN

Now that we're in the lion cage you wanna call the trainer?

DUSTIN

Holy shit! Chill!!!

BEN

That was a really good line.

DUSTIN

You freak me out when you get like this.

BEN

I've never seen you get this nervous.

DUSTIN

You won't let me smoke!

BEN

I don't want to run away from this. I wanna taste you.

A pause.

DUSTIN

Yeah.

BEN

(mmm)

Hmm.

DUSTIN

That's why you don't get to.

BEN

You hot yet?

DUSTIN

You want to. You don't need to.

BEN

How do you know?

DUSTIN

You said want. Also I can see it in your eyes. You're being tactical.

BEN

You don't want me to run loose.

DUSTIN

There's no other way you'd get it.

BEN

Woah, somebody just turned their game on.

DUSTIN

Yeah?

BEN

Your eyes.

DUSTIN

I can play too.

BEN

You want me?

DUSTIN

Holy shit.

BEN

We're here, dude--We don't know if Max is coming back, do we?

DUSTIN

Nope. We'd be risking it.

BEN

But you love risk, don't you?

DUSTIN

Yeah...make me need it.

BEN

That's *my* job?

DUSTIN

Yeah, right now it'd be a favor to you. Make it a favor for me.

BEN

...Haha. No, it would totally be a favor for you.

DUSTIN

Fuck you.

BEN

Holy shit you are fucking transparent when you're horny. You're shaking.

DUSTIN

I'm not, you're literally just scaring me!

BEN

I'm exciting you. You've never been challenged--Oh shit you've never been dominated...Oh we'll have fun.

DUSTIN

Shit.

BEN

So you gonna do yourself a favor or make me need you?

Dustin tries to make Ben need it. It's really two hungry lions pushing each other back. It's really fucking hot. But they never kiss.

BEN

Okay, I need it.

DUSTIN

Yeah, you do.

BEN

You're crazy.

DUSTIN

So are you.

BEN

Same playing field finally.

DUSTIN

Took you long enough.

BEN

Don't act big.

DUSTIN
Wait and see.

BEN
:O

DUSTIN
I said it.

BEN
Holy fucking shit. He *means* it.

DUSTIN
You got me.

BEN
I know.

Ben straddles or wraps himself around Dustin, bites his neck, pulls the skin, Dustin is opened to literally another world for a second.

BEN
Going to bed.

DUSTIN
What?

BEN
Goodnight.

DUSTIN
It's not even 8!

BEN
Long day.

DUSTIN
Dude, chill! Oh my god.

BEN
Dustin.

DUSTIN

Fuck off. Please.

BEN

I'm gonna go.

DUSTIN

No.

BEN

Yes.

DUSTIN

Oh my god, dude.

BEN

Haha that's cool. Yeah, goodnight.

DUSTIN

No dude wait, you cannot just...What, are we supposed to just keep being roommates?

BEN

Yeah. And at some point maybe I'll swallow your cum.

DUSTIN

-!

BEN

Oh my god I keep *saying* it!

DUSTIN

Wait, but like don't....you're just leaving me here fucking bleeding.

BEN

I'm not. You just really want me.

DUSTIN

You did a crazy thing and made me....and then you're just leaving....

BEN

Make you need it, right? That's the game.

DUSTIN

Fuck your game.

BEN

Claws came out.

DUSTIN
Get scratched, bitch.

Ben gives him one last tease. Walks up to him, breath. Dustin is in total suspense. Ben swivels out of it.

BEN
Goodnight.

DUSTIN
No, please.

Maxwell walks in.

BEN
Hey.

MAXWELL
Hey.

BEN
You busy Saturday?

MAXWELL
Night?

BEN
Yeah, Jess is throwing a party.

MAXWELL
Oh yeah, Jamie told me about that.

BEN
How did she hear about it?

MAXWELL
I don't know, word gets around. Can we come?

BEN
Yeah.

MAXWELL
Did I walk in on something?

BEN

No, I'm heading in. I think Dustin's gonna smoke.

DUSTIN

Yeah, i don't know.

MAXWELL

I'm good, I'm just grabbing my phone charger.

BEN

Going back over?

MAXWELL

Yeah.

BEN

You two like a thing?

MAXWELL

Uh...yeah, I think so....Hey, Dustin, were we like--were people walking in on us last night?

DUSTIN

I don't think so, no.

MAXWELL

Okay, just trying to gauge.

DUSTIN

Yeah, you're good. Happy for ya.

MAXWELL

Thank you. So, can you text me her address?

BEN

Yeah, I'll send it in the group chat.

MAXWELL

Sicko.

BEN

What?

MAXWELL

...Nothing, thank you.

Ben and Maxwell go into their rooms. Ben does not look at Dustin. Dustin is watching Ben. Dustin is not okay.

Scene Five. Amy and Jamie

Jamie's room. She's on her computer with earphones in. There's a knock at the door. She takes a second, goes to the door, opens it, it's Amy.

AMY
Hey.

JAMIE
Hey!

AMY
Do you have a second?

JAMIE
Um, *[looks back at her stuff]* sure, what's up?

AMY
...Can I come in?

JAMIE
Oh, yeah, sure.

Amy walks in. Stands somewhere in the room, awkward. Jamie closes the door slowly, her last moment to herself. Turns around. They stand far apart. Jamie at the door, Amy in the middle of the room.

JAMIE
Do you wanna sit down?

AMY
I'm okay. Thank you.

JAMIE
Okay.

AMY
Okay.

JAMIE
What?

AMY
I don't know.

JAMIE
Yes you do.

AMY
So do you.

JAMIE
You knocked on my door.

AMY
Right.

JAMIE
What?

AMY
What happened?

JAMIE
When?

AMY
I don't know.

JAMIE
What?!

AMY
What?

JAMIE
You're--you're not saying anything!! What!?

AMY
Sorry.

JAMIE
YOU'RE STILL NOT SAYING ANYTHING.

AMY
Sorry.

JAMIE
I don't think I should be judged for having someone good in my life.

AMY
I'm...not judging you? I'm not judging you, Jamie.

JAMIE
It feels like it.

AMY
What did I do that felt like that?

JAMIE
I don't know, it's just like small like--i don't know, just do you care?

AMY
Yeah of course i care.

JAMIE
Why do you care?

AMY
No, I don't like *care*, I just thought like you would tell me.

JAMIE
WHAT?!

AMY
Sorry!

JAMIE
No, sorry, but like okay, I'm sorry I didn't tell you? I'm doing stuff with Max.

AMY
Yeah, I know.

JAMIE
Okay....

AMY
Sorry.

JAMIE
Stop apologizing!

AMY
Sorry...Sorry. Um. Should I go?

JAMIE
I don't know, do you want to go?

AMY
I don't know if you want me here.

JAMIE
I don't know why you're mad at me.

AMY
I'm not mad at you?

JAMIE
Well then//I don't know what you feel.

A knock. Jamie opens the door, Maxwell is holding a phone charger. AH

MAXWELL
Oh. I feel like I keep walking in on things.

JAMIE
You're fine.

MAXWELL
Hey, Amy. This time I'm on the outside of the door....that was....sorry.

JAMIE
Do you wanna come in?

MAXWELL
Can I, or do you guys wanna talk?

Jamie looks at Amy for an answer. Amy waits for Jamie to answer. They both get into 'why aren't you saying anything?'
Amy leaves the room.
Maxwell comes in.

MAXWELL

That was a really stupid joke....um....what happened?

JAMIE

Nothing.

MAXWELL

Okay....are you okay?

JAMIE

Yeah.

MAXWELL

Is she gonna come to the party on Saturday?

JAMIE

I don't know, I invited her yesterday.

MAXWELL

Do you want to un-invite her?

JAMIE

What? Do you know how fucking crazy that would be to ask someone to not come to a party you--no, I'm not gonna. If she wants to come then she can.

MAXWELL

I can go if you want me to.

JAMIE

I don't. I don't want you to go.

MAXWELL

Are you sure?

JAMIE

Yes. This--you're really good for me. You make me feel really good.

MAXWELL

So do you.

JAMIE

So then this is good. I don't want you to leave.

MAXWELL

Cool.

JAMIE

Can you kiss me?

MAXWELL

Yes, ma'am.

They kiss. She relaxes.

JAMIE

You make it good. You make it worth it.

Scene Six. The Party or The Ballet

Jess's kitchen. CUPIDO walks across the stage. JESS and BEN are setting up the kitchen behind him while he talks.

CUPIDO

Right? RIGHT? But listen. Listen! You won't believe it. You ready for the kicker? The good news? You people are so boring most of the time. Youngins waste soo much time, talking and talking and talking about what? All you do is talk and say nothing! No, your words--your true soliloquies come through your actions. They come through in the storms; when the chaos around you is so much, you abandon your monkey logic and revert to a wonderful little animal instinct. And tonight we find that storm. The party. When the animals come out of their costumes. When the subconscious wrestles for survival. Let's dance.

Cupido exits.

BEN
Good?

JESS
Think I am good, yes.

BEN
You feeling okay?

JESS
You feeling okay?

BEN
Yeah, just a ton going on with everyone, but there always kind of is at this age, I guess.

JESS
You are not wrong. If one of us ever feels weird or not cool about something, we check in, yeah?

BEN
Yeah. But we're both good to have fun?

JESS
Yup. Feel free, have fun. Are you thinking of sleeping here?

BEN

Not sure yet.

JESS

What does that mean, not sure?

BEN

Just like depending on how the night goes. Don't know where I'll end up.

JESS

Oh.

BEN

Just like, probably will end up here but i don't know what kind of--like probably.

JESS

no that is fine. like honestly we dont know. just jarring.

BEN

right. you're sure this is all okay?

JESS

Yes. this is just like....

BEN

Different. Bigger.

JESS

Much. I don't wanna fuck it up.

BEN

I don't wanna fuck it up.

JESS

Then don't.

BEN

Chill. Stress me out.

JESS

I'm kidding!

Door buzz. Jess presses a button.

JESS

We're good?

BEN
Yes.

JESS
We are?

BEN
Should we not be?

JESS
No no.

BEN
In your head?

JESS
Big.

BEN
Big.

Jess hugs Ben. It's love. They both think about saying it.

Maxwell and Jamie walk in, coats in hand.

JESS
Jamie! Fuck yes, I wasn't sure you were coming!

BEN
Max! Guy!

JAMIE
Hey, Jess.

MAXWELL
Hey hey.

MAXWELL
You good?

JAMIE
Of course, I miss you.

BEN
Yeah, pretty okay. You're good?

JESS
Take a shot at some point?

MAXWELL
Very good. Very.

JAMIE
Fuck yes

BEN
Fuck yes.

They all laugh.

JAMIE

Can I put my bag--?

JESS

Yes! Quick layout, uh living room is where most of the dancing and everything should happen, i'm gonna try and direct everyone there mainly. There's my room, but please try and stay out of--well...uh yeah [*can't help but laugh a little*] if you two could please steer clear of my room if you could//that would be well appreciated.

JAMIE

Yes! Yes. Definitely.

MAXWELL

Sure, sorry, yes, shit, we will not be in there.

JESS

Cool. Um, bathroom down there to the left. Bags can be left in--I think Angie said her room could be used for bags. But yeah, bedrooms preferably left for bags would be great. And then this is the kitchen, use it for snacks, safe haven, what have you. Simple.

Elsewhere: Outside Jess's apartment building. Amy is waiting outside, no coat. It's cold. She is frozen waiting to get a sign as whether or not to go inside. Dustin walks up. Coat.

DUSTIN

Amy?

AMY

Hey!

DUSTIN

You okay?

AMY

Yes.

DUSTIN

...okay. This is Jess's place, right?

AMY

Yes.

DUSTIN

What's up?

AMY

Nothing. Just stuff. How're you?

DUSTIN
Stuff.

AMY
Stuff.

DUSTIN
Stuff that makes me wonder if I should go to this.

AMY
Stuff that is the reason I'm standing outside.

DUSTIN
Are we dumb?

AMY
I think we're hopeful.

DUSTIN
Hopeless?

AMY
Hopeful! Full! Oh my gosh!

DUSTIN
Oh I was like 'oh//okay shit call me out'

AMY
No no. I don't know. I think we're young.

DUSTIN
Yeah. We can always leave early.

AMY
We can...I feel like whenever I say that I end up staying the latest.

DUSTIN
Yeah, same actually. Let's see who stays later hahaha.

AMY
Deal. Couple of outsiders.

DUSTIN
Can we check in through the night? Like each other's rocks?

AMY

Yeah, that's sweet. Thank you.

DUSTIN

I mean we'll at the very least wake up tomorrow morning at.

AMY

Well don't jinx it.

DUSTIN

I believe in us hahaha. You good to go in?

AMY

Yeah.

Lights come up on the whole stage. Back in the kitchen.

BEN

Dust! Fuck, I thought you really weren't coming.

JESS

Hey, Amy! Did you not bring a coat? It's freezing.

MAXWELL

Dustin! Yes!

DUSTIN

Made it. Can I put my bag anywhere do you think?

AMY

Yeah, I figured it would be more of a hassle than anything else.

BEN

Yeah, Angie's room is for bags I believe.

MAXWELL

I'm the same way, too much clutter--I don't do well.

JESS

Yeah, feel free.

AMY

Yeah.

JESS

....OKAY! Um. Does anyone want shots?

ALL

YES.

JESS

Good! Balcony is good for smoking if anyone//wants to do that.

DUSTIN
Will do.

JESS
Cool. Yeah. I'm around. People should show up soon, but enjoy yourself and go nuts!!

ALL
WOO!!

Shift. Lights change. We have entered the ballet of the party. The following are moments that happen. They can happen in tandem, individually; with as much stress placed on them as desired, but they should all happen. People can leave the stage, everyone can remain on the whole time, artistic liberty here.

Everyone is intoxicated immediately. Music is over all of it. Some suggestions: "Ain't My Fault" by Zara Larsson, "disco tits" by Tove Lo, "All Night" by Chance the Rapper. Whatever is popular at the time. Songs that keep the mood up, but mostly songs that look really beautifully ironic underneath the deep heartbreak that happens at parties.

--Everyone does shots.

--Jess, Ben, Dustin, Amy smoke on the balcony.

--Ben bites his lip at Dustin.

--Jamie dances with Maxwell, drunk fast. They're more aware of themselves at this party because of their 'reputation' now? But it's like funny how ridiculous it is. They're those people at the party.

--Everyone dances.

--Ben and Dustin dance in the middle of a dance circle. They really go for it with each other. Everyone "WOAH"s at the whole thing when two guys dance sexually with each other.

--It turns Jess on.

--Ben and Jess in the bedroom, feeling each other's body. Kissing.

--Dustin walks in the room.

--Jamie dances with Amy. It's tentative, but picks up. It's sensual. Jamie gives in. It's tight squeezes and ear bites.

--Maxwell sees them dancing. Amy sees him, Jamie doesn't. He freaks and leaves leaves.

--Dustin is in the bathroom, trying to be okay. Maxwell comes in, the door wasn't locked.

Maxwell apologizes. Dustin freaks out. Maxwell freaks out. They start physically fighting for a second; nothing to do with each other. It ends in a tight hug. They fall to the ground. Sit next to each other.

--Ben and Jess slow dance. Then they have fun dancing. Then they slow dance. Back and forth.

--Dustin and Maxwell hardcore makeout in the bathroom.

--Ben is eating chips in the kitchen. Dustin comes over. They both eat. Dance. It's funny. It ends in slow dancing. Maxwell comes in and sees the two of them. The three stare at each other.

Maxwell feels rejected, confused, high, alone. He runs.

--Jamie and Amy are dancing with each other, not overtly sexual, but it's clear that something is happening. Jess comes over, holding a drink. They talk for a bit. Jess picks up on whatever is going on. The two of them don't stop. It gets more intense. Jess comes closer. Amy and Jess sandwich Jamie. Still not explicit; they're still talking, but it's getting fun, sexy, 'oh, i can play'. Jamie asks for all of them to go into Jess's room. Jess says no, but that they can go ahead. Amy and Jamie go.

--Jamie and Amy are in the bedroom. They're scared, lost in the storm. Tentative, they kiss. They keep stopping to look at each other.

--Maxwell comes in. It's really unclear what to do. Amy reaches a hand out. Maxwell comes over. Amy's in the middle. Maxwell looks to Jamie. Amy and Maxwell kiss. Amy and Jamie kiss. They all kiss. They all fly and keep kissing.

--Jess walks in to join, sees Maxwell, apologizes, leaves.

Dustin and Ben are dancing less with each other, but both high and playing in the same space. Jess comes back. It's been like 4 hours. The kitchen. Music softer, still going. Everyone's still shit-faced.

BEN

Hey.

JESS

Hey.

BEN

You thinking it's winding down?

JESS

Yeah, I think people are starting to shuffle out anyway, I might tell people to go.

BEN

Hear that. You want help?

JESS

Sure, if you could just tell the living room. Dustin, thank you for coming.

DUSTIN

(wait, i thought i was staying)

yeah. sure. Right.

BEN

You'll get back to campus okay?

DUSTIN

yeah. I'll lyft with Max or I think I saw Tanner in there.

BEN

Cool. You wanna take the chips?

DUSTIN

Hahaha no. No, that's okay.

Amy, Jamie, and Maxwell stumble by, clinging to each other. Amy's bag is in the room. She separates from the other two to grab it.

AMY

Hey, Jess, we're gonna head out, thank you so much. Really sweet, i love you!

JESS

Oh, hey, awesome, I'll talk to you soon. Let me know when you get back to campus safe?

AMY

Yeah. Thank you. I will. Ben. Dustin, you good?

DUSTIN

Yeah. You're good?

AMY

Yeah. We're young.

DUSTIN

Hopeful.

AMY

Slip of the tongue.

DUSTIN

What?

AMY

I didn't--I'm gonna. Hey! I wasn't the last one. I said--nevermind hehehe. You're the last one

DUSTIN

okay

AMY

I love you all so much!!!!

ALL

We love you too.

AMY

Let's go home.

MAXWELL

Thanks, Jess.

Jess nods. The three of them leave.

BEN

I'll go tell everyone it's over.

JESS

//Thanks.

DUSTIN

I'll head out.

BEN

You sure?

DUSTIN

What? Yes. I'm....yes. I'll go.

BEN

Okay.

JESS

You good to get home?

DUSTIN

Yeah. I can get home. I just need air for a second I think.

JESS

Okay.

BEN

Let me know when you get home.

DUSTIN

Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Dustin hugs Jess. Hugs Ben. fuck. Separates.

DUSTIN

G'night. Thank you for the party.

JESS

Of course. Have a good night.

He snaps at them and goes. It's a 'Dustin thing'.

Amy, Jamie, and Maxwell are walking through the Boston Common. Maxwell pulls Amy, they kiss. The three are here for a second. Amy lies on the floor. The energy softens. Slowly, Maxwell and Jamie start laughing.

JAMIE

Ahh!

MAXWELL

Hello.

JAMIE

WHAT!?

AMY

Yeah?

JAMIE

WHAT!

MAXWELL

WHAT IS GOING ON!

AMY

AHHHHHHHHHHH!

MAXWELL

YOU'RE SCREAMING IN THE COMMON!

AMY

Howl like wolves. Ready?

JAMIE

What?

ALL

AAAAOOOOOOOO!!!!

AMY
Cool.

Maxwell sits on the ground.

MAXWELL
How many times you think we'll get to be this stupid?

JAMIE
I don't know what I'm doing.

AMY
I'm fine with it.

JAMIE
No, I like it. I really really like it.

*Amy reaches for Jamie's hand. They hold each other.
It starts snowing. Little white angels float down to them. They say nothing, but all smile. :O :D*

JAMIE
What the fuck.

MAXWELL
That's amazing.

JAMIE
what. the FUCK! It's fucking snowing!

MAXWELL
It is.

JAMIE
It hasn't snowed all year!

AMY
(standing in it)
First one.

MAXWELL
Very first time. Fucking crazy.

AMY
I like you guys.

JAMIE
Yeah.

MAXWELL
I really like you guys....This is fucking insane.

AMY
Hopefully young and in love.

*she's not wrong but no one's said love yet. they sit
in that*

JAMIE
you're right.

MAXWELL
i never thought i could.

JAMIE
i thought it was gonna....yeah, i didn't think it was gonna happen either. especially not like this

AMY
full of love and hope.

BEN and JESS in Jess's bedroom. Getting ready for bed. Still shit-faced.

BEN
You feeling okay?

JESS
Yeah. That was crazy.

BEN
Yeah.

JESS
How are you? Doing okay?

BEN
Not really, I think.

JESS

whats up?

BEN

yeah i dont really know, just like--a lot happened

JESS

a lot happened, yeah i agree

BEN

are you okay?

JESS

i don't think so, not really? yeah, i don't know

BEN

can we talk in the morning? i feel like we're both not at our 100 percent right now.

JESS

hey. hey. i really want to be good for you? i think?

BEN

what?

JESS

i don't want to be a bad thing in your life. i don't want you to look back at me in your life and think about how i hurt you, i want you to think about how it was happy and good//and how it was like fun while it lasted you know? like i want me

BEN

you're a good thing in my life. Jess. seriously, you're a good thing. you're--jess, it's been crazy. we like--we're shitfaced. we should sleep. we'll talk. you are a good thing for me. you're really good

JESS

okay, you don't have to baby me

BEN

i'm not.

JESS

i really like you.

BEN

i *really* like you.

JESS
i love you.

ah!

BEN
i love you.

JESS
i love you

BEN
i love you

JESS
me?

BEN
i love you. me?

JESS
i love you.

BEN
thank you.

DUSTIN comes out. He's walking home, freezing cold. Spiraling. He drops to his knees in the middle of a Boston sidewalk at 2 in the morning, shivering. He just wants to fucking die.

BEN
i'm scared

JESS
i'm so fucking scared

BEN
what are we doing!

JESS
nobody knows what they're doing. you make me feel warm in the cold.

BEN
oh hey, it's snowing.

JESS
fucking called that shit, didn't i?

BEN
and we're warm

JESS
make it cold, so we can get warm. hmm. that's crazy

BEN
maybe i'm not broken

JESS
woah, you're not broken

BEN
maybe we can love

JESS
maybe it's really good

BEN
maybe

JESS
maybe it can just be simple as i love you

BEN
maybe it's as simple as i love you

JESS
Ben

BEN
Jess. Thank you for letting me stay over

JESS
thank you for asking. i had fucking competition tonight apparently

BEN
so did i, are you fucking kidding? hope was following you around all night

JESS
the two catches

BEN
i love you

JESS
hmm :) i like hearing it

BEN
i'll say it through the night

JESS
please. can i say a dumb thing?

BEN
it's probably not dumb

JESS
if i could live one day--sometimes i think that when we die we can relive one day. like we get one more run. no different choices, no anything like that...just a reliving. i would choose this day. i would relive this. i don't know if that made any sense

BEN
hmm. you're so cool

JESS
you're perfect

BEN
you're just saying stuff now

JESS
i am

BEN
wanna get in a bed together?

JESS
i love you

BEN
i love you

AMY

do you think it's hopeful or hopeless?

MAXWELL

what's the context?

AMY

Just hopeful or hopeless?

MAXWELL

I don't know. there can't ever really be *no* hope, right? Then we'd all just wallow where we are

AMY

Full.

JAMIE

Yeah.

MAXWELL

full

JAMIE

Full

AMY

yeah

DUSTIN

just get up. just fucking get up and go home. this is so fucking pathetic. just...ugh you're being dramatic.

*dustin gets up and goes home.
end of act.*

ACT II. The Blueprints to the Supernova Look Better in the Dark

Scene one. Cupido

CUPIDO climbs back over the wall. He's seen this a million times.

CUPIDO

(climbing over)

THAT'S WHAT ALWAYS CONFUSES ME. Really, it just--hang on. It doesn't make any sense to me. I mean it's the only reason any of this works, but it truly does not make any bloody sense. You people are simply the most enlightened thinkers, examining the whole battlefield and all its possible variables RIGHT up until you're in the middle of the fight--then suddenly your chickens without a head. I give you one dream, one *seed* of infatuation and you speckles nurture it and feed so that it overtakes your entire goddamn sense of self. You have a poor fucking bloke here who's shivering out in the 20 degree Bostonian arctic, and it isn't like any of these other motherfuckers *didn't see that shit plain as a day*, but did any of them offer to help? No. But if they weren't involved with another little guy then you bet your ass they would have helped him out! It's because you're occupied with self, with the pleasure of the self. And in this moment of war you believe this reality is all there is, it becomes your everything. The illusionist veil of permanence comes rushing in to simplify this moment, so that the joyful feel like heaven's angels and the damned feel like an eternally lost soul. And I don't blame that, really and truly I don't. I think it's survival: that manners are of the utmost importance right up until you start eating. At that point anyone caught in the crossfire is on their own, hmm?

The inflatable hammer is thrown on.

But with that you become blindsided to inevitable force of me! Of change! See, change is the natural course of this universe--always will be--and I am its beautiful personification. The damned will eventually rise, the joyful will eventually grovel, and at each point they will feel as though they'll never escape. But enough preaching! Back to me! What have I been doing all this time the rats have been nesting? WELL! You know I research the friend group all I can, but then once I whack 'em around, the real job of mine is to *observe*. I'm off to the side with a little notepad in hand taking all the notes I can in between my fits of laughter and tears. I watch them like a lion and see how the pieces rub up against each other. I then wait for the moment of utmost deliciousness, and think who could I whack that would cause the most chaos?

He starts moving everybody around to the following formation:

Ben looking at Amy.

Dustin looking at Ben.

Jamie looking at Jess.

*Amy looking at Maxwell.
Maxwell looking at Dustin.
Jess looking at no one.*

CUPIDO

Because without the chaos of change, you people would drown in boredom; you'd tear each other limb from limb. You crave chaos underneath all those suits and dresses. Now, chaos does not *only* mean pain for everyone involved! *I* mean chaos in the way of "what will make the most amount of people feel the most amount of life?" You have grown such a distaste for the uglier sides of feelings, but me...well I just love every little bit. The heartbreak and the love shine equally as bright to me. So I'm not doing any sort of disservice by stirring up the chaos, I'm actually painting a masterpiece. Chaotic Evil in that way, you see?

He begins hitting each person, leaving Jess last.

CUPIDO

That could mean accentuating the love even further, causing eyes to wander, causing self to turn on self, or again, *my* personal favorite--

He hands Jess a mirror. She looks into it, he hits her.

CUPIDO

A dream where you fuck yourself. Now, it's rare that I give these out; they're sort of nirvana, but if any of you have had one of these *and* actually remember it, consider yourself extremely lucky. The plague that damns you are the connections that turn from desire to dependence. Sleeping with yourself--I think--is a gentle reminder that no one can fuck you better than you can....See you soon.

Scene Two. Ben and Jess

Jess's bedroom. Ben wakes up in her bed, alone. She's out of the room. He just woke up from a dream where he was having sex with Amy. It was really good. Thus comes anxiety, fear, shame, guilt; it's a real stew of fear with dashes of self-brutalization sprinkled in. Immediately, he thinks how he can hide this from her. He goes on his phone for a few seconds, it doesn't help in the slightest. He gets out of bed--he's naked. He puts on his clothes. He stands by her window, lost. He wants to just leave, but that's rude. He thinks of texting her he had to run--that's really fucking weird. So he just stands staring out the window feeling really really anxious. Muffled music from outside the room growing louder. The door opens and Jess comes in having just showered, holding a speaker playing the last minute or so of "New House" by Rex Orange County. She's in a towel and removes it immediately upon entering the room [Note: if the actor is uncomfortable with this, she can also be in Jess's most comfortable outfit; however, the following lines about being naked should be changed to reference her having just showered]. She dances and sings it. Ben is overwhelmed but tries not to show it. The last part of the song is sweet for Jess, it's about love and being with the person who makes you feel good. She gets really close to Ben. Touches him--"this one's really good". She looks at him and sees the thing....there's something wrong. "Loving is Easy" by Rex Orange County comes on next.

JESS
Hi.

BEN
Hey.

JESS
hi

BEN
Hey.

JESS
what's going on?

BEN
Nothing. Just slept kind of weird.

JESS
Okay....what do you mean?

BEN

Just uh, like weird kind of like--weird dreams.

JESS

What happened?

BEN

(i have fucked up so badly anxiety is on fire)

Nothing nothing, it's like--I don't really wanna talk about it, just me stuff.

JESS

Okay....what?

BEN

What?

JESS

What's like wrong?

BEN

Nothing....I'm like fully clothed and you're totally naked.

pause.

JESS

Oh. Do you want me to put clothes on?

BEN

No no, you don't have to--I don't--it was just something I was feeling.

JESS

wwwhat was the feeling? all you said was that i was naked and you weren't

BEN

i don't know....just like, should i be naked?

JESS

No?

BEN

Okay.

a pause. what the fuck is going on?

JESS

Okay, I'll put clothes on.

she starts to put clothes on

BEN

No!...No, you don't have to....sorry, i'm like really anxious.

JESS

(she hasn't stopped getting dressed)

yeah, i know. what's wrong?

BEN

Nothing.

JESS

So you're not telling me, which makes me think it's about me or us which makes me wonder what could be so bad that you would be like afraid to tell me.

BEN

Okay.

JESS

I mean I know we said we would talk about last night, and like i wanted to talk cause a lot happened and i don't know where i stand on some stuff--

BEN

what does that mean?

JESS

Um....okay?

BEN

What?

JESS

No, like, you're just not telling me what's wrong with you and you're asking me to talk instead.

BEN

oh, sorry.

JESS

....okay so you're still not gonna tell me.

BEN

Uh....yeah, i don't know.

JESS

Okay. Just that last night was insane and everyone was like tense and weird and crazy but then also everyone like wanted to fuck everybody? And I know we're poly, but like it's been a minute since I've been in a relationship and....the previous ones weren't good so i'm like trying to figure out if//i really should be poly and

BEN

wait, weren't--? sorry....weren't good?

JESS

it's fine.

BEN

Okay.

JESS

And like you make me feel good and it's happy and so i'm like trying to not fuck it up but i know that i'm prone to like i don't know, throwing my heart around and so i'm trying to//like re-evaluate almost

BEN

wait, did you say you don't know--sorry....

JESS

Go.

BEN

Sorry, did you say you didn't know if you should be poly?

JESS

Yeah, like it's probably not....like Jamie and Amy and i danced in the kitchen and it was whatever but then they asked me to like do more and i said no and i don't *really* know why i said no? Like that's not like me....so i've been trying to think like what i really want out of this, like why's this so different and weird, ya know? And I don't know. And i also don't know what's up with you and dustin, but i don't even really *care*, i just wanted to know if something like did happen--

BEN

Nothing happened with Dustin.

JESS

Okay.

BEN

Well...like, nothing *has* happened, but we've flirted, but nothing--like i wasn't planning on doing--well, like i don't know....sorry, to answer your question: nothing happened with us last night.

JESS

(he really does not have his shit together)
okay.

BEN

Okay.

JESS

So, that's--like I woke up this morning in a really *really* good mood//and that hasn't

BEN

that's awesome

JESS

yeah, and that hasn't happened in a really long time so i'm like happy and i like you but i do want to like--i want you to talk to me cause i know something's wrong.

BEN

Um. Yeah. Sorry, I'm really just like freaking out.

JESS

Yes, I know, but you're not letting me in like at all.

BEN

cause it's ugly

JESS

stop speaking for me. you're really not ugly

BEN

you don't know me

JESS

hey. stop. you're like beating yourself up. so, stop. i care about you. i like you. as a human. you're not ugly. you're messy, but i like you. i'm like here for this. i'm here to get to know the messy parts of you.

BEN

i had a dream i slept with someone else.

JESS

oh, okay. okay. who?

BEN

oh. i don't really wanna answer that.

JESS

o...kay? um, why do you feel weird about it?

BEN

I don't know, i just feel weird inside about it.

JESS

like you feel weird about them or weird about me or weird about us?

BEN

i don't know

JESS

like weird about us?

BEN

i don't know.

JESS

cause like, you're allowed to sleep with other people.

BEN

yeah, no, yeah, no i know that. i don't know

JESS

so....do you....i don't know dude, do you wanna do this still?

BEN

what?

JESS

do you--i don't know....do you wanna do this or are you not wanting to....cause if you can sleep with other people and you had a dream where you slept with someone else--whoever it was--and

you feel weird, that makes me feel like you wanna like not be with me anymore for some reason....so....he's not saying anything.

BEN

that was a fucking crazy thing to say

JESS

you haven't said i'm wrong

BEN

i'm just like scared! i don't know! I'M SORRY. i'm sorry, i'm like fucked up and scared and freaking out and like i feel like destructive right now and i know you'll say i'm not but like i just feel really gross after that dream and like twisted up and like i don't wanna say something that i don't mean in the long run just cause i'm like spiraling.

JESS

if you say it i think you do mean it. and if you're feeling it, i'm asking you to say it

BEN

i don't know. it's like here [*rubs his stomach*]. it's like deep like fire anxiety in there that isn't going away and makes me want to run out of here screaming.

JESS

okay? okay, then you should like....leave?

BEN

What? What?

JESS

you have a fuck ton of anxiety from being around me?//then you should--

BEN

no no no//that's not

JESS

yes, no, it really sounds like you don't want to be here. like it's freaking you out. i don't know. you're not like really saying anything else

BEN

are we still like--? Us?

JESS

dude, i don't know. Did we ever know? we never exactly talked about it.

BEN

i don't want to not ever see you again

JESS

we go to school together. we'll see each other

BEN

yeah.

JESS

i don't know. we'll just play it by ear. we've always played it by ear.

BEN

okay.

JESS

it sounds like this is freaking you out, which makes me think you don't wanna do it. or at least like shouldn't. i don't know. i'm doing a lot of the talking right now, which is funny

BEN

....

JESS

can you just say that you do want to do this? to be with me?

BEN

.....ah, i'm like trying--i don't know why i can't say it without having this anxiety inside me tell me like 'you're lying, don't lie you're shit' it's like--

JESS

that's worrisome. Right?

BEN

i don't know

JESS

you can't tell me that you *do* want to be with me without feeling anxiety or guilt?

BEN

yeah, but i don't even--i don't know if that's my truth or anxiety taking over my whole like self

JESS

i think it's you not maybe wanting to do this for whatever reason, but you can't tell me the reason

BEN
it's just anxiety

JESS
okay, you didn't say you don't like not wanna do this just now

BEN
i don't know

JESS
okay.

BEN
i'll um. i'll go i guess then

JESS
okay. okay

BEN
okay. um. thank you for letting me stay over

JESS
you're welcome

BEN
yeah. i like your room. sorry. i'll go.

JESS
you're good. see ya.

BEN
see ya. thanks

Ben goes. Her mood is ruined. It went from fantasy to messy.

Scene Three. Maxwell and Amy

Jamie's room. Daytime. Max is using watercolor. It's new and really sweet and he's learning a lot about himself while doing it. String lights are on. He's listening to SZA's album, Ctrl on repeat. He's currently on the song "Prom"

Amy softly knocks and opens the door at the same time. She's here for a reason but is not making that reason even remotely clear. Maxwell is too tunnel vision to pick up on it.

AMY
hey.

MAXWELL
Hey, what's up? Um, Jamie went out to the garden or the common i think with Jess if you're looking for her.

AMY
oh, okay, cool. what're you doing?

MAXWELL
oh, well she watercolors all the time but i'm always like afraid to do it in front of her cause she's really good//and so I

AMY
(softly)
yeah

MAXWELL
just wanted to like play around with it, and it's like--i don't know if you've ever done it but it's really fun and cool.

AMY
) yeah, i have. um, could i see what you've done?

MAXWELL
(letting her see)
oh, it's not like anything really, i was just experimenting with mixing colors and just like how it works.

she thinks it's really beautiful. she sees him fully represented in it. it's young and naive and sweet and growing. she's falling deep.

AMY
that's really good, like really good

MAXWELL
Oh, hahaha, thank you. Yeah, I'm just playing around...um, so how are you?

AMY
i'm good. good. how are you?

MAXWELL
pretty good. just--yeah, pretty good

AMY
what?

MAXWELL
Nothing Nothing.

AMY
okay

MAXWELL
like it's just very crazy. like this is just easily like the craziest thing i've ever done--with the two of you

AMY
right

MAXWELL
i don't know if you've ever like...done something like it before

AMY
yeah

MAXWELL
yeah like you have?

AMY
um....yeah like something like not *like* this, but like similar. But it's not this.

MAXWELL

Holy shit! I feel like i know nothing about you

AMY
that's not true

MAXWELL
you don't know anything about me
AMY
yes i do

MAXWELL
i mean i want to know you

AMY
okay

MAXWELL
what?

AMY
nothing....what?

MAXWELL
no, just like. I want to know more about you. I feel like i don't really know you

AMY
okay....what do you want to know?

MAXWELL
um....oh okay....i guess like....i don't know. You ask somebody like to think of questions and there's like--it becomes impossible to think of things.

AMY
right. Um, I might//get back to just

MAXWELL
why did you come--what? Sorry.

AMY
What?

MAXWELL
um. just like why did you come in here if it wasn't for Jamie?

AMY

i wanted to say hi to you....

MAXWELL

oh. You did?

AMY

sorry?

MAXWELL

What, no. I just thought--i don't know, i didn't know you like....sorry

AMY

what?

MAXWELL

no no, it's like not a big deal

AMY

okay

MAXWELL

like we just haven't known each other for a really long time and like i'm just not always sure like who actually likes me....ya know. like when the three of us kiss it's like "oh is she?--wait, she doesn't wanna kiss me--oh she--nope--wait? okay, no, stop focusing on her so much you're making it obvious how much you like her" it's uh, yeah it's just again like the weirdest thing i've ever done

AMY

yeah....i have to stop myself sometimes, because i'm paying too much attention to you.

MAXWELL

oh well i certainly didn't pick up on it

AMY

you don't pick up on a lot....

MAXWELL

oh. okay.....wait, what?

AMY

:) nothing. nothing.

MAXWELL

what....ah.

AMY

?

MAXWELL

sorry, what's like....i don't know. what's like going on, with us.

AMY

what's going on with us

MAXWELL

like....

AMY

yeah, no

MAXWELL

okay. Okay. So....i don't know, it's like obvious something is there

AMY

yeah

MAXWELL

you came to see me

AMY

I mean that's a pretty normal thing for friends to do

MAXWELL

okay, but you don't kiss me like a friend

AMY

neither do you

MAXWELL

yeah. it's good

AMY

yeah, it is

MAXWELL

so i guess i ask my question again I mean I don't know like with the three of us, I've not really ever been in//a relationship let alone been in one this

AMY

I don't think i can fall in--wait did you say you've never been in a relationship before?

MAXWELL

wait, what? what do you mean you don't think you can fall in?

AMY

this is the first like relationship you've--?

MAXWELL

what's going on?

AMY

sorry. i don't know. sorry.

MAXWELL

wait woah don't back out, what're you doing?

AMY

no, i um//i'm gonna go

MAXWELL

no, you were saying you don't think you can fall in love? What does that mean?

AMY

it's not....sorry. Um. Can you not--tell Jamie? have you?

MAXWELL

what....what are you doing? we were like in the middle of talking.

AMY

you're not getting um....i shouldn't have brought it up

MAXWELL

....i don't really know what just happened.

AMY

no. that's okay.

MAXWELL

i think i love you

AMY

okay, stop

MAXWELL

What? What? we're both thinking it!

AMY

stop stop.

MAXWELL
okay. sorry

AMY
bye.

MAXWELL
bye?....okay, bye? I guess.

Amy slowly leaves without really checking back in with Maxwell. He feels anxiety but has no name for it, so he just freaks for a second. He's confused and scared. He can't paint.

Scene Four. Jess and Jamie

The Boston Public Garden. Jamie is sitting on a little patch of grass overlooking the pond. She's lost in thought, picking at her cuticles unconsciously. Jess comes up.

JESS
Hey!

JAMIE
(turning)
Hey!

Jess comes to sit down, Jamie starts to get up to hug her. It's weird. Both freeze, try and make it work for the other person. Jess ends up sitting, and they haven't hugged.

JAMIE
Sorry.

JESS
You're fine. Greetings are bullshit.

JAMIE
Hmm, yeah :)

JESS
How are you, what's been up?

JAMIE
Um, nothing. Just sort of getting through the semester. Oh! Have I talked to you about my Psych class at all?

JESS
No--wait sorry do you mind if i eat?

JAMIE
No, please.

(Jess removes a tupperware container of strawberries and eats)

Basically just the teacher in that class thinks he's like Freud, and has i'm pretty sure three shirts in total that all look the same, and he has massive pit stains, and he talks really really close to you when you talk one on one, and it's really creepy--

JESS

gross.

JAMIE

yeah, so we were in class today, and--do you know Mike? Brickbaker?

JESS

I don't

JAMIE

it's fine. He's this journalism major, I think. But we were talking about the reading we had for that class and he just asks--without being called on--"Pete, sorry, but do you think there's any reason to really--like talk about any of this when the human subconscious is still a total mystery?" and he said "why are *you* the person who's so qualified to teach this class of mystery?" Like WHAT?

JESS

Boys are stupid.

JAMIE

Everyone is going crazy recently? Like everyone is just going absolutely insane.

JESS

Mercury is in retrograde, so.

JAMIE

No. No, you don't--what does that even mean?

JESS

No, it's like a real--it's like the orbit of mercury does this thing where it looks like Mercury is going backwards but it's just passing between the Earth and the Sun.

JAMIE

and it causes everyone to go fucking nuts?

JESS

Well just like communication between people gets sort of--sorry, wait do you want one? [*a strawberry*]

JAMIE

No no, you're alright. I'm fine, thank you.

JESS
sure, i just feel like i should offer.

JAMIE
Thank you. Yeah.....

JESS
do you want one?

JAMIE
like one maybe.

JESS
:)

*Jamie takes one. Bites it. It's really fucking good.
Jess feels confident.*

JAMIE
Oh my god

JESS
yeah, i know

JAMIE
Fruit is so insanelly good

JESS
yeah, people who don't like fruit i cannot fuck with

JAMIE
you know Max has never had a peach?

JESS
what does that fucking mean?

JAMIE
it means he's never eaten a peach

JESS
what about like yogurt? or pie?

JAMIE
no peaches.

JESS
am i supposed to be impressed?

JAMIE
no! like it's impressive, but like peaches are incredible! Why would you be *proud* you haven't had a really good thing?

JESS
Can i ask what's happening with the two of you guys? Or three? I don't know really

JAMIE
i wish i could tell you haHA!

JESS
oh.

JAMIE
No. Sorry, ah. No, I have no idea. I have no idea.

JESS
Okay. Are you okay?

Dustin walks by, on a walk on his own.

JAMIE
Yeah. Yeah, I'm fine. I don't know, everything is just kind of--oh. Hey, Dustin.

JESS
Dustin!

DUSTIN
Hey. How're you guys?

JAMIE
Good.

JESS
Good. Glad it's not 2 degrees out.

DUSTIN
Yeah, Boston is crazy. One week it snows, next week it's sun.

JESS
Yeah....are you okay?

DUSTIN
Yeah. Yeah. Just out for a walk.

JESS
Okay. Cool.

DUSTIN
Cool.

egfyeig.

DUSTIN
It was cool running into you.

JAMIE
Yeah, see you around.

JESS
Mhmm, enjoy the walk.

DUSTIN
Thanks, you too--I mean--not like--thank you.... :)

Dustin leaves. "You fucking idiot"

JAMIE
Ughhh [*into her hands*] AH!

She falls backward, lying on the ground.

JESS
Yeah, okay. Hey. How are we?

JAMIE
No one's okay.

JESS
what do you mean?

JAMIE
everyone's like freaking out and time is moving like really fast--like more has happened in the past like week than ever has in my entire life and no one knows what anyone's doing and everyone's not okay because of it

JESS
Are you?

JAMIE
Am i what?

JESS
Well, are *you* okay? Like with everything that's happening.

JAMIE

I don't know....yeah. I mean pretty okay. Yeah no, I'm doing good. Like whatever it is that's going on is good, but everyone else//is freaking the hell out

JESS

yeah yeah yeah okay. But maybe you can't worry about them.

JAMIE

yeah, okay

JESS

I'm serious. You're gonna destroy yourself worrying about other people.

JAMIE

i don't wanna be the person who hurts my friends.

JESS

you--Jamie. You can't make yourself be a harmless individual. That's literally impossible. You will always probably piss someone off, but you'll also probably make someone else feel really good, or fall in love.

JAMIE

yeah

JESS

hi. hello

Jess crawls her hand over Jamie's. She grabs hold.

JESS

Do you smoke?

JAMIE

Like...?

JESS

Like weed.

JAMIE

Not usually.

JESS

I just have a dab pen, was gonna offer it.

JAMIE

And that means...?

JESS

Hahaha, it's just a little guy that you suck just a little and that's all. Like convenient future type thing.

JAMIE

and that's it?

JESS

yeah. I was just gonna also ask if you wanted to get food, and if you said yes I was gonna smoke first and so i wanted to offer.

JAMIE

being high and eating is like a real thing?

JESS

What? Dude....what? Of *course* it's a real thing. You've never eaten while high?

JAMIE

No, the couple of times I did it was at parties, and it was like too much.

JESS

please smoke and let's go eat.

JAMIE

right now?

JESS

(taking her hand from Jamie's)
you don't have to

JAMIE

No no! I was just asking. Can I?

Jess hands Jamie the pen.

JAMIE

Does it taste like bad?

JESS

oh just wait.

JAMIE

Just--?

JESS

Just suck.

She does. The first time she gets nothing. The second time is nice, full. Doesn't cough. Hands it back.

JAMIE

Is that like, flavored?

JESS

(hitting it)
watermelon

JAMIE

What! That's amazing.

JESS

Do it right if you're gonna do it.

JAMIE

You're good at that.

JESS

Living for me, bitch.

JAMIE

Hmm :)

JESS

You're alright, you know.

JAMIE

No, we are not doing this right now. Come on,

Jamie gets up. Hand out to Jess. She takes it, hops up into a hug. Feeling each other. Jess pulls out. Looks at her.

JESS

How much time do you have?

JAMIE

I'm not doing anything, why?

JESS

Just wondering how late you wanna be out. How long the adventures can be.

JAMIE

Take me on an adventure please that sounds so nice.

JESS

:) Absolutely. Come come

They hold hands and walk off into the distance.

Scene Five. Ben and Amy

The hallway in Amy and Jamie's suite. Amy is putting on makeup. A knock. She opens the door and Ben is standing there.

BEN AMY
Hey. Hey, Ben.

BEN
What's up?

AMY
Um, nothing, just getting ready//what's up?

BEN
Oh, sorry, are you busy?

AMY
What's up?

BEN
Do you um....do you like have a second?

AMY
What's up?

BEN
Um, i like feel crazy? I don't know.

AMY
okay. should you come in?

BEN
I don't wanna like interrupt or just like barge in.

AMY
I mean you're here, just come in.

BEN

okay. thank you.

He comes in. She starts putting on lotion.

AMY

So, you feel crazy?

BEN

Yeah, just like everything feels insane right now--I don't know if it's everybody or just like a few people, but everything is just really like a lot.

AMY

Right.

BEN

Right....so yeah, i don't know. I just didn't really have anywhere else to turn and i like you and you make me feel good and so i just wanted to say hi.

AMY

What?

BEN

What.

AMY

holy....sorry....yeah, no. No, ben

BEN

wait what? what just happened?

AMY

you're....like i'm pretty sure it's crazy for everyone right now first of all--but like, yeah i don't know what's going on with you but like....Ben, you don't know me. Like we don't know each other. We're like friends of friends. You can't like me

BEN

I can't want to be your friend?

AMY

You're not here because you want to be my friend....you're here because you want--yeah, it sounds like you want me to like save you. And I don't love you//and we don't know

BEN

I didn't--didn't say that I love you.

AMY

Well you knocked on my door and you just said ‘oh wow i like you, i wanna get to know you’ and there’s no one else even home and i’m getting ready anyway, so fucking WHAT DO YOU WANT!...WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME, BEN? BEN! WHAT IS IT THAT YOU SO DESPERATELY FUCKING---sorry. Sorry.

BEN
I’m freaking out

AMY
Sorry.

BEN
in general, not because of--well now kind of because of you//but like

AMY
i’m sorry i’m sorry

BEN
no no no no. It’s fine. *[goes to touch her, stops]* Amy. Sorry. No, I--yeah. Sorry. I like shouldn’t have--i do like think you’re cool

AMY
....okay

BEN
just like saying i do like like being around you. i think i just did a dumb thing and i don’t want that to make me just seem like the dumb guy to you

AMY
we’re all the dumb guy right now

BEN
why?

AMY
because we’re young and hurting and other people can make that go away

BEN
why can’t we make it go away for ourselves?

AMY
yeah, i don’t know....probably like a loving ourselves thing

BEN

are we like addicted to it?

AMY

no. we're not *addicted* to love

BEN

no, are we addicted to being the dumb guy

AMY

it's easier to be here and just do it all and pay for it later

BEN

but then instead of paying for it i just try and fall in love....oh

AMY

oh

BEN

Sorry, i really just walked in here with massive fucking chaos energy....How are you?
Everything's crazy?

AMY

everything's fine. Yeah, it's fine. I'm heading out anyway

BEN

okay. Sorry.

AMY

don't apologize

BEN

okay

AMY

thank you

BEN

best of luck on whatever it is you're gonna do

AMY

whatever it is I'm gonna do?

BEN

I guess i just assume every time one of us goes out now it's to have some like monumental conversation with someone

AMY
okay

BEN
sorry. not sorry. I'll go. Um, be brave.

AMY
weird

BEN
my uncle says it

AMY
you're not my uncle?

BEN
i'm just gonna go

AMY
okay. bye

BEN
bye

ben leaves.

Scene Six. Dustin and Maxwell and Ben

The boys' common room. Maxwell is drawing in a newly-purchased sketchbook. Dustin comes in with a to-go Shake Shack bag. Light up.

MAXWELL
Hey, Dustin

DUSTIN
hey

MAXWELL
how are you, what's up?

DUSTIN
good. I'm just gonna eat

MAXWELL
okay, cool....how are you, what's up?

DUSTIN
good.

MAXWELL
you're good?

DUSTIN
yeah, dude, what?

MAXWELL
so, can i have a fry?

DUSTIN
what the fuck? why would you ask me that?

MAXWELL
so you're not okay?

DUSTIN

//what?

MAXWELL

cause if you were okay then it would be like ‘oh yeah, my good buddy Maxwell, here is a french fry, because everything is fine, i have plenty’ but if you like weren’t okay then it would be like ‘what the fuck, why would you ask me for something that you clearly know is like my comfort right now?’ that or it means *we’re* not okay--which could be the case because i can be kind of oblivious at times, but we haven’t exactly been super involved in each other’s lives recently, which leads me to simply believe that you don’t wanna give me a fry because you’re not okay.

DUSTIN

dude, what the fuck?

MAXWELL

dumbo max is getting smarter

DUSTIN

what the fuck, have a fry

Dustin throws a fry at Maxwell. He either catches it and eats it, or misses it, picks it up, and eats it.

MAXWELL

okay, maybe it is something with us

DUSTIN

no, you didn’t do anything dude

MAXWELL

okay, so why have you been inside all day?

DUSTIN

what, because i just wanna be inside

MAXWELL

isn’t that like a sign of depression?

DUSTIN

what the fuck//did you just say, dude? You don’t just fucking call someone depressed dude--even if *there was* something wrong, that’s a really fucking like mean thing to say to someone

MAXWELL

Not that i know from like personal experience--sorry, no i didn’t mean to--no, i wasn’t saying you were depressed, Dustin--dude, i didn’t mean to--i wasn’t trying to be mean to you

DUSTIN

Well you fucking were!//You don't just tell someone they're depressed

MAXWELL

I wasn't saying you were//depressed Dustin! No I didn't--I was straight up asking if you were okay

DUSTIN

YES YOU DID, BECAUSE I SHOWED A FUCKING SYMPTOM OF DEPRESSION YOU JUST TOLD ME I WAS FUCKING DEPRESSED, LIKE YOU'RE MY FUCKING LIKE THERAPIST OR SOMETHING WHO'S UP MY DICK ABOUT IF I'M OKAY LIKE MAYBE--I DON'T KNOW MAYBE I STAYED FUCKING INSIDE TODAY BECAUSE I WAS FUCKING TIRED OR BECAUSE I HAD FUCKING WORK OR BECAUSE I NEEDED A FUCKING BREAK FROM YOU PSYCHOPATHIC NYMPHOMANIACS!

MAXWELL

okay, so you're not okay

DUSTIN

FUCKING NO!!!! WHAT?!

MAXWELL

okay, well you weren't saying you weren't

DUSTIN

WELL I AM NOW

MAXWELL

is this because of you and me at all?

DUSTIN

No!! Dude, you didn't like *do* anything. Well, I mean you're a *part* of it//but it's not like--no, you didn't like do anything intentionally

MAXWELL

WHAT! You just said I didn't do anything!

DUSTIN

everything's just fucking crazy right now

MAXWELL

is it because we kissed?

DUSTIN

i'm sorry, what?

MAXWELL

In Jess's bathroom? At her party

DUSTIN

We kissed in Jess's bathroom

MAXWELL

big guy didn't remember that we kissed

DUSTIN

big guy does now

MAXWELL

yes, we kissed--pretty hard

DUSTIN

didn't we like also fight?

MAXWELL

yeah, you tried punching me in the dick

DUSTIN

i tried?

MAXWELL

you missed

DUSTIN

oh my god, i'm sorry dude

MAXWELL

Nnnnno, i'm pretty grateful that you missed

DUSTIN

No, I'm sorry that I like did it at all

MAXWELL

I think neither of us were okay--like both of us were really bad and we just like needed to freak out. And so we did. And then we kissed. Which I think might've been a part of the freakout

DUSTIN

wow. you're like really good, aren't you?

MAXWELL

what?

DUSTIN

You're like smart now

MAXWELL

okay.

DUSTIN

no, like--you're drawing, and you look really good--like you're *actually* doing really good, aren't you?

MAXWELL

yeah. yeah, i am

DUSTIN

i'm glad

MAXWELL

so what's up?

DUSTIN

nothing.

MAXWELL

you're being annoying

DUSTIN

what! fuck off dude, i'm like not doing well

MAXWELL

so i asked what was wrong, yeah.

Ben comes in. Dustin realizes if he had just told Maxwell when he'd asked, he at least could've had someone to hold onto.

BEN

Hey.

MAXWELL

hey.

BEN

did you get food?

DUSTIN
yeah.

BEN
cool....What's up?

MAXWELL
(noticing their dynamic)
Nothing.....

BEN
What?

MAXWELL
(putting it together)
Nothing....I'm thinking

BEN
Weird. Weird, right?

DUSTIN
He thinks.

BEN
okay. You good?

DUSTIN
(you have no idea how badly i could hurt you)
yeah.

BEN
okay. Are you guys going outside at all? It's getting dark but it's still really nice out somehow and I think people are gonna smoke.

Dustin says nothing. Maxwell is still putting together it's Ben who Dustin isn't okay about.

BEN
Hello?

MAXWELL
Yeah, maybe, i'm hanging out with Amy at some point.

BEN

okay, i think she might be out there. Dustin?

DUSTIN
i'm good

BEN
okay
DUSTIN
okay?

BEN
what?

DUSTIN
you're not gonna--nothing

BEN
okay

DUSTIN
what the fuck?

BEN
What??

DUSTIN
you're just saying okay

BEN
you're saying you don't wanna go

DUSTIN
okay

BEN
what?

DUSTIN
See??

MAXWELL
Ohhh.

BEN
What?

MAXWELL
Nothing.

BEN
What?

Dustin goes into his room.

BEN
What? What?

MAXWELL
I don't know. I don't know if I'm right. I think I am.

BEN
Right about what?

MAXWELL
I think you fucked up.

BEN
Fucking what?

MAXWELL
I don't know, maybe not.

BEN
What are you fucking on?

MAXWELL
Bitch, i'm drawing in a sketchbook, you need to chill out....I think you might've fucked up. Bad. If I'm right--whatever is on with you, i'm sorry. But there's other people involved in your shit.

BEN
You're a guru now?

MAXWELL
I don't know. Heart opened up, i think.

BEN
that's really nice

MAXWELL
i got lucky

BEN

will you let me know if you're done hanging out with Amy and still wanna hang?

MAXWELL

you don't wanna talk now?

BEN

um....yeah, i don't know. not maybe--not right now

MAXWELL

okay man. Um. I love you

BEN

what?

MAXWELL

I love you and I think you're a really good human being

BEN

what the fuck don't//do this right now

MAXWELL

I think you're heart hurts really bad and you're freaking out and it's not easy. None of it makes any sense or is easy at all, and it's not going to get easier, so you have to accept the hurt that you did and love yourself and let yourself be loved. I love you

BEN

you don't know me

MAXWELL

actually you can't pull that shit with me, because yeah i do know you. I know the gross you. And yeah I still love you. Can I give you a hug?

BEN

Please hug me, Max

they hug

BEN

i love you

MAXWELL

i love you so much, dude. i think you're really sweet and kind and special

BEN

what the fuck happened to you?

MAXWELL

i don't know. i really don't know

BEN

you're so nice i love you so much i'm so fucking ridiculous

MAXWELL

we're all idiots.....BAM!!!!

BEN

WHAT ARE YOU DOING

MAXWELL

I needed to shift the energy cause I have to go but didn't know how to get out of the sweet moment

BEN

you're insane

MAXWELL

I'm starting to love myself!

BEN

i love you

MAXWELL

i love you too my guy

BEN

:)

MAXWELL

:) hmm. I'll text you

BEN

have fun

MAXWELL

stay good.

BEN

yeah.

Maxwell leaves. Ben goes and looks at Maxwell's sketchbook. Sits in it all. Goes to his room.

Scene Seven. Nature's Party or Everyone Converges

The Boston Common. Amy's sitting on some grass. Jamie and Jess come up. It's been a really good and sweet adventure. Sun has set.

JESS
Hey, bitch

AMY
Hi

JAMIE
hey

AMY
how are you guys?

JAMIE
mhmm

JESS
good good, just been walking around, got some food, crazy motherfuckers out tonight

AMY
yeah?

JESS
yeah, big like--a lot of dog walkers, and they're all like--you ever notice how people usually--like owners match their dogs in personality? And sometimes looks?

AMY
i do

JESS
like i wonder if the owner picked a dog like them, or picked a dog they *wanted* to be like and then they molded themselves to be like that dog

AMY

i would think probably they a dog like them

JESS

yeah, i guess so. do wanna smoke?

AMY

right now?

JESS

yeah, we did. i have a Dab pen

AMY

you guys smoked?

JAMIE

Yes. Jess is awesome

JESS

I'm awesome

JAMIE

Jess is fucking awesome!

JESS

Bang bang! It's me, bitch. Fucking it's a good world out there

AMY

sure

JESS

(handing it to her)

she said sure. she said sure she said. she didn't even hesitate in asking//or waiting for permission

AMY

is there a button?

JESS

sorry, no. just a suck. don't do too much. Jamie did that--too much

AMY

you okay?

JAMIE

Amy, I am so fucking good you have no idea

AMY

:) [*takes a hit; it only takes one try*]

JESS

boston is a weird ass city when you look at it

JAMIE

why?

JESS

well, everyone *talks* about LA and New York--like those are the big giants, but then Boston is tucked underneath New York--which is i think really good. Because the people in Boston aren't like 'YEAH I LIVE IN BOSTON' but they're like 'yeah i live in boston' and then the stuff they make is like weird but not just to be weird, but to like be them. but it's also like the most historical city in america which is crazy

AMY

i feel like that's also San Francisco kinda

JESS

yeah. San Fransisco is L.A.'s Boston

AMY

right

JAMIE

fuck

JESS

alright, well i'm gonna go take a walk.

AMY

oh, okay. Are you okay?

JESS

Yeah. Yeah, just gonna take a walk around. I have my phone on me.

AMY

okay

JESS

(starts to leave)

breathe, bitches

AMY

breathe?

JAMIE

she started saying it and can't stop

JESS

(leaving)

it's fun and it's good advice i think. Breathe bitches

Jess is gone.

AMY

Is she okay?

JAMIE

mhmm. She just wanted to walk around, give us--walk around

Jamie curls up in Amy's lap.

AMY

hi :)

JAMIE

hi. hahahah how are you?

AMY

i'm alright, how are you?

JAMIE

alright? what's alright?

AMY

it's fine, how are you?

JAMIE

she won't tell me what's not alright she said....

AMY

'She'?

JAMIE

sorry. it's a thing i think i picked up from jess

AMY

are you guys good?

JAMIE

Yeah. Yeah, what do you mean?

AMY

like are you guys doing anything? did you guys do anything?

JAMIE

oh. um....yeah, i don't know. there was the party--

AMY

right

JAMIE

but we only kissed like just now while we were walking, yeah

AMY

okay

JAMIE

is that okay?

AMY

yeah, i don't know, why wouldn't it be?

JAMIE

i don't know. we never set any like rules

AMY

yeah

JAMIE

is that okay?

AMY

it's alright, yeah

JAMIE

so it's alright, she says. Sorry

AMY

it's fine. i like it. it's fine

JAMIE

sorry

AMY

for what?

JAMIE

i don't know. just sorry

Maxwell comes in. Everything gets a little tighter.

*Amy doesn't know how she and Maxwell are.
Jamie doesn't know how to deal with the fact that
she doesn't really love Maxwell anymore.
Maxwell doesn't know if Amy told Jamie, and they
look really happy right now with each other.*

MAXWELL

hey guys

JAMIE

hey

AMY

hey. How are you?

MAXWELL

Good. Big like talk kind of thing just happened

AMY

with who?

MAXWELL

Ben and I. Something was just like up

Amy simply has no idea what that means

AMY

gotcha

JAMIE

you're good?

MAXWELL

yeah. yeah. I'm realizing i'm like really good actually

*Jamie thinks it's cause of her, guilty
Amy thinks it's cause of her, awkward*

*You get the picture: this whole thing is just
miscommunications furthering their own
assumptions*

JAMIE
yeah

AMY
that's sweet

MAXWELL
yeah. How are you two? Just hanging out?

JAMIE
i was just hanging out--yeah, just sort of relaxing. Tired. Sun tired

MAXWELL
sweet. sweet.

*a moment of eye-contact ballet. No one looks at
anyone. Maxwell tries, isn't held. Amy eventually
looks at him, smiles, looks away*

MAXWELL
what was that?

AMY
what?

JAMIE
what

MAXWELL
what's up?

AMY
nothing

MAXWELL
okay

JAMIE
wait what happened?

MAXWELL
you looked at me weird

AMY
what?

MAXWELL
you like looked at me and then were like 'oh god he's looking at me' and looked away
AMY
okay

MAXWELL
what's wrong?

JAMIE
wait, *what* happened?

MAXWELL
amy

AMY
sorry. I can't like. Sorry

MAXWELL
wait, what

JAMIE
WHAT

AMY
(getting up)
sorry, sorry

JAMIE
wait okay what just happened?

MAXWELL
amy what are you doing, please don't leave

JAMIE
amy

AMY
What???

JAMIE
what's wrong?

AMY
i really just can't do this right now. i//like really just

MAXWELL
what does that mean--

JAMIE
yeah

AMY
it means i don't want to do this right now

JAMIE
okay well i wish you would like talk to us

MAXWELL
what's wrong?

AMY
i am

JAMIE
no you aren't. you aren't talking ever. you just like walk away

AMY
okay

JAMIE
and stop saying okay! i don't know what that means

AMY
i don't know what else to say then

JAMIE
i don't know.

AMY
okay. i'm gonna walk

JAMIE
What????

AMY
what?

JAMIE
nothing. nothing

MAXWELL
can you just talk
AMY
um. not right now, no. no

MAXWELL
seriously

AMY
yeah

Amy goes

MAXWELL
okay, bye

JAMIE
AH!

MAXWELL
i don't know what to do

JAMIE
what the fuck even happened!

MAXWELL
what do you mean?

JAMIE
i don't know what's going on

MAXWELL
i feel like every time we see each other it's just us repeating the words 'i don't know what's happening' over and over. that's like everybody's fucking mantra

JAMIE
yeah....i'm gonna go find Jess

MAXWELL

WHAT? Why are you leaving too?!

JAMIE

yeah. I just need to like breathe

MAXWELL

what's wrong--what happened?

JAMIE

that happened

MAXWELL

why can't you breathe here?

JAMIE

Cause i don't know what's going on!

Again: Maxwell thinks she's talking about him and Amy

Jamie thinks she's talking about them two

MAXWELL

Okay. Fair, yeah, neither do i

JAMIE

okay so you know what i'm talking about at least

MAXWELL

yeah, i think so

JAMIE

yeah, so i need to like breathe. neither of us know what's going on

MAXWELL

can we talk at some point?

JAMIE

i don't know, yeah? i don't know. We'll see

MAXWELL

okay?

JAMIE

what?

MAXWELL
no one's saying anything

JAMIE
no one knows what to say

MAXWELL
because no one's saying anything

JAMIE
so then say something!....he's not saying anything

MAXWELL
what do you mean he's not saying anything?

JAMIE
nothing. i just--nothing. ha. nothing

She goes.

It's Ben! He comes in with a lot.

BEN
Max!

MAXWELL
what the fuck, sure, why not

BEN
what's up?

MAXWELL
nothing, everything's exploding, what's going on?

BEN
wait, why, what's wrong?

MAXWELL
not the time, what. you're like out of breath

BEN
Dustin is just gone

MAXWELL
what do you mean? what do you mean, like he puffed into smoke?

BEN
dude, i mean he's like gone. like he like left the suite

MAXWELL
okay, what happened--people leave suites

BEN
he left after i slipped him a note

MAXWELL
you wrote him a note?

BEN
yeah, to like ask to talk

MAXWELL
couldn't you just knock and ask?

BEN
i didn't know if he was home?

MAXWELL
that's what knocking is for!

BEN
okay well i didn't! and now he's gone and i tried calling him but he left his phone in his room and i don't know if that was on purpose or accident but i have like shit with this kind of stuff and it's like not chill

MAXWELL
okay. okay. okay. so, here's the truth that you won't like. He's probably fine. He's probably fine and he's just hurt or mad and he's fine and he took air.//you can't

BEN
but what if he was asking me to chase him!!

MAXWELL
YOU CAN'T--no. Dude, that's not Dustin. Dustin isn't doing that

BEN
he could be really bad

MAXWELL
look, here's the truth. I can't deal with this. I like *really* can't deal with this right now. I have a gut instinct he's fine, and if I'm wrong, then i'll be wrong

BEN
that'd be a pretty fucking big wrong

MAXWELL
yeah, i fucking know. okay

BEN
you're being selfish

MAXWELL
yeah.....i am. okay? and like right now i won't apologize for it. fucking god forbid it's misplaced selfishness, but right now, yeah, i *am* taking care of myself. we're all trying to.....**AHH WHAT THE FUCK**.....that's where you like hug me or tell me it's okay

BEN
sorry

MAXWELL
okay, um. i gotta go deal with stuff

BEN
are you okay?

MAXWELL
no, ben. not at all.

Touches his shoulder, squeezes. Squeezes his arm, tousles his hair, pat pat pat like an older brother. Just on the verge of hitting but also sweet? Who's to say. Ben certainly has no fucking clue

MAXWELL
i just gotta go deal with this stuff

BEN
okay

Jess. She's still having a great time. She's pretty unstoppable at this point. Maxwell shows up.

JESS
oh, hey dude

MAXWELL
hey....

JESS
what's up?

MAXWELL
i think uh, Jamie was looking for you?

JESS
oh, i was just with her
MAXWELL
oh, okay

JESS
oh wow, he's coming in with big chaos going on, what's up big boy Max?

MAXWELL
what? i don't know

JESS
okay, and he's spiraling as well. diagnosis: he is freaking out

MAXWELL
stop

JESS
so then tell me what's going onnn

MAXWELL
i don't know//i don't know what's going on

JESS
'i don't know what's going on' unique

MAXWELL
well i don't

JESS
it's all anyone fucking says anymore....is this about Jamie?

MAXWELL
yeah, has she told you?

JESS
no, we didn't talk about you. Unfortunately, it isn't all about you

MAXWELL

i--okay, i didn't say it was

JESS

okay. yeah, i don't know. we didn't talk about you

Jamie's here!

JAMIE

hey--oh

MAXWELL

hi

JESS

oh. oh you meant looking for me like now?

JAMIE

I texted you

MAXWELL

yeah

JESS

(checks phone)

you did

JAMIE

am i interrupting?

JESS

i think I'm interrupting?

JAMIE

no, you two were talking

JESS

not really

MAXWELL

what's going on

JESS

and i have officially entered a conversation where i am not welcome

MAXWELL

what? no you didn't

JAMIE
what?

MAXWELL
what?

JAMIE
you want her to just be here for us talking?
MAXWELL
come on, it's Jess

JESS
thank you max

JAMIE
what? WHAT?

JESS
i did take peer mediation in high school to be fair

JAMIE
we're not fighting

JESS
oh, you're so definitely fighting

MAXWELL
i really don't wanna fight

JAMIE
WE'RE NOT--fine. But like--we're doing this in the fucking common? at night?

JESS
i would love to do it in boloco if that suits you better

JAMIE
stop. fine. fine

JESS
okay, so Max--Maxwell

MAXWELL
don't

JESS

i've never called you it before

MAXWELL
there's a reason

JESS
state what's wrong, what are you feeling?

MAXWELL
Um, okay, well she's//well i guess

JESS
I statements....“I've felt blah blah blah”

MAXWELL
oookay? Um well I've felt like the thing that the three of us are doing is really weird and strange and so no one knew what was gonna happen but now something happened and *I feel* like it made you like hate me or something but...*I feel* like you won't tell me why, I guess. yeah

JESS
Okay, Jamie?

JAMIE
Yeah, it's insane and no one knows what it is but, yeah, feelings shifted and i think that's like a part of life and now we're here and i don't think that should like destroy us forever--

MAXWELL
Right, yeah

JAMIE
Right.

JESS
Right.

JAMIE
what?

MAXWELL
wait, what are you talking about?

JAMIE
what are you talking about?

MAXWELL

me and amy

JAMIE

what happened with you and amy?

MAXWELL

what?

JAMIE

wait, what?

JESS

mhmm, this is good

MAXWELL

feelings for amy

JAMIE

Me?

MAXWELL

no, me

JAMIE

you do?

MAXWELL

yes?

JAMIE

was that a question?

MAXWELL

no no, yes. yes, like i think i have feelings for her, which doesn't mean i don't like want you in my life and still it's messy or whatever

JAMIE

right. okay

MAXWELL

What? Wait, what were you talking about?

JAMIE

us.

MAXWELL
Us?

JAMIE
like the thing we were

MAXWELL
what were we?

JAMIE
i don't know

MAXWELL
okay....so, what happened?

JESS
it sounds like you never established--sorry, just giving my two cents--you never established what you were, and then *something* changed, and you didn't re-establish what you were, but that was impossible because you never established it in the first place so Jamie thought *you* were stuck on phase one of your thing but you thought *she* was stuck on phase one of your thing when in reality there never even *was* a phase one, you both just naturally shifted with your changing relationship
oh my god i'm so high

JAMIE
You like, don't care about us?

MAXWELL
well don't say//it like that

JAMIE
no, but like. Yeah, i thought you were really sad about us changing

MAXWELL
no, it felt like it wanted to change. Did you not want it to change?

JAMIE
no no. it just like changed, yeah. i don't know

JESS
the two of us have kind of been kissing all day

MAXWELL
what?!....is everyone just fucking everyone?!

JESS
kinda

JAMIE
kinda

MAXWELL
sure. fine. so

JAMIE
I think we're good then?

MAXWELL
this feels anti-climactic

JAMIE
we should find Amy

MAXWELL
oh it's so not over

JAMIE
no, not at all

MAXWELL
do you wanna be peer mediator again?

JESS
Nnnno, i'm gonna go walking. If you happen to stumble into me again, i'll give you my services.
Like a wandering video game merchant. Hahaha. Yeah.

Jess walks off

JESS
Cha-ching

MAXWELL
um, okay

JAMIE
okay

MAXWELL
i do like you

JAMIE
yeah

MAXWELL

we don't know

JAMIE
not even close

MAXWELL
that's okay

JAMIE
for right this second, yeah. might have to know at some point

MAXWELL
i like here

JAMIE
i do too. you're good

MAXWELL
i like being your friend

JAMIE
yeah

MAXWELL
i also like kissing you sometimes

JAMIE
i also really like that too, yeah

MAXWELL
and maybe for right now that's okay?

JAMIE
it sounds like a total setup to explode at some point

MAXWELL
yeahhhh, but that's *some point*. We're right here

JAMIE
yeah. young and dumb. should we find her?

MAXWELL
yeah. i don't know, should we call her?

JAMIE

yeah, i'll do it

They go off

Dustin is sitting by the water.

Amy comes over.

AMY
Dustin?

DUSTIN
oh, hey. we're doing this again.

AMY
what?

DUSTIN
uh, the two of us talking--how we were outside Jess's place at the--whatever, nevermind, dumb.

AMY
okay

DUSTIN
oh, you're--hey

AMY
hey

DUSTIN
hey

AMY
hey

DUSTIN
) i've been watching these two ducks freak out in the water?

AMY
which?

DUSTIN
those. There's a bunch of little chicks with them, but the dad keeps going and like chasing this other guy duck around the pond and then swimming back and then going and chasing him. It's

like a real saga. Like did the other duck try and hit on the wife? Did he try and attack the kids?
Who's to say?

AMY
:) yeah

DUSTIN
But like, i've never--like i've lived in Boston for two years now and i feel like i've never just like *sat* and watched the ducks? Like there's whole ass storylines going on 24/7. There was this like flock of birds feeding from this like old woman throwing seed or cheez-its or something, and then all of the sudden there's a tweet and every single bird flies outwards in a circle, but there's this one little red bird in the center who's still standing and it's like i just saw either bird jesus or bird satan claim their fucking territory! And i look around and like nobody saw it! Nobody noticed it! Everybody is on their phone or in their own thoughts or whatever, but nobody saw it. Except the old woman--who was feeding them? I saw her smile. It's like the freaks are tuned into it all--well not freaks. You know what I mean

AMY
yeah, i do

DUSTIN
it's a cool place, this whole thing

AMY
How are you?

DUSTIN
oh, me? Lil ol me? Uh, yeah, bad, but way better than i was like 40 minutes ago. Being outside really helped. Watching life i guess really helped. It got dark and it's getting less warm which is like not my cup of tea to be honest

AMY
yeah

DUSTIN
you okay?

AMY
i don't know

DUSTIN
okay.

AMY
tell me something

DUSTIN
what?

AMY
just tell me anything

DUSTIN
that's so general

AMY
that's the point

DUSTIN
um...fair...um i lost my third grade spelling bee to kaleidoscope

AMY
woah

DUSTIN
yeah, um...narwhal's horns are a tooth...okay i guess that one wasn't as interesting, didn't even get a 'woah'

AMY
no no it was!//I'm just listening.

DUSTIN
I know i know, i'm kidding...um, i can't tell the difference between eggshell white and just white. I don't know what shade of white *white* is? I don't get that even remotely...I think ducks are really like pretty animals but also intensely disgusting. I think i'm not okay, and i may not be for a while, but i also may be okay sooner than i think, but i think it's not helping me to think about 'oh maybe some point soon i'll be okay'....i think everyone i know is either mid-fucking someone or grieving over said fuck...i think i can't tell the difference between being pulled to someone sexually and then my heart following or vice versa...i don't know if it matters right now...i think i'm really tired and exhausted of being tired and exhausted and of being sad...i think you're like this rock i have--to clarify, sorry, i have to clarify i am not confessing my love to you//i just think

AMY
i know you're not

DUSTIN

cool. You're like--you saw me at an "ah" place, and we both were like "ah" and then we went to the party and you were happy I think and had a good time and a good night and i didn't and i was like mad that you didn't come and like help me? but i think i was just sad that night and people *could have* acted differently, but i don't know if there's an objective right and wrong--bottom line. Okay bottom line: to tell you something. I know absolutely nothing. And that's okay. I'm young. Even when i'm old, i doubt i'll know anything

Jamie and Maxwell come on.

DUSTIN
hey

JAMIE
hey

MAXWELL
this park is weirdly tiny

DUSTIN
should i go?

AMY
yeah. thank you. will you be around?

MAXWELL
Ben is looking for you

DUSTIN
sigh yeah, probably.

AMY
okay. thank you

Okay. Dustin snaps at them, walks off.

AMY
i don't know

JAMIE
neither do i

MAXWELL
me neither

JAMIE

cool. now that we've all said our mantra//we can finally

AMY

(hahaha)

fuck you

MAXWELL

(hahahaha)

fuck off

JAMIE

scream on 3?

AMY

i'm gonna howl

JAMIE

what?

MAXWELL

like a wolf?

AMY

123

ALL

AAAAOOOOOOOOO!!! AAAAOOOOOOOOO!!! AAAAAAAAAA!!!! AOOOO!

JESS

(from a distance)

RIGHT ON

AMY

Yeah, but i'm fine not knowing

MAXWELL

okay....um. sorry, yeah, i think with this--with like us i do kind of need to know

AMY

yeah. okay. um. yeah. i can't. i can't. i'm fine doing what we've done, but like the whole falling completely--falling totally in love, i....i can't do that yet if that's what you're asking for....if that means we need to stop, then we can stop, i'm fine with that

MAXWELL

okay....yeah, i don't really know

AMY
we should stop

MAXWELL
no--well, i think it'll be messier if we try and cut it off entirely. Like that's not possible i think?

AMY
yeah, but still if it's hurting you

MAXWELL
yeah. i don't know. that's like--i guess the question of how dumb am i gonna be?

AMY
am i a bad friend for letting you be dumb?

MAXWELL
i think i'm the wrong person to ask. i'd say no. but i like you

JAMIE
do i make it weird?

MAXWELL
no

AMY
no

JAMIE
Okay! I was just checking

MAXWELL
you're fine....i don't know. I think i have to feel it out

AMY
okay

MAXWELL
but that means it's messy

JAMIE
yeah this is weirdest thing i've ever done

MAXWELL
i don't know. i'm glad

AMY
but if you want out--

MAXWELL

i'll--probably....yeah, i don't know. I don't know yet.

AMY

okay

MAXWELL

can i?

AMY

please

They hug. Jamie's awkward. Amy extends a hand to Jamie. Maxwell follows. She doesn't move. They start shuffling towards her saying "yes, yes, yes, yes" it's weird and sweet and loving and scary. Jamie laughs and is weirded out and is pulled into the hug. They laugh, hug, breathe, squeeze.

Jess and Ben walk on from opposite sides of the stage, in a different world than the other three. The three leave.

JESS

Hello, again

BEN

Hey

JESS

Yeah.....i don't know, dude

BEN

what?

JESS

I don't know. I don't know! Ben. Bennnn.

BEN

are you high?

JESS

(dropped in)

yeah. why?

BEN
just wondering. do you wanna talk high?

JESS
we're talking?

BEN
technically yeah

JESS
but we're not like, 'talking,' are we?

BEN
can we?

JESS
have you figured your shit out?

BEN
what?

JESS
i don't know. whatever was going on with you. have you figured it out?

BEN
i don't know what that means

JESS
yeah, okay. Um, i think you have like shit to figure out. I think we all do, but you have shit that like *needs* to be figured out now. And whenever we talk we come to a standstill where it's like we move nowhere cause you don't know what this thing is

BEN
yeah, i know. it's not--does it have to be an alone thing? like can i not go through it with someone?

JESS
yeah. **sigh** yeah. It can be, yeah, but like--look. I've been like good? Which never happens. I've been alive and breathing and the stars shine and the sun is warm and that hasn't happened in a while. So...someone else going through a bunch of shit just like doesn't sound as appealing honestly. And that's selfish

BEN
yeah

JESS

yeah, and so i am sorry for that. genuinely. I think i might even feel really fucking awful about it in like a week or a day or tomorrow morning. But right now, i'm like happy and it's like stupid happy

BEN

i'm glad

JESS

thank you. i like you

BEN

i like you

JESS

it's not like we're fucking *done*

BEN

i don't know what we were to begin with

JESS

SHALL WE SAY IT ON THREE, ONE TWO THREE

BOTH

I have no idea what's happening

JESS

good

BEN

i like you a lot

JESS

yeah man, we're messes. is it okay i'm kind of being like this? selfish?

BEN

not like really? but i get it. it just is like you're leaving me behind right now to like hurt

JESS

yeah, i do know that. i do know. but. i am doing it for me, who i also really love

BEN

also

JESS

yeah, also really love because i love you! OKAY

BEN

sorry :)

JESS

:) i don't know, dude

BEN

i'll probably see you around

JESS

i hope i come around to not being as selfish and wanting to help you

BEN

jesus. that sounds fucking brutal. i guess i hope i'm not hurt enough so that i take it

JESS

me too. maybe you should slap me and tell me to just like grow up and help someone who i love

BEN

we'll probably end up kissing by the end of the week

JESS

okay wow so you still really just say it

BEN

and then it'll be messy again

JESS

and we'll have some fucking big phat conversation that's dramatic and one of us will cry and it'll probably be me and then i don't know

BEN

and then what? what happens to us in the end?

JESS

i don't know, that's like big future shit. i'm 21, can't we just be here?

BEN

i think it's more dangerous

JESS

yeah. yeah. i know, but we'll never not be like what we always are

BEN

kinda messy, kinda hot, kinda sweet

JESS

fuck. yeah. that's us pretty much. that was good.

BEN

thank you

JESS

i'm gonna keep walking, i think. I'm currently being a wandering merchant. i've already sold a nut to a squirrel, big sell.

BEN

yeah, i really like you

JESS

:) I really like you. Thank you for being--like for--i think getting me

BEN

same

JESS

Ba-bye ben

BEN

a-ba-bye jess

JESS

:)

They hug. She kisses him on the cheek. Starts to leave.

BEN

on the cheek??

JESS

I hated it too don't worry i was trying to be sweet and cute bye!

BEN

BYE.

Dustin comes on. It's a new place, new time. They exist in their own universe now.

They just stand. No one says anything. They're scared and waiting.

DUSTIN
Jesus, hi

BEN
hi, sorry

DUSTIN
just fucking standing here like dodo birds

BEN
sorry

DUSTIN
it's fine. this is so fucking dramatic, jesus

BEN
i'm sorry about the note

DUSTIN
what note?

BEN
the note i slipped under your door

DUSTIN
what? when?

BEN
like an hour ago?

DUSTIN
i didn't get a note

BEN
wait, why did you leave the suite?

DUSTIN
i wanted to go outside?

BEN

you didn't take your phone with you?

DUSTIN

because i didn't want to....

BEN

oh. hmm. fair, i guess. jesus, big dick universe energy

DUSTIN

you think i like ran off or something?

BEN

for a second, yeah. it was tense, to be fair

DUSTIN

yeah. well

BEN

yeah....hmm

DUSTIN

what?

BEN

No, um....sorry. is that a new shirt?

DUSTIN

what?

BEN

i haven't seen that shirt before

DUSTIN

what? yeah. it's a new shirt.

BEN

It's nice.

DUSTIN

Cool, thanks.

BEN

What?

DUSTIN

What?

BEN

It's just a nice shirt.

DUSTIN

Thank you. What?

BEN

Why are you being weird about the shirt?

DUSTIN

....I'm not being weird about the shirt.

BEN

All I said was it's a nice shirt.

DUSTIN

...So I said thank you. What--what the fuck is--what is happening right now!?

BEN

I don't know!

DUSTIN

it's a new shirt, look! OOOOO NEW SHIRT

BEN

IT'S JUST A NICE SHIRT, WHEN DID YOU GET IT

DUSTIN

THURSDAY

BEN

HAVEN'T SEEN IT

DUSTIN

HAVEN'T WORN IT

BEN

YOU DIDN'T TELL ME YOU BOUGHT A NEW SHIRT

DUSTIN

WHY ARE WE SCREAMING IN THE//COMMON

BEN

(louder)

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME YOU BOUGHT A NEW SHIRT?

DUSTIN

I DON'T KNOW, JUST DIDN'T COME UP

BEN

OKAY

DUSTIN

What?

BEN

NOTHING

DUSTIN

we're still doing the yelling?

BEN

WHAT

DUSTIN

Jesus--WHAT DID YOU SAY

BEN

OH HEY

DUSTIN

WHY ARE WE YELLING

BEN

I THINK BECAUSE I KEEP WANTING TO RUN AWAY BUT THIS WAY I CAN'T RUN AWAY AND I'M MAKING MYSELF SAY THE THINGS I FEEL AND MEAN IT AND I CAN'T RUN

DUSTIN

YEAH OKAY THAT'S LIKE DEEP AND ALL--

BEN

YEAH?

DUSTIN

YEAH, BUT ONE, THE ENTIRE COMMON CAN HEAR US AND TWO, YOU'RE NOT ACTUALLY SAYING HOW YOU FEEL, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A STUPID FUCKING SHIRT THAT I BOUGHT AND THAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW I BOUGHT

BEN
you just i feel like used//to tell me

DUSTIN
oh okay that worked

BEN
sorry--YOU USED TO//TELL ME WHENEVER

DUSTIN
NO NO NO IT WAS FINE. IT WAS GOOD--THE NOT YELLING

BEN
:) you just uh, i feel like i used to hear all the time when like anything good happened to you, and like buying a shirt is like a nice, cool thing to do, so it's like--and you *never* buy a new shirt, so it's just like 'oh, he didn't tell me. he doesn't tell me stuff maybe anymore'

DUSTIN
yeah

BEN
which sucks

DUSTIN
sigh

BEN
what?

DUSTIN
okay, like. you fucked me up pretty bad

BEN
yeah

DUSTIN
which is not your *fault* i guess because you didn't like--no it is entirely your fault, dude. you bit my fucking neck

BEN
yeah

DUSTIN

which was awesome, like great

BEN

yeah?

DUSTIN

yeah, but then you left me like fucking bleeding out on the floor and then i didn't know what was gonna happen like ever again--if ever again--so i didn't know what to do and then....yeah and then i thought you were gonna kiss me at the party and you didn't and i didn't know why because you said you two were poly so i thought that meant that you could just like do what you wanted

so it makes me think you just didn't *want* me. Which is fine, but sometimes i think you do want me and so i don't really know--really have been throwing me around by the balls.

BEN

yeah. I'm sorry

DUSTIN

i wanted more out of this i think

BEN

sorry. I got reckless and just kept saying fuck it and then i got anxious and....and yeah i think i talk pretty tough

DUSTIN

yeah, you do

BEN

and sometimes that's sort of rooted in nothing

DUSTIN

yeah but then you don't like admit defeat--you like fucking armor up and keep pretending you won by fucking retreating

BEN

okay. i'm trying to figure myself out

DUSTIN

yeah i know

BEN

you haven't been like talking to me at all recently

DUSTIN

i am very aware. it was a very conscious choice

BEN

right

DUSTIN

you never even asked how i was

BEN

i was scared, i think

DUSTIN

facing the fucking guy you lead on

BEN

yeah, facing a mistake

DUSTIN

here it is. the mistake. you scared?

BEN

no

DUSTIN

no. but i'm still gonna be hurt, because--

BEN

because, yeah, i'm not getting any cleaner, i think. at least it's not gonna be quick, i don't know.

DUSTIN

i'm not saying change who you are. just like don't leave me bleeding.

BEN

okay

DUSTIN

okay

BEN

sorry, i like wanna say i love you but i don't want that to be weird

DUSTIN

yeah, okay, maybe don't say that right now

BEN
okay, sorry

DUSTIN
say something stupid, like 'ur my bro'

BEN
no

DUSTIN
why?

BEN
that has absolutely none of the sweetness i want to convey

DUSTIN
it's caring!

BEN
it makes me sound like a dweeb!

DUSTIN
(joking about the pain, loud)
well you can't say i love you, because *you* bit my neck and now i'm trying to get over you and saying i love you wouldn't help, so you fucked up and the least you could to repay me is by saying that i'm your bro so say it! SAY I'M YOUR BRO!

BEN
YOU'RE MY BRO

DUSTIN
HELL YEAH

BEN
FUCK YEAH

DUSTIN
OOOOOOO

BEN
BIIIIIGGGGG

DUSTIN
YOU'RE MY G

BEN
UR MY BRO

DUSTIN
UR MY BRO

BEN
BRO HUG ME

DUSTIN
WITH PLEASURE

*they do the one-hand clasp into a hug thing that
guys do. Pat pat pat. They hold there. It turns sweet.*

DUSTIN
just talk to me

BEN
i will

DUSTIN
ur my bro

BEN
) ur my bro

DUSTIN
thanks...bro

BEN
people i think--dude i don't know what anyone else is doing

DUSTIN
everyone's losing their fucking minds tonight

BEN
yeah, but. you wanna try and find them?

DUSTIN
what, like walk into possible storming chaos?

BEN
right

DUSTIN
hahahahahahah. HAHAHAHAHAHHA

BEN
what?

DUSTIN
are we never gonna learn anything?

BEN
you think learning means shutting ourselves off?

DUSTIN
i think learning may mean protecting me maybe, i don't know

BEN
i think we can learn how to use this heart, but we can't turn it off

DUSTIN
shut up

BEN
:) do you wanna go find everyone else?

DUSTIN
yeah, of course I do.

CUPIDO'S BACK. Either in the audience, or comes from the booth to the stage, or legs dangling off the catwalk, or he's flying in a harness. Could even end up onstage so long as he doesn't just walk on from the wings.

While he's talking, everyone slowly else comes on. One final tableau of love, of youth, of human.

CUPIDO

NOW LET ME REMIND YOU. Yes, hello, it's me, it's Cupido. Good evening--we're almost done people, don't quiver. Let me remind you. You remember where this whole thing came from? Where it all started? Well, yes *of course* it came from me, but no. It came from one dream. It came from a singular dream--yesthatigavethem--where they had sex with a friend. That's not a lie! I did nothing else. And that may upset a few of you; I sort of just took a big shit on love didn't I? Love at first sight? People wanna fuck. Romeo and Juliet saw each other at a party of *masks* and 'fell in love'? Wanted to fuck.

Everyone talks about *young love* like it's some sort of diamond in the foggy past. All young love is is people with low enough inhibitions and a high enough sex drive to plunge into the pool of

people. And then--then well, this play happens. People get messy--well maybe not *as messy* as these little shrivels, but messy. Maybe even messier for some of you, who knows?

So, I look at all of you; little plankton in the shimmering sea. You don't see the plays going on around you. A storm is difficult to appreciate when you're in the midst of trying to survive. And who am I to ask you to *appreciate* how brutally hard it is right now? Who am I to actually ask you to look at the situation long enough to laugh at the irony and weep for the clown and yell for the missed opportunity of magic?

Who am I...I'm the mythological creature who watches you all fall madly in love and hurt madly in pain. I'm the guy who watches you pick yourself up and fall in love again even though you're in a full body cast. I'm the guy who loves you. I'm the guy who's never fallen in love. Who can't fall in love. Not like you can.

I feel love for all of you--weird little piss ants that you are. Yeah, I feel love, but there's something that happens to *you* and only you. It's in your eyes. It's in your breath and your fingernails and your soul and your toes and your hair and your chest and your singing and your dancing and your dreams and your smile. It's some deep love and it leads to the hardest tears and the most passionate sex and the sweetest gifts and the most violent anxiety and it's something that seems like a feeling that's too impossibly big to actually feel. You're like the personification of infinity, of impossibility, and so it's selfish for only me to be appreciating it. So all I ask is please to look at your full ass you and fall madly in love with yourself because I wish I could! I really do wish that I could. I have no idea how spectacular it must feel. But I know that I'm meant to be this guy. I'm me. I'm Cupido. And you're you. Bunch of shimmering water lilies floating down the stream just bumping into each other, creating galaxies. God, you're beautiful. Anyway, wrap it up. Thanks for everything. Terribly sorry not sorry for all the inconveniences, mail any complaints or suggestions to my P.O. box. Lots of love, xoxo, Cupido. I'll see you tonight.

end of play.