

I HEARD YOU WERE DEAD
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CHARACTERS

The Friends

PIPER, a junior, a little funky, probably dyed hair, wants to be a writer. (she/her)

CONSTANTINE, a junior, recovering from leukemia, doesn't know what he wants to be. (he/him)

The Love Interest

CHLOE JIMENEZ, a junior, a theater person.

The Chorus

THE CHORUS wears all grey—when a member of the Chorus enters a scene, they grab a piece of colored clothing (a scarf, a hat, a sweater, a boa, anything) to signify that they are now in the scene. Feel free to double-cast roles out of the Chorus as you see fit.

NOTES ON CASTING

Gender of the Characters: Any gender may play any role. I think it's probably best if the parents are played as the gender of their characters. It makes more sense for Constantine to be played as male-identifying as well. Piper may be played as any gender.

Werewolf Fan Fiction: You may tone down the queer werewolf fan fiction if it's necessary for your community.

Constantine's Hair: After recovering from chemo, Constantine's hair follicles have been permanently damaged. This could take the form of simply having him be bald, or having his hair be kind of patchy or thin. A bald cap is probably a bad idea. (Ideally, an actor would shave his head for the role, but if that's not possible, then go with the actor's natural hair.)

Using the Chorus: The Chorus should create all of the locations for the various scenes—feel free to have them become characters in any scene that might be in public (the cafeteria, for instance)—I envision the Chorus moving in a stylized manner, not unlike a Greek chorus, and drawing focus to different parts of the story. Please be creative with them.

I HEARD YOU WERE DEAD

ACT ONE

Scene 1

Music.

Lights up on the Chorus, frozen, dressed as nurses and doctors.

CHORUS. Part One.

Constantine.

*The Chorus separates to reveal a hospital room with a bed.
The Chorus creates soft beeping of machines. Some of the
Chorus members hold up a white curtain around the bed.
Lots of flowers in lots of vases.*

*Constantine, sixteen, lies in the bed, reading a printed out
story. He wears a hospital gown—bald.*

Piper, sixteen, sits nearby, in a chair, on her phone.

Constantine laughs from something in the story.

PIPER. Which part?

CONSTANTINE. “I want to howl with you. No more cages. No more shackles.” Oh yeah.

He chuckles—

PIPER. You like that?

CONSTANTINE. Your brain is so disturbing. Uh oh here we go. “It’s too dangerous. My blood runs too hot.”

He laughs—

Oh the moon’s coming out.

He reaches the end, flips over the page.

That's it?

PIPER. I'll have the next part tomorrow.

CONSTANTINE. You are killing me.

PIPER. That's all I got so far.

CONSTANTINE. It is an actual crime to end at this part of the story. I need some werewolf-on-werewolf action.

PIPER. Working on it.

CONSTANTINE. My parents keep bringing me flowers—you bring me horny werewolf stories and that's why I love you best.

PIPER. I aim to please.

CONSTANTINE. Can you explain to me the point of flowers? Like, "Hey look it's something beautiful! Let me rip it out of the ground with a dozen of its friends, and then trap it in a glass vase so you can watch it slowly die in front of you." Thanks. Thank you.

PIPER. Somebody's feeling morbid.

Constantine coughs. It's a fit.

You okay? You need some water?

Constantine is still coughing.

Ice?

He nods through the coughing.

Piper finds a paper cup and hands it to him.

He takes it gratefully. Puts a piece of ice in his mouth. He's in pain.

Your stomach?

Just breathe.

Constantine tries.

You need to throw up?

CONSTANTINE. I'm okay.

PIPER. I can go if you need me to.

CONSTANTINE. I'm all right. Just—you know—the anticipation of the story is driving me crazy.

PIPER. (*Joking.*) Shut up.

Piper freezes.

Constantine speaks to the audience and climbs out of the bed.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* This is our sophomore year. Day eleven of chemo. I'm in the middle of a delicious bout of acute lymphocytic leukemia. Zero stars. Not recommended. But this isn't a play about cancer. This is a play about recovery. And Piper. That's Piper over there. She's my neighbor and my best friend. It's her highly disturbing werewolf erotica* that I've been reading. One of the many adorable things the chemo has done is mess with my eyes, so I have a hard time reading off a phone—which is why she prints out the pages every time she visits me. I will be spending seventeen more days in the children's oncology wing.

PIPER. *(To Constantine, unfreezing.)* And then you go home.

CONSTANTINE. Right. Then I go home.

PIPER. You totally made it sound like you were gonna die here.

CONSTANTINE. No I didn't.

PIPER. One hundred percent everyone thought you were dead.

CONSTANTINE. It's not that kind of show.

PIPER. I know that. I'm just telling you that when we see a kid in the cancer ward, one hundred percent chance the kid is going to die. There's gonna be like a sad clown and then a therapy dog / and—

CONSTANTINE. There's like an eighty-nine percent survival rate to my kind of leukemia—

PIPER. I know that.

CONSTANTINE. Do you mind? This is my part of the play. We'll get to you.

PIPER. Fine.

CONSTANTINE. In seventeen days I go home. In remission. Over the next four months I will get twenty-two more chemo treatments, lose nineteen pounds, most of my hair, my fingernails, and vomit five hundred million times. But I live.

Claire and Trent enter with a wheelchair.

* Throughout the play the word "erotica" can be replaced with "romance."

These are my parents. I was a cross-country runner before I got diagnosed. I leave in a wheelchair.

The Chorus removes the hospital setting as Constantine gets into the wheelchair.

Trent helps him to another part of the stage.

Seven months to the day after my diagnosis, I am ready for the first day of school—junior year.

Piper moves to her side of the stage, texting.

PIPER. You want to walk to school tomorrow?

CONSTANTINE. I thought your mom was giving you a ride.

PIPER. You want a ride with my mom? You survived cancer, you want to chance a ride with the worst driver in the history of humanity?

CONSTANTINE. My mom's giving me a ride anyway. She's like—hovering—she's already picked out my clothes for tomorrow—forty feet of bubble wrap. I'm gonna look like a sphere.

PIPER. That's hot. No seriously that's the new thing. Everyone wears bubble wrap.

CONSTANTINE. School has changed a lot in six months.

PIPER. You won't even recognize it. We have jet packs now. We're living in the future.

CONSTANTINE. Figures. I'm not supposed to use jet packs.

PIPER. They're experimental anyway.

CONSTANTINE. I gotta get there early. 'Cause I'm slow now.

PIPER. Do you get to park in the handicapped spot?

CONSTANTINE. That's the only reason I got cancer in the first place.

PIPER. Sweet. I'll see you tomorrow.

CONSTANTINE. Yeah you will.

PIPER. School sucked without you. I mean it.

Claire enters Constantine's room.

CLAIRE. Sweetie, I think it's time for bed.

CONSTANTINE. I'm sixteen years old, Mom.

CLAIRE. And Dr. Chu said you needed more sleep now than you used to. No more staying up till the middle of night texting Piper—

CONSTANTINE. I'm not texting Piper—

CLAIRE. Phone. Now. Bed.

Constantine hands over his phone.

CONSTANTINE. If I was texting Piper, I'd be saying how my mom was being overprotective.

CLAIRE. It's a big day tomorrow.

CONSTANTINE. I know.

She stops to look at him. Tears up.

He notices.

Mom.

CLAIRE. I can't look at my baby?

CONSTANTINE. Mom.

CLAIRE. I just wasn't sure we'd make it here.

Lights change.

The Chorus sets up the school.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* Day one. Junior year.

I feel like an alien.

Constantine steps into the space. Puts on a hat.

The Chorus becomes high school students.

They rush around him—everyone has places to go. Everyone is laughing and having a great time silently.

I am in slow motion.

He moves very slowly as the Chorus rushes around him.

My feet hurt. My muscles hurt. And then I see her. Chloe Jimenez.*

Chloe walks through the scrum, not seeing Constantine.

The Chorus parts suddenly to highlight Chloe. Perhaps angelic humming. Maybe a spotlight.

The girl who saved my life. The person / who—

* If you do not have a Hispanic actor to play Chloe, please change Chloe's last name to match the ethnicity of your actress. (Jackson, Wu, Patel, etc.)

Tripp, emerging from the Chorus with a baseball cap, approaches Constantine from the Chorus.

TRIPP. Constantine Wright!

The spell is broken. Chloe moves on. Everyone moves.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* I have no idea who this is.

Tripp grabs him by the shoulders.

TRIPP. Are you serious right now, bro?

CONSTANTINE. Hey...man.

TRIPP. I heard you were dead.

CONSTANTINE. Um...no.

TRIPP. No I heard it. It was in the paper and everything I swear.

CONSTANTINE. Oh. I'm not dead.

TRIPP. Bro. That's awesome. Did they have like a funeral?

CONSTANTINE. I think maybe it was just a mistake—

TRIPP. You shoulda totally showed up at your own funeral. Like hang out in the coffin? Then when they're like trying to bury you or whatever, you just like *explode* out of the coffin and you're like, "not today, suckers! Aaaaaaah!" Bro that woulda been awesome. You totally shoulda done that.

CONSTANTINE. Yeah I guess I didn't think of it.

TRIPP. Next time. Super glad you're not dead bro, I gotta go.

Tripp heads off, talks to Spiro, who has also emerged from the Chorus.

Didn't you tell me Constantine Wright died?

SPIRO. Oh yeah. Super tragic. Cancer.

TRIPP. He's right there, bro.

SPIRO. Shut up. Seriously.

He gawks at Constantine.

Is he like a zombie now?

CONSTANTINE. The rest of the day kind of goes like that.

Constantine walks—everyone in the Chorus swivels to watch him.

CHORUS. (*Amongst themselves, overlapping.*) That's the kid who...
I thought he was dead...
Leukemia...
That's so awesome—

The Chorus freezes as teachers emerge.

TEACHER 1. We have a special student with us today. Constantine, can you stand up please?

A second teacher comes forward.

TEACHER 2. So brave. I just want to say...so brave.

A third teacher comes forward.

TEACHER 3. No hats.

Constantine takes off his hat.

Oh. Um...sorry uh—

STUDENT. Dude that kid had cancer.

A fourth teacher comes forward.

TEACHER 4. Let's give him a round of applause.

Half-hearted round of applause from the Chorus.

Oh come on, we can do better than that. Let's let him hear it.

Slightly less half-hearted round of applause.

Do you want to say something, Constantine?

CONSTANTINE. What.

TEACHER 4. Do you have some words for us?

CONSTANTINE. About what.

TEACHER 4. About, you know, life? How lucky we are to be here. How important it is to live every day like it could be your last. Because think about that, guys. You think you're immortal. You think nothing bad is going to happen to you, but one day you could wake up like Constantine here and it's like, your life's over. Get used to it.

CONSTANTINE. You want me to say that?

TEACHER 4. Or whatever you want to say. But something like that would be great.

CONSTANTINE. I survive until lunch.

The Chorus sets up the cafeteria.

Piper plops down next to him.

PIPER. What did your mom make me for lunch today?

CONSTANTINE. Uh...

PIPER. You wanna see what I got?

She holds up several packets of Cheez-Its.

Behold.

CONSTANTINE. I didn't realize you liked Cheez-Its that much.

PIPER. Not a fan, actually. My mom is just throwing whatever into a bag—

CONSTANTINE. Here's a thought—I mean, this may be impossible, but maybe you could like make your own lunch?

PIPER. Have you seen what's in the pantry at my house? There's like pre-pandemic mac and cheese in there. I swear my parents have gone from passively trying to ruin my life to actively trying to ruin my life. The divorce has turned them into children. I want trees to fall on all of them.

CONSTANTINE. What happened this morning?

PIPER. Oh my God it's crisis 24/7. My dad stole our cooler and took it to his apartment and it's like the crime of the century. They keep texting me. I hope the school takes our phones away, honestly. I can't deal with this. (*Regarding the food.*) What is that?

CONSTANTINE. Spanakopita.

PIPER. Your mom made you spanakopita for lunch. Think about that.

CONSTANTINE. You want some?

PIPER. I'm not gonna take your lunch—you're literally recovering from cancer.

CONSTANTINE. I'm basically almost fine. Seriously, Piper. Take some. My mom thinks I should eat like an offensive lineman now.

PIPER. I don't even know what that is.

CONSTANTINE. Sports reference.

PIPER. Oh I didn't realize we were doing sports now.

CONSTANTINE. Have it.

He hands some over.

PIPER. Thanks. Thank you. I mean that. Thank you. My mom is just like...spiraling.

CONSTANTINE. Sorry.

PIPER. It is what it is. Constant nightmare. BUT—how are you doing? How is your day? Is it everything you always dreamed of?

Constantine laughs.

Is this what you were envisioning in the chemo?

CONSTANTINE. It's exhausting. All day long. "Are you cured? Is your hair gonna grow back? What was it like?" I need like a little sign that just answers everything.

PIPER. Put it on a T-shirt.

CONSTANTINE. But I saw Chloe Jimenez.

PIPER. (*Sarcastic.*) Oh. Well in that case.

CONSTANTINE. Do you know her?

PIPER. She was in my Earth Sciences class freshman year I think. And I know you're totally obsessed with her.

CONSTANTINE. I'm not totally obsessed with her.

PIPER. Serious stalker energy.

CONSTANTINE. I'm not obsessed / with her—

PIPER. Okay. I'm sorry. You saw Chloe today. Congratulations. She goes to school here.

CONSTANTINE. She saved my life.

PIPER. Wow. I didn't even know she was an oncologist.

CONSTANTINE. I'm serious, Piper.

PIPER. No that's amazing that she's a junior in high school and already completed medical school and works in the cancer ward already—wow—

CONSTANTINE. Can I tell you how?

PIPER. Please—and if this doesn't end with Chloe developing a cure for cancer, I'm going to be disappointed.

CONSTANTINE. Can I just tell you?

PIPER. Fine.

CONSTANTINE. Okay—so um...so you know how like nobody came to see me, right?

PIPER. I came to see you. Like all the time.

CONSTANTINE. Right. You know how nobody else came to see me, right?

PIPER. Fair.

CONSTANTINE. So um—Chloe's dad is a firefighter, and they do benefits for the children's wing sometimes—and so anyway, she visited one time.

PIPER. All right.

CONSTANTINE. And you know that I had a totally non-obsessive crush on her—

PIPER. Uh huh.

CONSTANTINE. Well anyway, um...this is like actually pretty embarrassing—

PIPER. I can't imagine how this is embarrassing.

CONSTANTINE. So uh...we talked and...I was in pretty bad shape—like really bad—this is not the moment you want to see your crush, you know? You're not sleeping, you can't eat anything, you haven't been outside in like a week—not cute, right?

Piper nods.

So... She leaned over and gave me a hug and um...

He's having trouble saying the words.

PIPER. What?

CONSTANTINE. It moved.

PIPER. What moved?

CONSTANTINE. Me.

Piper almost gets it.

PIPER. I'm sorry?

CONSTANTINE. Like I felt something...in my...loins.

Piper bursts out laughing.

No no no it's a big deal!

PIPER. Oh *is* it?!

CONSTANTINE. Because it's like blood flow—I had a *blood* disease—That's one of the symptoms that you can't like...get aroused... and that reaction—

PIPER. Hold on hold on are you telling me that Chloe Jimenez saved your life by giving you a magic erection?

CONSTANTINE. No—

PIPER. Your manhood *awoke* and with it, your will to live!

CONSTANTINE. This is why I don't tell you things.

PIPER. I'm sorry, please continue your story about your life-saving boner.*

CONSTANTINE. It was proof I was getting better. You don't understand—until that point, I didn't think I was going to make it. But then...I know it's stupid and ridiculous, but at that moment, I could see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Piper loses it.

Don't make jokes!

PIPER. Was Chloe aware that she had that...effect on you?

CONSTANTINE. I mean I was wearing like a cotton dress that was open at the back—

PIPER. Hot.

CONSTANTINE. But I vowed that if I lived I would...ask her out. And let her know how much she meant to me.

PIPER. Funny. 'Cause she's right here.

Chloe is behind him.

Hey Chloe.

Constantine reacts.

CHLOE. Oh my God it so good to see you!

Constantine stands awkwardly as Chloe gives him a hug.

Piper snickers.

CONSTANTINE. Hi! Oh my gosh hi.

CHLOE. So is that it? Are you cured?

* These lines may be cut.

CONSTANTINE. Um...well...so like I'm in remission, you're not actually officially cured until you're five years out—

PIPER. Constantine was just telling me how he has to answer the same questions all day long.

CHLOE. Oh my gosh I'm so sorry I didn't mean to harass you—

CONSTANTINE. You're totally not harassing you it's fine it's fine Piper's just weird—

PIPER. Like all day long. Same questions.

CONSTANTINE. I'm good. I'm okay. It's weird being back.

CHLOE. I'm so glad you're back. And I totally want to catch up but I am here on a mission. Ms. Kluber is giving us a choice for the fall show this year, and I know you're not big into theater, but the choice is between *The Crucible* and *Twelfth Night* which is ridiculous.

CONSTANTINE. Right. Yes. Absolutely. Completely ridiculous.

PIPER. Why is it ridiculous, Constantine?

CONSTANTINE. Because um...

CHLOE. Because one show is a patriarchal nightmare.

CONSTANTINE. Yes. Yes it is. Um...Shakespeare is—

CHLOE. Great.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you, yes. I was just going to say that.

CHLOE. And *The Crucible* is a nightmare. You read it in English class last year, right?

CONSTANTINE. Um...you know I was doing a lot of virtual school so—

PIPER. Did not read it.

CHLOE. Okay so the hero of the show is this guy John Proctor—who's like married and thirty-five years old, and he sleeps with a teenage girl—and she's basically the villain. Right? The *hero* is the dude who just happened to be seduced by this temptress—a temptress who was like a kid whose existence in Puritan society was to be married off and pump out babies for a guy thirty years older than her. She's the freaking *hero* but we're supposed to hate her. Like oh no I'm so sad for that pedophile being led off to his death if only that harlot were killed instead.

CONSTANTINE. Wow. Yeah.

PIPER. I hadn't thought of it like that. I just thought it was boring.

CHLOE. So you'll sign this?

CONSTANTINE. Yes. Definitely. I was actually thinking about getting into theater this year.

PIPER. You were?

CHLOE. You should totally try out. We need men.

Piper snickers.

CONSTANTINE. Well I am a man.

PIPER. I don't know that I would go that far.

CHLOE. Seriously—if you're male-identifying, you'll get cast. We always have a million women trying out for the show and not enough dudes—which is why *Twelfth Night* is awesome because it's a bunch of girls dressing up like guys anyway—not like a bunch of them—one—but—that's the whole plot.

CONSTANTINE. I would love to see you dressed up like a dude.

CHLOE. You should try out too, Piper.

PIPER. No thanks. I'm just a snarky voice in the darkness. I don't appreciate people, or applause, or people watching me, or people judging me, or memorizing things.

CHLOE. Right.

She snatches up the clipboard.

It's so awesome seeing you I gotta go but we should catch up later okay?

CONSTANTINE. Yes. Yes. Definitely.

She goes.

PIPER. "I would love to see you dressed up like a dude." *That's* your flirting?

CONSTANTINE. I don't know! I wasn't prepared! I hadn't thought of anything!

PIPER. You are so bad at this.

CONSTANTINE. Help me—you're like a girl—*

* This can be replaced with "you're like a writer—"

PIPER. Oh gee thanks I'm like a girl nice—*

CONSTANTINE. No but you're like a *writer*—you write amazing things—

PIPER. I write queer werewolf fan fiction—

CONSTANTINE. Which is amazing! You could write my dialogue for me. Make me sound smart.

PIPER. There's a lot of howling in my work, Constantine.

CONSTANTINE. Cut out the howling part then. See this food? I can bring more food. My mom makes amazing everything—I will feed you, / I will—

PIPER. Okay okay okay fine. I don't need you to feed me. I mean yes I need you to feed me, but I don't need payment. I will help you with Chloe.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you.

PIPER. And audition for the show.

CONSTANTINE. I'm doing what now?

The Chorus changes out the cafeteria as Constantine steps out to talk to the audience.

Over the next week I see Chloe nine more times in the hall.

The Chorus becomes students again, moving quickly, as Constantine moves slowly.

Chloe comes from one direction, smiles at Constantine as she walks past.

She smiles at me every time. I try to think of something to say each time—total blank.

Chloe walks back the other way—Constantine fails.

I forget how to smile. I think I make an expression like this every time I see her—

Constantine makes a weird expression.

And then I try to—

He's interrupted by Raisa emerging from the Chorus.

Chloe walks offstage.

* This can be replaced with "Oh gee thanks I'm *like* a writer nice—"

RAISA. Oh my gosh are you Constantine Wright?

CONSTANTINE. I think so.

RAISA. You are such an inspiration.

CONSTANTINE. Oh. Thanks.

RAISA. Seriously. I mean I don't want to get cancer or anything, but if you can do it, I can do it. That's kind of how I look at it.

CONSTANTINE. Great.

Marquis, a jock, emerges from the Chorus and yells at him.

MARQUIS. Dude! You kicked cancer's ass! YES! WOOO!

He gives Constantine a thumb's up.

(To a friend with him.) That's the guy. That's the guy.

FRIEND. BRO YES!

RAISA. What was it like? Almost dying?

CONSTANTINE. Um... It's kind of hard to describe.

RAISA. The reason I ask is I'm entering a short story contest, and I really wanted to do something about this kid who almost dies. And I thought that you would be an awesome person to talk to, because, you know, you've been there.

He looks for Chloe. She's gone.

CONSTANTINE. You want to use me for a story you're writing?

RAISA. Just as like one source.

CONSTANTINE. No thanks?

RAISA. Rude.

She exits.

Constantine steps out to talk to the audience as the Chorus brings on his room.

CONSTANTINE. The day of the audition. I still do not have a script from Piper. Or any clue whatsoever.

Piper enters.

I think she's flirting with me.

PIPER. How is she flirting with you?

CONSTANTINE. She smiles at me in the hallway.

PIPER. How is that flirting?

CONSTANTINE. It's like a smile—like you don't smile at people you don't like.

PIPER. So everyone she smiles at she's flirting with?

CONSTANTINE. Well no but—she's not not flirting with me.

PIPER. You need help.

CONSTANTINE. I know! That's why you're over here. I need lines.

PIPER. I'm not giving you lines—

CONSTANTINE. How am I supposed to / talk to Chloe if—

PIPER. (*Overlapping.*) You're going to memorize all the lines between / now and five o'clock?

CONSTANTINE. (*Overlapping.*) You said you were writing / out my dialogue—

PIPER. (*Overlapping.*) Hey hey hey shut up. I'm not writing your lines. That's stupid.

CONSTANTINE. You're the writer.

PIPER. You want to do seductive howling? Compliment her on her fangs? No. But I promised I was going to help you and I will. Let's start with your clothes.

CONSTANTINE. Do you think my clothes / are important?

PIPER. (*Mocking him, overlapping.*) "Do I think your clothes are important?" YES.

She puts her hand over his eyes.

Tell me what you are wearing right now.

CONSTANTINE. Jeans.

PIPER. What color is your shirt?

CONSTANTINE. Crap. Um... Blue?

Piper releases him.

Constantine looks. His shirt is not blue.

Dang it.

PIPER. So let me guess about the amount of effort you put into your wardrobe today. Zero.

CONSTANTINE. Right.

PIPER. So my point is this: Step one: give a crap.

CONSTANTINE. So what should I wear?

PIPER. Something better than what you have on.

Piper starts looking through his clothes.

She holds things up to him.

No. No. No. Did your mom buy all these clothes?

Piper keeps finding things.

CONSTANTINE. Who else is going to pick out my clothes?

PIPER. You.

CONSTANTINE. I had leukemia! I wasn't going shopping.

Piper has picked out some pants and a shirt.

PIPER. Here. Put this on it's not horrible. All right while you're doing that let's talk about how you talk to another human being.

Constantine starts changing, as modestly as he can.

CONSTANTINE. I talk to you.

PIPER. Right. How you talk to another human being that isn't me. First: Ask questions. Listen to what she says and ask more questions.

CONSTANTINE. Like... If you could be any animal, what kind of animal would you be?

PIPER. Not stupid questions. *Actual* questions that you would like to know answers to. Find out about her. More than just fantasy hot girl who stirred my loins. What does she like?

CONSTANTINE. Theater.

PIPER. What bands does she listen to? What is her family like? Does she have brothers and sisters? What does she do when she's not visiting hospitals like an erection fairy? How about find out if you actually like her or if you're just a horny dork who's obsessed from afar.

CONSTANTINE. What if it turns out I'm just a horny dork?

Claire enters at that exact moment. Constantine is mid-change.

CLAIRE. Hey sweetie I—oh!

Constantine trips over himself to hide.

CONSTANTINE. Ah!

CLAIRE. Um...what is going on here?

CONSTANTINE. Knock please!

CLAIRE. This is my house!

PIPER. No worries, Mrs. Wright, I'm just helping your son get ready for the audition.

CLAIRE. Audition for what?

PIPER. Dance troupe.

CLAIRE. (*Alarmed.*) Dance troupe?!

CONSTANTINE. (*Finally getting his clothes on.*) No, Mom I'm trying out for the school play.

CLAIRE. Since when are you interested in plays?

CONSTANTINE. Always. Always interested but couldn't do it 'cause of cross-country.

CLAIRE. Dr. Chu said you needed to take it easy.

CONSTANTINE. This is easy.

CLAIRE. What are you supposed to be doing in this play?

CONSTANTINE. I don't know, it's like Shakespeare. It's probably standing around and talking or whatever.

CLAIRE. I don't think this is a good idea. This is supposed to be after school?

CONSTANTINE. Yes, like two hours a day.

PIPER. Mrs. Wright, they need men. I don't know how that relates to your son here, but I've been told.

CLAIRE. Do you have a bathroom plan?

CONSTANTINE. (*Mortified.*) Mom.

CLAIRE. You need a bathroom plan.

CONSTANTINE. I have a bathroom plan.

CLAIRE. Do they know that you aren't supposed to stand up for long periods of time?

CONSTANTINE. I will tell them.

Trent, Constantine's dad, enters.

TRENT. Sounds like there's a party going up here! Hey Piper.

CLAIRE. Did you know Constantine was trying out for the school play?

TRENT. Fantastic.

CLAIRE. No it's not fantastic.

TRENT. It is not fantastic. Why is it not fantastic?

CLAIRE. Am I the only one who listens to the doctor?

PIPER. I'm sure it's going to be fine.

CLAIRE. Are you a doctor?

PIPER. Not practicing.

TRENT. It's the school play. How hard can it be?

CLAIRE. He's supposed to be recuperating.

TRENT. What if he played a rock?

PIPER. I don't know that there are rocks in *Twelfth Night*.

TRENT. Remember his first play? When he was a rock?

CLAIRE. I don't think he's gonna be a rock.

TRENT. He was amazing as a rock. Do you remember it, Pipe?

PIPER. I think I've blocked it out.

TRENT. It was brilliant. He sits there the whole time—you made the rock costume—he's just killing it, totally still, completely believable rock, and then gets up, and he has his line, and he says, "I'M IGNORANT." It was supposed to be "I'm igneous" but he says "I'm ignorant." Total highlight of elementary school. I have it on video.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you. Thank you for that wonderful trip down memory lane.

TRENT. Any time, buddy.

CONSTANTINE. Mom, I promise I will take it easy.

CLAIRE. And know where the bathroom is—

CONSTANTINE. I know where the bathroom is—

CLAIRE. Where is it?

CONSTANTINE. It's near the theater.

CLAIRE. So you don't know.

CONSTANTINE. They have bathrooms! They're nearby! Can I draw a map to where it is? No!

TRENT. Claire, I think it's okay he goes out for the show.

CLAIRE. Tell your director you are still in recovery.

CONSTANTINE. I will.

CLAIRE. That means you are recovering.

CONSTANTINE. I know.

CLAIRE. You come home immediately after rehearsals.

CONSTANTINE. Okay.

Claire relents.

CLAIRE. All right.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you.

TRENT. I wonder if we could make this more embarrassing for Constantine right now.

PIPER. Do you have any baby pictures I could look at while I'm here? Preferably ones where he's dressed up in some kind of humiliating outfit?

CLAIRE. All right, we'll leave you alone to finish...dressing our son.

PIPER. It's only because he's hopeless.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you. Thank you everyone. This has been great.

TRENT. All right let's go.

Trent escorts Claire out.

A moment.

PIPER. I promise you I'm not going to ask about the bathroom plan.

CONSTANTINE. I have a very weak stomach because of chemo. I puke all the time.

PIPER. I know.

CONSTANTINE. I can also get overwhelmed and can pass out if I stand too long.

PIPER. Okay.

CONSTANTINE. I have to have a lot of strategies.

PIPER. Got it.

CONSTANTINE. Maybe I shouldn't tell that to Chloe.

PIPER. Why?

CONSTANTINE. 'Cause she would think I wasn't...you know...worth it—

PIPER. If she thinks that, then she's a terrible person and you don't want to go out with her anyway. There's no point in hiding who you are.

CONSTANTINE. But isn't that what we're doing with clothes?

PIPER. No, we're putting the best version of you forward. That's not lying about who you are, that's revealing who you want to be.

CONSTANTINE. ...I want to be a person that people love.

Piper is touched.

PIPER. People do love you.

CONSTANTINE. No I mean—not for like the whole “he survived leukemia” thing, but for like *me*, you know? I feel like I've been this *project*, you know—there's been a team of forty people keeping me alive and I just—I wish I could go back to who I was before.

PIPER. I don't think it works that way.

CONSTANTINE. And I'm still a project. Sometimes I get so wrapped up in my own stuff—how are you doing?

PIPER. How am I doing?

CONSTANTINE. Yeah.

PIPER. I'm fine.

CONSTANTINE. No I mean like how are you really?

PIPER. It is what it is.

CONSTANTINE. And what is it?

PIPER. ...horrible. I just go in my room and write my stuff and—shut it out.

CONSTANTINE. You know what you should do?

PIPER. Oh you're giving me advice now?

CONSTANTINE. Send it out. Your writing. It is so good—

PIPER. Oh yeah okay—

CONSTANTINE. I am so serious right now. You are like the most talented person I know—

PIPER. You don't know many talented people—

CONSTANTINE. I know you.

PIPER. Yeah okay the world needs werewolf erotica that would solve everything—

CONSTANTINE. So write from your heart, write something personal. Try. Isn't that what you're telling me to do? Try? You should totally get an agent and write books and change lives—

Piper can't even look at him. Constantine gets her attention.

Hey. Hey. Hey. If I can do this crazy audition and chase after the girl of my dreams, you can do this. Promise?

PIPER. Promise.

Lights change.

Constantine steps out to talk to the audience.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* I decided to wear a hat to the audition.

He puts on a hat.

Piper puts a different one on him.

A better hat.

The Chorus sets up the theater. One of them becomes Ms. Kluber, the theater teacher.

The others become the students. They start preparing themselves, doing vocal warm-ups.

MS. KLUBER. Let's engage our instruments.

Everyone starts doing lip trills.

That's right. I want you to feel the energy. I want to let it flow through you. I want you to loosen your bodies. Let the tension flow out of you.

Constantine enters slowly—the actors are moving around him.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* It was like walking into a zoo or preschool. Or a zoo preschool.

MS. KLUBER. That's right, I want you to explore. If you feel the need to make noises, I want you to allow them to pass through your body. But not farting.

Chloe emerges from the scrum of actors, spots Constantine.

CHLOE. You made it!

CONSTANTINE. *(More awkward than clever.)* Hey. I heard you needed—men.

CHLOE. What?

CONSTANTINE. Men. Of which I am one.

Chloe catches on.

CHLOE. Oh! Well actually Ms. Kluber said we're doing gender-blind casting which is amazing.

CONSTANTINE. Yay! Great. I love gender-blind—everything—that's wonderful.

CHLOE. But I am so glad you're here!

CONSTANTINE. Me too.

CHLOE. I need to get ready but you're going to do awesome.

She runs off.

Constantine speaks to the audience.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* Flirting. Definitely. Probably. Maybe.

The Chorus circles up as theater kids—Ms. Kluber barks commands to them and they react instantly.

Constantine tries to follow along, but it's fast, confusing, and weird as heck.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* And then...the weirdness intensifies...

MS. KLUBER. *(To the rest of the actors, continuous.)* Big Face
Little Face
Big Face
Little Face

Big Body
Little Body
Big Body
Little Body

Reach up for the sky—reach—reach for it—reach high high high
high you're almost there you can reach—

Crumple up in a ball! You're a tiny ball you're little little little you're
big you're BIG you're so BIG. You're BIG you're TINY you're BIG
you're TINY! Okay now we're going to walk...like PIGEONS!

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* My stomach was boiling. My
legs felt like they were going to snap. I was sweating in terrible
ways—

CLAIRE. *(Offstage.)* Do they know that you aren't supposed to
stand up for long periods of time?

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* This was so much harder
than being a rock. And then I noticed—

Everyone has stopped to stare at Constantine, waiting.

MS. KLUBER. Whenever you're ready.

Chloe smiles at him.

CHLOE. You're going to do great.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* And I took a leap.

Lights change suddenly.

We're somewhere else.

CHORUS. Part Two.

Piper.

Piper enters as the Chorus changes the set to her house.

PIPER. *(To the audience.)* My turn.

About three years ago I stopped sleeping. Around the time my
brother died. I would try to sleep, but I'd end up just laying there,
with my brain going a million miles an hour. I could never shake
the feeling that something was wrong—some imminent disaster
that I couldn't quite see—

And then the disasters came for real, one after the other.

Keith and Janine, her parents, enter.

KEITH. You're gonna want to sit down for this.

JANINE. We have some bad news—

KEITH. About your brother—

JANINE. About your friend Constantine—

KEITH. About us—

PIPER. *(To the audience.)* Terrible things always happen on the most beautiful days. I found out about Constantine on a fall day so perfect that it felt like it was out of a movie. He collapsed during a cross-country meet. The news about my brother came two years earlier—in the middle of summer, on a night when there were so many fireflies they were their own constellations. And my parents told me they were getting divorced on the first snowfall of my sophomore year. So what do you do with that?

You mostly lose your mind.

Or start writing queer werewolf erotica.*

Or both.

Two Chorus members become Johan and Balthazar—regular teenage boys who are also probably werewolves.

Balthazar is putting himself into the cage.

BALTHAZAR. It's a full moon, Johan. You have to leave me.

JOHAN. I'm not leaving you. I want to see who you really are.

BALTHAZAR. You won't love me—when I'm hairy.

JOHAN. I want you to bite me.

BALTHAZAR. No. I can't do that. It's a curse.

JOHAN. I want to join you. I want to howl with you. No more cages. No more shackles. We can finally be free.

BALTHAZAR. It's too dangerous. My blood runs too hot.

JOHAN. Feel my skin. My blood is as hot as yours. My desire is just as—

JANINE. *(Offstage.)* What are you working on up there?

Piper slams her laptop shut.

PIPER. Nothing!

She steps out to speak to the audience.

* This line may be changed to "werewolf love stories."

Day one of junior year.

*As before, the Chorus creates the school. Moves quickly.
Constantine is moving slowly.*

PIPER. *(To the audience.)* In second period my mother texts me to let me know that my father has stolen the Yeti cooler out of our garage.

Janine enters, on the phone, texting.

JANINE. He just took it. Just walked in and took it.

PIPER. Mom I'm in school.

JANINE. Tell him he can't do that.

Keith enters, opposite, on his phone, texting.

KEITH. Is your mother texting you about the cooler? I BOUGHT that cooler.

JANINE. I don't have a cooler now. That's our best cooler. Did your dad text you?

PIPER. Mom I'm not supposed to be looking at my phone right now.

KEITH. If she wants a cooler, she can buy her own cooler. She never uses it anyway.

JANINE. Can you call your father?

PIPER. No. I hate calling Dad.

JANINE. He's not answering his phone when I call.

KEITH. Tell your mom to quit calling me.

PIPER. Mom, I have to go. I have school.

JANINE. He can't do this. Let him know.

PIPER. I'm not letting him know anything I have school.

JANINE. Do it during lunch.

PIPER. Mom.

The Chorus sets up the cafeteria like before.

A Chorus member becomes a cafeteria worker. Piper has a banana.

CAFETERIA WORKER. I'm sorry you don't have an account.

PIPER. I had one last year—

CAFETERIA WORKER. Yes and it's overdrawn and no one put more money in it over the summer. Your parent has to set it up each year.

PIPER. Right. I know. My mom was going to get to it.

CAFETERIA WORKER. You can text her and she can put money in right now.

PIPER. I could do that, yes.

Piper texts her mom.

Mom can you put more money in my lunch account?

She waits.

I mean she's not like on her phone 24/7 so—

CAFETERIA WORKER. Can you put the banana back please?

PIPER. It's like a literal banana.

CAFETERIA WORKER. Right and when your mom puts more money in your account you can buy that literal banana.

PIPER. Oh wow. It's gonna be like that, huh? We're getting all snarky now?

CAFETERIA WORKER. There's other people in line.

PIPER. It's like fifty cents.

Fine whatever.

Piper puts the banana down.

She plops down next to Constantine.

What did your mom make me for lunch today?

She speaks the audience.

So I did what I always did. Put it into the writing.

Johan and Balthazar enter.

JOHAN. I hunger for you.

BALTHAZAR. No. You cannot. It is forbidden.

JOHAN. I don't care what they say. I will devour you—

BALTHAZAR. I tell you we cannot! The others—

JOHAN. Damn the others, Balthazar!

BALTHAZAR. The price of my love is too steep for you.

JOHAN. I will pay any price.

BALTHAZAR. With what currency, Johan? You have nothing they want. You cannot place a claim on me.

JOHAN. Damn this world and its cruelty!

BALTHAZAR. I must return to my lair. Do not seek to find me.

Balthazar escapes.

JOHAN. I will come with you!

Johan heads after him.

Offstage howling.

Janine enters, on her phone.

Piper approaches.

PIPER. You have all the time in the world to text me about the cooler but you can't write me back about the lunch account?

JANINE. Well—I'm sorry—I didn't get to it.

PIPER. I'm sitting there like an idiot waiting / for you—

JANINE. I am not on your beck and call—

PIPER. You were supposed to set up the lunch account. You had / all summer to—

JANINE. I've been a little busy, all right? You are perfectly capable of making your own lunch.

PIPER. With what food?

JANINE. Why don't you ask your father to put money in your account? Maybe he should be the one dealing with some of this—
In the meantime, you can tell him to bring our cooler / back—

PIPER. Oh my God can you get off the cooler for five seconds?

JANINE. It's important.

PIPER. You don't use the cooler.

JANINE. So you're on his side.

PIPER. I am on no one's side! I am trying to eat lunch. That's all I want to do—I want food in the house, I want a ride to school in the morning—I just want normal.

JANINE. Normal left a while ago.

PIPER. Yeah well I would like it back please.

JANINE. Sometimes you don't get what you want. Did your dad tell you the new schedule?

PIPER. There's a new schedule?

JANINE. He was supposed to explain it to you.

PIPER. No he was too busy whining about the cooler.

JANINE. So he did call you.

PIPER. He texted me.

JANINE. Uh huh.

PIPER. What is the new schedule?

JANINE. It's a fifty-fifty—so you're here Sunday Monday Tuesday, then you're over there Wednesday through Friday—and we alternate Saturdays.

PIPER. I go back and forth in the middle of the week?

JANINE. That's what the judge said.

PIPER. Ugh.

JANINE. It's ridiculous, I know. He's only doing it to hurt me.

PIPER. I don't—I don't think that's it—

JANINE. He's just trying to separate us. Just coming back here and taking things—that's all he does.

PIPER. Mom.

JANINE. You know he has a girlfriend?

PIPER. Mom I don't want to talk about this.

JANINE. He hasn't told you?

PIPER. I don't want to talk about it.

JANINE. So he has told you.

PIPER. Oh my God this is so inappropriate right now.

JANINE. He's the one who's being inappropriate.

Piper escapes, speaks to the audience.

PIPER. *(To the audience.)* So it was like that. The only place to escape was my room or—

Constantine enters, texting.

CONSTANTINE. Are you gonna come help me with this?

PIPER. Absolutely.

Lights shift.

Piper rejoins Constantine, near the end of their previous scene together.

CONSTANTINE. You know what you should do?

PIPER. Oh you're giving me advice now?

CONSTANTINE. Send it out. Your writing. It is so good—

PIPER. Oh yeah okay—

CONSTANTINE. I am so serious right now. You are like the most talented person I know—

PIPER. You don't know many talented people—

CONSTANTINE. I know you.

PIPER. Yeah okay the world needs queer werewolf erotica that would solve everything—

CONSTANTINE. So write from your heart, write something personal. Try. Isn't that what you're telling me to do? Try? You should totally get an agent and write books and change lives—

Piper can't even look at him. Constantine gets her attention.

Hey. Hey. Hey. If I can do this crazy audition and chase after the girl of my dreams, you can do this. Right?

PIPER. At least your dream has a chance of succeeding.

CONSTANTINE. I *love* what you write—I laughed so hard I was probably coughing up blood—

PIPER. Maybe it wasn't supposed to be funny—

CONSTANTINE. And in the sad parts I was like weeping—

PIPER. Maybe those were supposed to be the funny parts.

CONSTANTINE. Why are you doing that?

PIPER. Doing what?

CONSTANTINE. Beating yourself up?

Piper can't answer.

I know that if I was talking about myself like that you would kick my ass.

PIPER. I'm just being realistic—

CONSTANTINE. What is the point of that?

PIPER. So I don't like—get my hopes up—

CONSTANTINE. Uh-huh—

PIPER. I mean it's easy for you—things work out for you.

CONSTANTINE. Things work out for me?

PIPER. You know what I mean.

CONSTANTINE. I got cancer at fifteen.

PIPER. All right yeah okay fair—

CONSTANTINE. I literally have the worst luck of anyone I know—

PIPER. But...like...everything is not great in my life.

CONSTANTINE. So write about that.

PIPER. That's hard.

CONSTANTINE. So? You can do it. I mean it, Piper. You know how much I looked forward to reading your stories? All those crazy cliffhangers? I was always like, "what's gonna happen next?" I was like hooked. You are so amazing and sometimes I think you don't know it.

PIPER. ...Thanks.

CONSTANTINE. So for the audition am I wearing a hat or not?

She steps out.

PIPER. I went home. I thought about what he said.

I tried to write about my brother. He was eight years older than me. I barely knew him before...before things went wrong.

She starts typing.

Dear Literary Agent, my name is Piper Lomax and I'm writing to you about my novel, which is about a boy who struggles with addiction and...

She starts over.

A boy—who forgets his little sister—

She starts over.

A boy—who dies—

She starts over.

A boy—who I don't know very well—

She starts over.

A boy—who is probably a werewolf—A boy...who is diagnosed with leukemia at age fifteen. Who has a good heart. Who is best friends with a girl who is so messed up she can't sleep at night.

Constantine enters, texting.

CONSTANTINE. I GOT IN!

PIPER. What?!

CONSTANTINE. I am a theater GOD! I have a huge part.

PIPER. That is amazing!

CONSTANTINE. At first I was like I can't do this—also we had to do this thing where we pretended to be pigeons and I totally bombed that part—but then, like, I calmed down, and I just...did it.

PIPER. I'm so happy for you.

CONSTANTINE. And Chloe was there? Incredible smile. Like a legit smile. One hundred percent flirting. Almost certain. We even talked for like—moments.

PIPER. Wow. Moments.

CONSTANTINE. She was super encouraging.

PIPER. Great. That's great.

CONSTANTINE. Everyone was really nice.

PIPER. Fantastic. How was your bathroom plan?

CONSTANTINE. Executed to perfection. Nobody even knew I was not one hundred percent. My feet were absolutely killing me—I was standing up at one point and basically every joint in my body was on fire. Completely worth it. Probably gonna die doing this but totally worth it.

PIPER. You're probably not gonna die from Shakespeare.

CONSTANTINE. Tons of people die from Shakespeare. It's a real problem.

PIPER. Hey I um—I sent a letter to an agent.

CONSTANTINE. For real?

PIPER. Like ten agents, actually. That's what you're supposed to do.

CONSTANTINE. You're gonna have like ten offers.

PIPER. I don't know about that but—

CONSTANTINE. HEY. No. Positive energy. You are going to destroy that getting an agent thing.

PIPER. All right.

CONSTANTINE. I didn't think I was gonna get cast, right?

PIPER. It was preordained you were gonna get cast 'cause you're supposedly a man.

CONSTANTINE. Guess what? That didn't even help me. Gender-blind casting and I still got in. So you can do the same thing with your like agents, right?

PIPER. Yeah.

CONSTANTINE. Piperrrrr.

PIPER. I know.

CONSTANTINE. You got this. You are like Katniss. You are like the Katniss Everdeen of werewolf erotica.

PIPER. I didn't send in the werewolf erotica. Something new.

CONSTANTINE. Great.

PIPER. I figured I needed something with less howling.

CONSTANTINE. That's a major disappointment but I'm sure it's amazing.

PIPER. Thank you for...kicking me in the butt.

CONSTANTINE. What are friends for? All right—so—when is our next session?

PIPER. What next session?

CONSTANTINE. Our next Chloe session.

PIPER. Oh. Um...I thought you were already in since she smiled at you at least twice now. She's probably secretly photoshopping your face into wedding photos.

CONSTANTINE. No I absolutely need your help. I am useless. She smiles at me and then I'm like uuuhhhhh—terrible. I am the dumbest person alive near her. Now that I'm in the show I need to strategize.

PIPER. Um...sure.

CONSTANTINE. You are the best I love you so much. There's this get-together thing at Aubrey's on Friday night—we should totally go over things before then—

PIPER. Yeah. Well I gotta be at my dad's this weekend—

CONSTANTINE. Oh that sucks—

PIPER. Yeah.

CONSTANTINE. Well maybe we could um get together at school.

PIPER. Okay.

CONSTANTINE. Cool. Hey what's your new book about? The one you're sending to agents?

PIPER. Oh um—it's a love story I think.

CONSTANTINE. Of course.

Lights change.

The Chorus sets up Keith's apartment.

PIPER. *(To the audience.)* My dad lives in one of those apartment complexes where there's a gate in front of it. Maybe the gate is to keep people in instead of keeping people out. He's bought all-new furniture, tried to cook dinner, tries to do things where it's normal, but nothing is normal. Nothing will ever be normal again.

KEITH. Hey Pipe-o. How's school going?

PIPER. It's fine.

KEITH. Uh huh. Just fine, or like...?

PIPER. Like what?

KEITH. How are your classes going?

PIPER. Fine.

KEITH. Cool.

PIPER. Yup. *(To the audience.)* That's how it is most nights. Until Friday night.

KEITH. So...um...I need to explain something to you.

PIPER. Denise is moving in?

KEITH. What?

PIPER. Your girlfriend is moving in.

KEITH. Where did you / hear that?

PIPER. Mom told me.

KEITH. No. She's not moving in. We're not that serious.

PIPER. Oh. I thought / that—

KEITH. No this isn't about her. Um...I wanted to prepare you for something. So—your mom and I...talked, and we came to an agreement...she's gonna have to sell the house.

Piper takes a moment.

PIPER. What?

KEITH. As soon as possible.

PIPER. Why?

KEITH. Well um...when people get divorced they have to split up their assets, it's a lot of numbers, and one of the biggest assets is the house, so—

PIPER. You're making me move my junior year?

KEITH. I'm not making you move, but your mom has to sell / the house and—

PIPER. Well we can't live in it after she sells it.

KEITH. Your mom's gonna have to find a new place.

PIPER. Mom can't even pack a lunch, Dad.

KEITH. Well, she's gonna need to get her stuff together and—

PIPER. Are you kidding me?

KEITH. No. This is what was decided / in the—

PIPER. Who decided?

KEITH. Me and your mother and the mediator—

PIPER. She agreed to this?!

KEITH. Sweetie, there's not really another way to split up the assets—

PIPER. Oh my God are you some kinda businessman now? Listen to you—assets and money and—

KEITH. That's what divorce is.

PIPER. What about my college money? Is that an *asset* for you guys to fight over?

Keith takes a moment.

KEITH. This isn't how I wanted to do this.

PIPER. Do what.

KEITH. I just want to have a nice weekend / with you—

PIPER. What.

KEITH. Look. Neither of us have a lot of money—we don't have family that's giving us money—and the lawyers—

PIPER. What are you talking about?

KEITH. There's not a lot of money for you to go to college—

PIPER. Define "not a lot."

KEITH. You know we spent a lot of money on treatment for your brother—

PIPER. Don't bring him into it. How much is there?

KEITH. I think about eighteen hundred dollars.

PIPER. For college.

KEITH. Yeah.

PIPER. Eighteen *hundred* dollars—for college.

KEITH. Right.

PIPER. I know for a fact that grandma gave me / two thousand to—

KEITH. I owe you some money.

PIPER. You took money *out* to—?

KEITH. Listen to me—the retainer for the lawyer—

PIPER. Are you telling me you robbed my college savings to pay for your divorce lawyer?!

KEITH. Sweetie—

PIPER. Don't touch me!

KEITH. Look—

PIPER. And now you're like Mom has to sell the house and you're going to divvy that up because it's *assets* and I have to move and I have no college savings. You couldn't wait two years to do this?! You had to blow everything up right now?!

KEITH. I'm sorry.

PIPER. Mom is a disaster. She cries all the time—

KEITH. I know that, but—

PIPER. All the time. I mean she barely makes it out the door in the morning. Neither of us sleep. I wasn't even worried about this, I was worried about other stuff and now—oh my God oh my God what am I gonna do what are we gonna do?

KEITH. You're going to be okay.

PIPER. Are you serious right now?!

KEITH. We're gonna get through this—

PIPER. We?! Who is we?!

The Chorus changes the scene.

(To the audience.) I left. I walk to my mom's house. It's a beautiful night. Full moon. The air is so clear and perfect—I imagine somewhere there are werewolves falling in love.

Howling offstage.

There's this flock of little birds that lives near my house. They seem to congregate in a bush. They're fat little finches, round and sweet-looking, always chirping. And whenever I go near them they fly up together, like a cloud, and they regather somewhere else. I want to be one of those birds. Living together in a big group, friends, loving each other, caring for each other. When I was little there were four of us, and it was noisy and bright and wonderful. And now, wherever I go, there's an emptiness where my brother used to be, there's a chasm where my parents were—everyone is in their own room, with their earbuds in, and it's so so empty and I am so so alone.

And I think about the person who makes me feel not alone.

She takes out her phone, texts.

You home yet?

She waits.

I'm walking home can I come over?

She waits.

Lights up on Constantine and Chloe, walking together.

They stop in front of Constantine's house.

(To the audience.) And I see them.

Chloe kisses Constantine.

And I remember—terrible things always happen on the most beautiful days.

Lights fade.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

CHORUS. Part Three.

Constantine.

The Chorus sets up Constantine's room.

He speaks to the audience.

CONSTANTINE. The voice message I leave for Piper is the picture of restraint. *(Into phone.)* AAAAAAAAAAAHHHH PIPER AHHHH-HHHHHH! IT HAS HAPPENED! AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH! Call me back. This is Constantine, by the way.

He speaks to the audience again.

I don't sleep the night after the "incident," as I am beginning to refer to it.

Piper enters.

PIPER. Hey.

CONSTANTINE. Did you get my message?

Piper holds up her phone and plays the message.

(Recorded.) AAAAAAAAAAAHHHH PIPER AHHHHHHHHHHH! IT HAS HAPPENED! AAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH! Call me back. This is Constantine, by the way.

PIPER. Yeah I got it.

CONSTANTINE. Okay so—you want to know what happened?

PIPER. I think I'm going to find out.

CONSTANTINE. First of all, like dream come true right? Amazing. Everything. I'm probably doing irreparable harm to my recovery right now just because of the adrenaline but it is WORTH IT. All right: details.

PIPER. You kissed her.

CONSTANTINE. She kissed me. THREE TIMES. But they were all sort of at the same time so I don't know if that qualifies as three kisses or one kiss—I mean it was all like in one sequence of kisses, so I'm not sure just how many there were. But immediately after the first kiss she wasn't like, "that was terrible," so I'm guessing that it

was acceptable. All right all right here's how it went down: We were at Aubrey's.

The Chorus sets up Aubrey's living room.

The theater kids are lounging.

Okay, I'm there—I got the hat on—

PIPER. Your phone dies—

CONSTANTINE. Yes my phone dies—how did you know that?

PIPER. I tried to call you.

CONSTANTINE. Right. Yeah. It died later, but anyway we're at Aubrey's—and I'm, you know, fitting in...

Constantine adjusts his hat and stands apart from the other theater kids. They are all laughing and talking with each other.

He waves sheepishly.

These snacks...are great.

He has a snack.

The theater kids stare at him, then go back to talking to each other.

Just killing it. And then I hear two people talking.

Victoria and Bryce step forward, right in front of Constantine.

VICTORIA. You totally should've been Orsino.

BRYCE. Yeah well—we all know why Kluber picked Constantine Wright.

VICTORIA. He just walks in and gets a lead—

BRYCE. Think about it: Cancer survivor stars in high school play. They're gonna do an article on it in the paper. It's like a financial decision. It doesn't matter if he sucks or not.

Chloe approaches them.

CHLOE. He's right here, Bryce.

CONSTANTINE. (*Waving, awkward.*) Hey.

BRYCE. Oh. You should let people know when you're behind them.

CHLOE. Or maybe you shouldn't talk crap about people.

VICTORIA. Bryce was just talking, Chloe. You don't have to take it personal.

CHLOE. You guys are odious.

They stare at her blankly, not knowing what the word means.

It's a Shakespeare word, look it up. *(To Constantine.)* Come on, let's go.

CONSTANTINE. Where are we going?

CHLOE. We're leaving. It's a little too obnoxious here.

CONSTANTINE. Okay.

He calls out.

Tell your mom thanks for the snacks!

He grabs some more as they leave.

CHLOE. *(As they're leaving.)* That's right, take them all, you get all the snacks.

The Chorus changes the scene.

Constantine talks to Piper as the Chorus sets up a street. Stars.

CONSTANTINE. We walked out onto the middle of the street. It was such a beautiful night.

CHLOE. I'm so sorry about that.

CONSTANTINE. It's all right. People say stupid stuff around me.

CHLOE. You weren't cast for a publicity stunt. I saw your audition—it was really good.

CONSTANTINE. Thanks. I was really sweating the pigeon thing.

CHLOE. That part was horrible. No commitment to the role.

CONSTANTINE. Well it's hard to make my head / bounce like—

CHLOE. I'm kidding! You were an amazing pigeon. Brilliant work.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you.

CHLOE. Ugh. I hate it when people pretend to be nice to your face and then like stab you in the back.

CONSTANTINE. To be fair, I don't think either of them were pretending to be nice to my face.

CHLOE. Then they're stupid. They are jerks. They are the scum of the earth. It's not okay.

CONSTANTINE. It is what it is—

CHLOE. It's not okay. You ever want to just shout at the top of your lungs?

CONSTANTINE. Sure.

CHLOE. You should do it.

CONSTANTINE. Right now?

CHLOE. Yeah. Come on. It's not okay!

CONSTANTINE. Is that what I'm supposed to shout?

CHLOE. Whatever you want.

CONSTANTINE. Okay.

He takes a breath.

BURRITO!

CHLOE. Burrito?

CONSTANTINE. That's what popped into my head.

CHLOE. You have a chance to shout something out to the world, to express yourself, to make a statement / about your existence—

CONSTANTINE. (*Overlapping, underneath.*) That is a lot of pressure—

CHLOE. And the word “burrito” is what you came up with?

CONSTANTINE. You want me to try again?

CHLOE. Yeah.

Constantine thinks about it—

Takes another breath.

CONSTANTINE. (*Even louder than before.*) **BURRITO!**

Dogs start barking—

CHLOE. **BURRITO!**

CONSTANTINE. BURRRRRR-ITTTTTTTTOOOOO!

CHLOE. (*Howling.*) BURRRRRRRR-ITTTTTTTTOOOOO!

OFFSTAGE VOICE. (*Yelling.*) It's not necessary to scream!

CHLOE. SOMETIMES IT IS NECESSARY TO SCREAM!

OFFSTAGE VOICE. (*Yelling.*) PEOPLE ARE TRYING TO SLEEP!

CHLOE. IT'S BARELY TEN O'CLOCK YOU HAVE AN UNREASONABLE BEDTIME!

OFFSTAGE VOICE. (*Yelling.*) THAT'S NOT FOR YOU TO DECIDE!

SECOND OFFSTAGE VOICE. (*Yelling.*) SHUT UP!

OFFSTAGE VOICE. (*Yelling.*) YOU SHUT UP!

SECOND OFFSTAGE VOICE. (*Yelling.*) COME OVER HERE AND MAKE ME!

CONSTANTINE. Um...maybe we should get out of here?

CHLOE. Come on!

Chloe grabs Constantine's hand and runs.

They run offstage.

Music.

Constantine and Chloe run in. Chloe is laughing.

Constantine is completely out of breath.

That was amazing!

Constantine has his hands on his knees, gasping for breath.

You okay?

CONSTANTINE. Hold on.

He doubles over.

CHLOE. Do you need some water or something?

Constantine sits on the ground.

CONSTANTINE. I'm okay. I'm all right. I just can't um...I can't run very far.

CHLOE. Oh. I'm sorry I didn't know—

CONSTANTINE. I didn't tell you.

CHLOE. Are you okay to walk?

CONSTANTINE. (*Still out of breath, not moving.*) Yeah. Sure of course.

CHLOE. I can walk you home.

CONSTANTINE. I should walk you home.

CHLOE. Yeah well I live farther away. You're only like a mile.

CONSTANTINE. You know where I live?

CHLOE. Your address was on the petition thing.

CONSTANTINE. You remembered my address.

CHLOE. Yeah I guess.

CONSTANTINE. Cool.

Constantine struggles to get up. He's having trouble.

CHLOE. Maybe we should get a car. I've got Uber for emergencies.

CONSTANTINE. No I'm okay. I can do it.

He gets up.

CHLOE. You sure?

CONSTANTINE. I guess the braying at the moon took a lot out of me.

He chuckles.

CHLOE. What?

CONSTANTINE. You know Piper? She writes these stories about werewolves and...

CHLOE. Oh.

CONSTANTINE. They're amazing. And really like gloriously filthy. So like the braying at the moon thing...made me think of... something she would do. There would be a lot of werewolf-on-werewolf action after that.

CHLOE. Sounds brilliant.

They walk a moment. Constantine is slow.

CONSTANTINE. So um... If you were an animal, what kind of animal would you be?

CHLOE. What?

CONSTANTINE. Never mind.

CHLOE. What kind of animal would I be?

CONSTANTINE. I'm sorry that was a stupid question—

CHLOE. Kind of random—

CONSTANTINE. Um...so uh...what is your family like?

CHLOE. My family?

CONSTANTINE. You have a family, right?

CHLOE. No I'm an orphan. I spend my free time hunting criminals in a rubber suit.

CONSTANTINE. Oh I thought / your dad—

CHLOE. I'm kidding. My dad is a firefighter.

CONSTANTINE. What's your mom do?

CHLOE. Nothing.

CONSTANTINE. She stays at home?

CHLOE. She's dead.

CONSTANTINE. Oh—I'm sorry. What did she die of?

CHLOE. Cancer.

Constantine nods.

That's why my dad helps out—

CONSTANTINE. Oh. Um... How long ago did she die?

CHLOE. Five years.

CONSTANTINE. That sucks.

CHLOE. Yeah so—I mean—you understand what it's like—cancer—

CONSTANTINE. Yeah.

CHLOE. Sorry I didn't mean to bring us down—

CONSTANTINE. No I asked—

CHLOE. It's just such a massive thing, you know? To have your world upended? And then it remains this massive thing even after... after it's over. I mean I didn't even understand what was happening, not really, I was too young. So...so you bray at the moon.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* We talked all the way home. I tried to keep up with her—the radiation from the chemo gave me something called peripheral neuropathy—the nerve endings in my feet and hands were fried—it means you can have shooting pain in your fingers and toes, or they can go numb at awkward moments—

He stumbles.

Like when you're walking with a girl. And you can't put one foot in front of the other. Somehow we made it to my house.

Chloe and Constantine walk in—the same spot Piper saw them at the end of Act One.

CHLOE. Con-Stan-Tine. I mean you've got a real name, you know? You have to really want to say it. *Con-Stan-Tine*. That takes effort.

CONSTANTINE. My name is weird. I'm named after like the least cool Roman emperor.

CHLOE. I'm named after the worst Kardashian.

CONSTANTINE. Is there a worst Kardashian?

CHLOE. Yes. And I'm named after her.

CONSTANTINE. Do you know what the nicknames are for Constantine? In grade school, I was called Connie. Not great. In middle school they mixed that up to Constance, which was worse.

CHLOE. I like Constance.

CONSTANTINE. There's also Teeny. Not a great nickname.

CHLOE. What if it was ironic? You know like all those really big guys named Tiny?

CONSTANTINE. Like from 1950s gangster movies or something?

CHLOE. There are big guys named Tiny. They have like pet chickens or small dogs or something.

CONSTANTINE. Outside of the movies, how many guys named Tiny have you met?

CHLOE. A few.

CONSTANTINE. Liar.

CHLOE. You're calling me a liar?

CONSTANTINE. I want to look in your phone and see any contacts named Tiny.

CHLOE. I didn't get their numbers. It was more just like passing in the dark—

CONSTANTINE. Oh that seems likely.

CHLOE. Definitely happened. They would whisper to me in the dark—my name is Tiny, just so you know.

CONSTANTINE. How many men are you whispering to in the dark?

CHLOE. Quite a few. It's a hobby.

CONSTANTINE. Me too, honestly.

CHLOE. I figured. I always thought you were a whispering in the night kind of person.

CONSTANTINE. Oh so you were thinking about me?

CHLOE. (*Sarcastic, flirty.*) All the time. Almost constant. Every page in my diary. And you've been thinking about me?

CONSTANTINE. Um...yes?

CHLOE. Really?

CONSTANTINE. Well I mean...we are in a few scenes together.

CHLOE. We are. There's a lot of lines we have to memorize.

CONSTANTINE. We do. It's very difficult mentally.

CHLOE. All the Shakespeare.

CONSTANTINE. Right. Right. The Shakespeare. The... Can I ask you another question? I've been told I should ask questions.

CHLOE. Who is telling you to ask questions?

CONSTANTINE. I guess you could call her my mentor.

CHLOE. Piper. She told you to ask questions?

CONSTANTINE. I feel like I've been captured by the FBI and am surrendering information now.

CHLOE. You would be a terrible spy.

CONSTANTINE. The worst.

CHLOE. So Piper—told you to ask me questions?

CONSTANTINE. Yes?

CHLOE. And why were you supposed to do that?

CONSTANTINE. Um...

CHLOE. (*Flirty.*) Oh now we're getting somewhere.

CONSTANTINE. Can I ask my question?

CHLOE. You've asked like nine questions trying to ask this question.

CONSTANTINE. Right. This is a big question though.

CHLOE. I guess I have to have a big answer.

CONSTANTINE. Can I kiss you?

Would you like it if I kissed you?

Should I try to kiss you?

If I kissed you, would you appreciate it?

She kisses him.

The scene changes.

PIPER. That's awesome. That's great—yeah.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you. I mean it—I never would've thought of asking questions if it wasn't for you.

Piper laughs.

Seriously.

PIPER. No worries. I'm happy for you.

CONSTANTINE. So why did you want to come over Friday night?

PIPER. Huh?

CONSTANTINE. The texts you sent me. I got 'em when my phone came back to life.

PIPER. Oh. Um...it's cool.

CONSTANTINE. Everything all right?

PIPER. Of course.

The scene changes.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* My relationship with Chloe mostly existed in theater rehearsal. Which was awesome.

The Chorus sets up the rehearsal area, appearing as theater people.

MS. KLUBER. Big face

Little face

Big face

Little face

Everyone freezes on little face.

CONSTANTINE. To be honest, I had no idea what was going on

most of the time because it was all theater weirdness except...I got to hang out with Chloe.

MS. KLUBER. You have a line.

CONSTANTINE. If music be the food of love, play on!

Everyone turns to look at him.

No idea what that means.

Music begins. Something pop and highly energetic, like the Beach Boys "So Happy Together."

The Chorus begins circling around Chloe and Constantine, alternating between "big face" and "little face"—perhaps they quietly chant that in the background.

Constantine and Chloe take hands.

Ms. Kluber comes up behind Chloe.

MS. KLUBER. Okay you are in love with him. Everything about him. He's a snack. He's a big snack.

CHLOE. Got it.

CONSTANTINE. What about me?

MS. KLUBER. You are intrigued, but he's also a boy.

CONSTANTINE. I can't love boys?

MS. KLUBER. In Shakespeare's time, this role was played by a boy dressed up as a girl dressed up as a boy. Totally clear. And you're obsessed with somebody else anyway.

Victoria steps out of the Chorus.

But you're more in love with the idea of her than the reality of her.

The Chorus circles—and moves Chloe and Constantine to different positions.

CHORUS. Big face

Little face

Big face

Little face

CHLOE. I am all the daughters of my father's house
And all the sons too.

CONSTANTINE. Sweet.

* See note on songs/recordings at the back of this volume.

MS. KLUBER. That's not your line!

CONSTANTINE. But died thy sister of her love?

MS. KLUBER. That's still not your line!

The Chorus circles and moves them again.

CHORUS. Big face

Little face

Big face

Little face

CHLOE. I'm just a girl—standing in front of a guy—while I'm dressed like a guy—who is helping that guy seduce another girl—who is in love with me because I'm dressed like a guy—who happens to mistake me for my twin brother because Shakespeare doesn't understand twins.

MS. KLUBER. Can we stick to the actual lines please?

The Chorus circles again and moves them again.

CHORUS. Big face

Little face

Big face

Little face

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* It's day seventeen of my relationship with Chloe when it happens.

The music stops abruptly.

The Chorus splits chaotically, everyone moving in different directions.

I felt it in my stomach first, and then all of a sudden I was sweating. I thought of my bathroom plan. I knew where the nearest bathroom was—I could make it to the nearest bathroom—

The Chorus continues to swirl around him—

Dark spots flared in front of my eyes. I didn't know where I was—I went to the bathroom and there were—

Tripp and Spiro are in there.

TRIPP. And then I was like, bro—nooooo...

SPIRO. Oh man.

TRIPP. Like what are you doing, you know? He's in there, and he's got like the thing, and he's doing the thing—

SPIRO. Bro, shut up.

TRIPP. (*To Constantine.*) Yo my man.

SPIRO. You okay?

CONSTANTINE. What?

SPIRO. You okay you look—

CONSTANTINE. I'm...

He passes out.

Spiro and Tripp look at him.

TRIPP. That's Constantine Wright.

SPIRO. Bro, I know that.

TRIPP. Are you okay bro?

No response from Constantine.

SPIRO. Did he just like die?

TRIPP. No you can't—people don't die like that.

SPIRO. People totally drop dead, what are you talking about?

TRIPP. Yo Connie! Connie!

Tripp gets down to check him.

SPIRO. Is he dead?

TRIPP. Nah bro he's breathing.

SPIRO. How do you know?

TRIPP. 'Cause I can figure it out, dingus.

SPIRO. I think we should call somebody.

Tripp and Spiro help Constantine to his feet.

CONSTANTINE. (*To the audience.*) My mom takes me to the hospital. I ride in the back, like when I was a little kid. I'm still in and out. My mom is saying something but I can't understand what it is.

CLAIRE. You can do this...you can do this...you can be strong... you're going to be okay—you did this before, you can do it again. It's going to be okay—it's going to be okay—

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* And then I realize—she's talking to herself.

The Chorus sets up the hospital room from the first scene.

Holds up the curtains.

There are flowers.

Piper enters.

PIPER. Is this the cool person wing of the hospital?

CONSTANTINE. I must be in the wrong place then.

PIPER. No I mean for me.

CONSTANTINE. You're planning on checking in?

PIPER. No I just need to maintain a certain aura wherever I am.

CONSTANTINE. Oh I get it. Like VIP.

PIPER. Totally VIP. You okay?

CONSTANTINE. I almost hit a urinal when I passed out. In front of two bros.

PIPER. That sounds amazing.

CONSTANTINE. Yeah. Definite highlight of the year so far.

PIPER. Are you okay though?

CONSTANTINE. Yes. Still in remission. They took my blood. I'm normal.

PIPER. I wouldn't go that far.

CONSTANTINE. They're just keeping me for observation 'cause my blood pressure's too low. I should go home tomorrow.

PIPER. That's so great. I freaked out when I got your text.

CONSTANTINE. Are you okay? You haven't been in school.

PIPER. Nah it's cool I'm just pretending to have Covid.

CONSTANTINE. Oh. Nice. I'm sure glad you're here in the hospital breathing on me then.

PIPER. So did your girlfriend come to see you?

He laughs.

CONSTANTINE. Why do you ask?

PIPER. I'm just wondering.

CONSTANTINE. I didn't tell her.

PIPER. You didn't tell her you were in the hospital?

CONSTANTINE. No.

Piper gives him a look.

What?

PIPER. Okay.

CONSTANTINE. No, what?

PIPER. I mean like you can do whatever you want.

CONSTANTINE. Yeah.

PIPER. It just seems like...she might be curious about where you are.

CONSTANTINE. It's not a big deal.

PIPER. *Now* you know it's not a big deal.

CONSTANTINE. Well there was no point freaking her out by telling her I was going to the ER.

PIPER. Yeah 'cause when you're going to the hospital, the last thing you want is anyone being concerned about it.

CONSTANTINE. What is your problem?

PIPER. I just think it's messed up that you didn't tell her.

CONSTANTINE. You know what? When you have leukemia, you can decide how you want to tell people.

PIPER. All right.

CONSTANTINE. I didn't want to bother her.

PIPER. Okay sure.

CONSTANTINE. Can you lay off?

PIPER. You don't have to do this thing where you pretend that everything's fine—

CONSTANTINE. Everything *is* fine—

PIPER. Does she know that you're in pain, does she know that you can't stand up for a long time, does she even know you passed / out in the bathroom?

CONSTANTINE. Do you know what it's like to be the cancer kid? People look at me with pity. All the time. I can feel their eyes on me—they see my hair or they see my eyes and I can just sense this

wave of pity rolling off them—nothing sadder than a teenager with cancer. That's all day, every day. I don't even have cancer anymore but I have to explain it over and over and over again—maybe, just maybe, I'd like a chance to *not* be that for a little while—just have a normal relationship where people aren't worried if I'm going to be dead in a year—I am sick of being sick. I am sick of being treated like I'm made out of glass or I'm some wounded bird in need of healing. Just let me have a day where nobody is asking how I'm doing, or poking me with a needle, or pulling out my blood—just a day to be normal like everyone else. Can you give me that?

PIPER. Okay.

CONSTANTINE. Thank you.

PIPER. But there's a line between wanting to be normal and *lying* to everyone about being normal.

Lights change.

Trent enters, holding some flowers.

TRENT. Hey Bud.

CONSTANTINE. Hey Dad.

TRENT. Too much acting, huh?

CONSTANTINE. Acting?

TRENT. In the show.

CONSTANTINE. I don't think Shakespeare tried to kill me.

TRENT. Maybe you need to listen to your mother and take it easy.

CONSTANTINE. No thanks.

TRENT. Just pull it back a bit. Rest here and there. Take time for yourself.

CONSTANTINE. Uh-huh.

TRENT. I mean look, I want to see you in this show, but you can't kill yourself to do it.

CONSTANTINE. I'm not trying to do that.

TRENT. All right. Brought you some flowers.

CONSTANTINE. Fantastic.

Trent settles in.

TRENT. You know I was in a show when I was a kid. Oh God it was different then. I mean—people were *mean*.

CONSTANTINE. I think people are still mean.

TRENT. If I had gotten leukemia in middle school, kids would've thrown a party. I mean it. They would have made flyers. Now everybody cares and is nice to you. Let me put it this way: I got cut from stuff. I got cut from the junior junior varsity soccer team in ninth grade. They cut me. They said there wasn't enough room on the bus for me. I weighed like eighty pounds and I was the shape of a Twizzler, I did not take up a lot of space! I could've fit underneath the seats in the bus, but no, they did not have enough space for me. Basically they said, "Your services will not be needed on this B team freshman soccer squad."

CONSTANTINE. I'm not sure if this is comforting or not.

TRENT. When I was in T-ball as a kid, I struck out. Think about that. They called you out and sent you back to the bench in tears. That's what life was like. I mean all these people who are telling you these are the best years of your life are *liars*. These are the worst years of your life. It definitely gets better after this.

CONSTANTINE. Thanks.

TRENT. Growing up sucks.

CONSTANTINE. The alternative is worse.

TRENT. Yeah. Yeah it is...aw jeez bud I wanted things to be easier for you. I had a hard time of it growing up—I really did, and I thought—you know...if there's one thing I can do, I can make it better for my kid. I promised it would be easier. And then...

He gestures around.

Then it wasn't so easy, was it?

CONSTANTINE. It's okay.

TRENT. You know, that first house we had—on Clover, you probably don't remember it. I think we moved when you were three. Neither me or your mom was making much money, but we were able to get this little dinky house... You know sometimes those cheap places are cheap for a reason. And I knew that there was...I knew it was too close to an old industrial area...I have spent

so much time looking to see if there was a cancer cluster in that area, 'cause I think, what if we hadn't moved there? What if I hadn't chosen to live in that house? They tell you in therapy that you can't think that way, because there's no way to know, you know? But I tried to make things easier and maybe I made them so much harder.

He takes a moment.

Sometimes—people will make you promises they can't keep.

Lights change.

The Chorus removes the hospital room.

Constantine steps out to talk to the audience.

CONSTANTINE. *(To the audience.)* I thought about what Piper said. What my dad said. Maybe I'd spent so much time pretending to be okay I forgot to actually be myself? Maybe my way of dealing with almost dying was just to lock myself in a box and stop thinking about it. Maybe that's not the right way to be.

The Chorus sets up the school.

Constantine stands in the middle of the students as everyone rushes around him again.

Maybe I needed to tell Chloe the truth.

Chloe emerges from the crowd.

The bell rings.

CONSTANTINE. I'm sorry I didn't text you last night.

CHLOE. No worries.

CONSTANTINE. Did you wonder why I wasn't in rehearsal?

CHLOE. I figured you were just sick.

Constantine takes a moment.

Is everything cool?

CONSTANTINE. I'm trying to figure out how to say this.

CHLOE. What's going on?

CONSTANTINE. The reason I didn't text you is because I was in the hospital.

CHLOE. Oh.

CONSTANTINE. I passed out and went to the hospital.

CHLOE. Are you okay?

CONSTANTINE. Yeah.

CHLOE. I'm sorry I didn't—

CONSTANTINE. You don't have to be sorry I just wanted you to know.

CHLOE. All right.

CONSTANTINE. I guess I just...I don't know maybe this is stupid—I was hoping you would text me. I mean I can't like send out a bat signal or something, but...

CHLOE. I didn't realize we were a texting every day kind of thing.

CONSTANTINE. I'd like to be. I thought that's what we were doing. With the kissing and everything.

CHLOE. Right.

CONSTANTINE. So that's like...that's like a really big deal for me. Maybe it's not for you—

CHLOE. No it's a big deal for me.

CONSTANTINE. Okay. So I guess...that's what I want to be.

CHLOE. Like boyfriend-girlfriend?

CONSTANTINE. Yeah.

CHLOE. I would be cool with that.

CONSTANTINE. Seriously?

CHLOE. Yeah.

CONSTANTINE. Cool. Very cool. I mean, awesome.

Constantine is shaking out his hands.

I get the tingles. When I get nervous.

CHLOE. It's so cute you're nervous.

CONSTANTINE. Amazing. This is amazing. Woo! I have to tell you something. Okay all right this is stupid but...I've been actually thinking about this for a while—ever since that time when you came to the hospital.

CHLOE. I came to see you in the hospital?

CONSTANTINE. Yes! You were like—you were doing something with your dad—

CHLOE. Oh. Ohhhhhh.

CONSTANTINE. And you hugged me?

CHLOE. Right yes.

CONSTANTINE. Right then I was like—she's the one.

Chloe takes a moment.

CHLOE. The “one”?

CONSTANTINE. Okay I mean it's kind of crazy. But like—you saved my life.

CHLOE. How did I save your life?

CONSTANTINE. Just...you did.

CHLOE. Huh.

CONSTANTINE. Is that weird?

CHLOE. A little bit. Like I—

CONSTANTINE. I just—it meant a lot to me and I was...you know I was basically in love with you after that point. Not that I'm like—obsessed with you or anything—I mean, Piper would probably say that, but—it was just...I don't know, I'm just saying things now, I just...I think I fell in love with you then. I want to say that. I feel like I can say that.

CHLOE. Constantine.

CONSTANTINE. I guess I've always thought you were amazing, and now, like, it's like a dream come true, I have to pinch myself sometimes—and maybe that's why I didn't text you yesterday because I was terrified you'd feel like I had too much baggage or you didn't want to get involved in someone who wasn't completely healthy—which I know is messed up, and I know that's my thing, not yours, but I was like, if she thinks I have cancer is she going to break up with me, and then have I like ruined the best thing in my life—

CHLOE. I'm not the best thing in your life.

CONSTANTINE. Right. I know that.

CHLOE. But you just said that.

CONSTANTINE. Yeah but like—you know I get...dramatic.

CHLOE. I don't know what to do with this.

CONSTANTINE. With what?

CHLOE. You're in love with me? You've been in love with me for like a year?

CONSTANTINE. You saved my life.

CHLOE. I didn't save your life. I just—I didn't even know you.

CONSTANTINE. We were in freshman algebra together. You didn't—you didn't know I existed.

CHLOE. Right. But—I mean we've been together two weeks, we're just getting to know each other—

CONSTANTINE. And I am loving what I've discovered so far.

CHLOE. But—this is too much. You can't do this. I'm sorry—this isn't fair.

CONSTANTINE. What are you talking about?

CHLOE. You can't put this on me. You can't say I saved your life, you can't say you're in love with me, we BARELY KNOW EACH OTHER.

CONSTANTINE. But we can get to know each other—

CHLOE. But now there's going to be this whole thing—where I'm worried you're obsessed and you're like—taking everything way too seriously, and—let's take it slow, let's not rush things—

CONSTANTINE. I thought I was going to die last year YES I AM RUSHING THINGS. I didn't think I was ever going to be able to do this! I thought that was it! I thought it was over and I was going to die never having fallen in love, never having...experienced anything so YES YES YES I AM GOING FAST I AM SORRY I DON'T KNOW IF I HAVE ANY TIME. I thought I was going to die last night! Again! I have been pretending like I am cool but I am TERRIFIED! I passed out in the bathroom and in the car on the way to the hospital I was convinced the cancer had come back and I was going back into chemo and this time it was going to kill me! And what scared me more than anything was the thought that you were going to abandon me as soon as you learned that!

CHLOE. I barely know you. We have been doing this for Two. Weeks.

CONSTANTINE. Eighteen days.

CHLOE. What?

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!



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