

DAY ONE

book and lyrics by Jonathan Dorf
music by James Balmer and Mary Nelson

List of Characters

The Principals (in order of appearance)

JAKE, senior class president and all-around guy, Helen's former or possibly present boyfriend (tenor)

STANLEY, Jake's best friend and a wannabe Brando in *Streetcar Named Desire* (baritone)

SKEETER, a first year (aka freshman) student who expects—and often gets—the worst from his new school (changing voice/high tenor/boy alto)

STELLA, a senior newly transferred into the school (soprano)

BLAISE, a girl who hides a sharp mind under a tough as nails exterior (alto)

ERIKA, the junior class overachiever—president, newspaper editor, yearbook editor—and ready to be a senior (soprano)

THYME, Mother Time in the guise of a high school student (alto)

HELEN, a senior rumored to have blown up the chemistry lab, rumored to be a witch, and Jake's ex or current girlfriend—nobody is quite sure which (soprano)

The Ensemble

Day One uses an ensemble of anywhere from a suggested minimum of eight to an almost unlimited number of students. Among the roles they cover: Stanley's Mother, Skeeter's Mother, Stella's Mother, various first year students, a Reporter, a Camera Person, a Make-Up Artist, a Bully, a Teacher, a DJ and a Swedish Exchange Student. Most important, however, are the Wannabes, a group of underclass girls who figure prominently in many scenes and songs (“A Good Boy is Hard to Find, and a Good Man is Downright Impossible,” for example, is completely their musical number). The Wannabe solos can either be sung as solos or sung by groups of Wannabes, depending on the needs of the production.

Notes on the Set

The show makes use of a variety of settings: the homes of the various principals, various school hallways, the cafeteria, classrooms, etc. To maintain the flow of the show, blackouts should be used as infrequently as possible, and sets/settings are meant to be suggested rather than fully realized. Elizabethan staging (making use of stage areas) is encouraged.

LIST OF SONGS

Act I

"Day One"	The Cast
"A Hole in the Wall"	Jake, Stanley, Wannabes
"This Place This Time"	Stanley, Stella, Jake
"Muhammad Ali"	Skeeter
"The Solution is Clear"	Erika, Skeeter, Wannabes
"The Solution is Clear" (reprise)	Erika, Skeeter, Blaise
"Fifteen Minutes"	Thyme, Ensemble
"Melt Into Me"	Helen
"A Good Boy is Hard to Find..."	
"Out Past Infinity"	Blaise
"Don't Let it Splatter"	Helen, Jake, Stanley, Stella, Skeeter

Act II

"Locker Room Blues/Year-Long Limbo"	Skeeter, The Cast
"New School Order"	Erika, Wannabes
"This Place This Time" (reprise)	Stanley, Stella
"Lost Sheep"	Helen, Jake, Stanley, Stella
"I Hate Stanley"	Stella
"Sand"	Thyme, Jake
"Come on, Jake"	Wannabes
"Sturdy and Strong"	Blaise, Jake
"I Hate Stanley" (reprise)	Helen, Wannabes
"Don't Let It Splatter" (reprise)	Helen
"In a Heartbeat"	Stanley, Stella
"The Dance/Finale"	The Cast

ACT I

(An ALARM CLOCK RINGS. Then another. Then a symphony of ALARM CLOCKS. Lights up on JAKE, a senior and a good-hearted member of the popular crowd, sleeping in a bed center stage. He jumps out of bed wearing whatever he sleeps in.)

JAKE

THIS IS THE DAY . . .
THIS IS THE DAY I'VE WAITED FOR
AND NOW I'M STANDING BY THE DOOR
A LOCKER AT THE TOP
A PARKING SPACE IN

(Lights up on STANLEY, another senior, wearing a wife-beater and clutching a parking permit. Jake continues to get ready.)

STANLEY

STOP—
AM I ALMOST DONE?
SENIOR LOT ONE-FIFTY ONE

(Stanley throws a Hawaiian shirt over his wife-beater. As the scene continues, new characters bring new lights, but the characters already on stage continue to go about the business of getting ready for school.)

JAKE

PAID MY DUES

STANLEY

PLAYED THEIR GAME

JAKE and STANLEY

DID THE DANCE FOR ELEVEN YEARS
AT THE END OF THE DAY
THEY'LL KNOW I WAS HERE

(STANLEY'S MOTHER, played by a member of the ensemble, enters.)

STANLEY'S MOTHER

Stanley!

STANLEY

I'm up!

JAKE

DON'T WANT TO MISS MY CHANCE

STANLEY

I'M READY TO MAKE THIS MY DAY ONE

(Lights up on SKEETER, freshman, looking every bit like a freshman that doesn't want to go to school. Enter SKEETER'S MOTHER.)

SKEETER'S MOTHER

Matthew, are you awake?

SKEETER

No.

SKEETER'S MOTHER

If you're sleeping, how come you're talking?

SKEETER

I'm not home.

SKEETER'S MOTHER

Oh.

(beat)

Well, get ready for school anyway.

(Skeeter's Mother exits. STELLA, elsewhere on stage, tries to get her make-up right. As she sings, lights up on various ensemble characters, some SENIORS and others WANNABE SENIORS, also getting ready for school.)

STELLA

IN THIS NEW SCHOOL I'M ALL ALONE
MY SENIOR YEAR SO FAR FROM HOME
MOM AND DAD DIDN'T ASK WHAT I THOUGHT
ONE HOUSE SOLD ANOTHER BOUGHT

(Enter STELLA'S MOTHER.)

STELLA'S MOTHER

STELLA DEAR PLEASE DO YOUR BEST

STELLA

BUT I JUST DON'T KNOW IF I'LL PASS THAT TEST

STELLA'S MOTHER

STELLA!

STELLA

I GUESS IT'S UP TO CHANCE
GOTTA START SOMEWHERE ON DAY ONE

JAKE, STELLA, STANLEY, SKEETER

ONE DAY TO LAUGH OR TO CRY

JAKE, STELLA, STANLEY

THE LAST YEAR OF SENIOR HIGH

SKEETER, WANNABES

THE FIRST DAY OF SENIOR HIGH

JAKE, STANLEY, STELLA

ONE DAY HELLO OR GOODBYE
START OF THE TIME OF OUR LIVES

(Lights up on BLAISE, a senior, dressed in a combination of black and denim that makes her look like the kind of person you leave alone.)

BLAISE

LET IT PASS ON BY
MY CLASS MAKES ME WANT TO THROW UP
HEY, CAN YOU SPELL INSTITUTION?
WISH I COULD LEAVE THESE ROSE-COLORED WALLS
AND START LIVIN'

(Enter BLAISE'S MOTHER, played by a member of the ensemble.)

BLAISE'S MOTHER

Blaise, could you wear something with color in it this year?

(Lights up on ERIKA, a junior dressed like a future business leader of America.)

ERIKA

THE SENIOR GAVEL'S CLOSE AT HAND
 IN ONE MORE YEAR I'LL TAKE COMMAND
 A YEARBOOK WRITTEN ALL ABOUT ME
 PRESIDENT IS MY DESTINY
 'TIL THEN I'LL WAIT MY TURN
 'CAUSE THE END'S IN THE AIR
 AND I KNOW I'LL BE THERE, BUT

ERIKA and WANNABE CHORUS

I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE CHANCE
 SOMEBODY GIVE ME MY DAY ONE

ALL

ONE DAY TO LAUGH OR TO CRY

SENIORS
 THE LAST YEAR OF
 SENIOR HIGH

SKEETER, FROSH
 THE FIRST DAY OF
 SENIOR HIGH

OTHER WANNABES
 THE NEXT YEAR OF
 SENIOR HIGH

ALL

ONE DAY HELLO OR GOODBYE

SENIORS EXCEPT FOR BLAISE
 START OF THE TIME OF OUR
 LIVES

**BLAISE, ERIKA, SKEETER,
 WANNABES**
 LET US GET ON WITH OUR LIVES

(Students hang a banner that says, "Welcome Back,
 Students!" Stanley throws off his Hawaiian shirt.)

VARIOUS

DID THE READING
 GOT MY SCHEDULE
 AND A PENCIL

UNDERCLASSMEN

HEAR THE BUS COME

SENIORS

START THE ENGINE

VARIOUS

DID THE READING
 GOT MY SCHEDULE
 AND A PENCIL

UNDERCLASSMEN

HEAR THE BUS COME

SENIORS

START THE ENGINE

ALL

COME INSIDE!

(The stage becomes the school lobby. Skeeter finds himself standing near Jake and Stanley as all of the students from the opening number mill around before school. Jake holds a gavel.)

STANLEY

Nice gavel, Jake.

JAKE

Some girl says to me "can I look at it"—I think she's a junior—and I'm like "sure"—

STANLEY

Senior gavel—'course she wants to look at it.

JAKE

Then she tries to "accidentally" stuff it in her purse.

STANLEY

You still got it.

JAKE

'Course I've still got it.

(The lights flicker.)

JAKE

(to Stanley)

You hungry?

STANLEY

I'm always hungry.

JAKE

I want all the freshmen to line up.

(The FRESHMEN—three speak but any number could be used to fill out the line—jump into a militarily precise line. Skeeter joins reluctantly, perhaps herded into place by another Freshman.)

SKEETER

(to one of the freshmen)

Do we have to get them food?

FIRST FRESHMAN

We *are* the food.

(The other freshmen pull out knives, forks and napkins.)

SECOND FRESHMAN

It's an honor.

(Jake and Stanley look the freshmen over.)

THIRD FRESHMAN

Where's your utensils? How are they supposed to eat you without silverware?

SECOND FRESHMAN

Don't you want to get picked?

STANLEY

What do you think?

JAKE

(points at Skeeter)

I kinda' like the little guy.

STANLEY

Dude, you'll be hungry in an hour.

JAKE

Yeah, but he's bite-size.

(squeezes Skeeter's cheeks)

And tender. Bet we can cut him with a fork.

(Skeeter struggles to get away, but Jake and Stanley hold him firmly.)

FIRST FRESHMAN

You are so lucky.

SKEETER

Help! Help!

STANLEY

The screamers are always tender.

(The lights flicker. All go back to milling about, and the silverware disappears—it's as if the previous scene never happened, which it didn't. But Skeeter still finds himself next to Jake and Stanley. Beat. Skeeter runs and hides elsewhere on stage.)

Did you know that kid?

JAKE

Never seen him before.

STANLEY

He totally ran away. It's great being a senior.

(beat)

Isn't that great?

JAKE

Very great.

STANLEY

You're not acting like it's great.

JAKE

It's great. It's just—

STANLEY

Man, this is gonna' be the most amazing year. In the parking lot, there were three freshmen waiting to shine my shoes. I tell them I'm wearing sneakers. You can't shine sneakers. They ask if they can *buy* me shoes.

JAKE

Stanley, do you really think Helen moved to Haiti and joined a voodoo cult?

STANLEY

I heard it was Trinidad.

JAKE

Trinidad?

STANLEY

Yeah—those islands down by...I'm kidding.

(beat)

You broke up with her. Why do you miss her so much?

JAKE

I don't know. We were always the Three Musketeers.

STANLEY

Stanley, Stella and Blanche. Except it was two guys and a girl.

JAKE

And nobody was named Stella or Blanche.

(beat)

That's it.

STANLEY

What?

JAKE

We're the "in crowd"—right?

STANLEY

In as it gets.

JAKE

We're not a crowd. Three's a crowd. Oh—one more thing—we didn't exactly break up.

HALF A YEAR AGO IN A CLASSROOM NOT SO FAR FROM HERE

STOOD A GIRL, THE CENTER OF MY WORLD

AND THEN SHE SLIPPED AND BLEW A HOLE IN THE WALL

THROUGH THE WALL, SHE SAW IT FALL

HELEN DISAPPEARED FROM SCHOOL AFTER THAT DAY

HELEN BECAME A NUN—I REALLY LIKE THAT ONE

BUT THE STORY I LIKE BEST IS THE ONE

WHERE SHE BECAME AN ISLAND QUEEN

NOBODY KNOWS IF SHE TOOK UP

SANTÉRIA OR WAS IT VODOO?

ALL THAT I KNOW IS WE NEED SOMEBODY

IT'S NOT ENOUGH JUST ME AND YOU

(Stanley pulls out a "Help Wanted" sign. The Wannabes gather around to see what's going on.)

WANNABE GIRLS

I KNOW THAT WE'LL BE A PERFECT FIT
 I CAN BE YOUR NUMBER THREE
 HERE'S MY PHOTO, MY RESUME
 CALL ME, PLEASE CALL ME

FIRST WANNABE

I'LL DO YOUR HOMEWORK EVEN YOUR CHEMISTRY
 BLOW UP A WALL IF YOU'D LIKE THINGS HOW THEY USED TO BE
 WASH YOUR CAR WALK YOUR DOG DO YOU OWN A DOG
 TELL THEM ALL THAT YOU'RE WITH ME

SECOND WANNABE

(to the First Wannabe)

HEY YOU, COME HERE, LOOK ME IN THE EYE
 DON'T CRY AND WHINE AND BEG TO GET YOUR WAY

(to Jake and Stanley)

YOU NEED SOMEONE WHO'S TOUGH TO KEEP THE DOGS AT BAY

THIRD WANNABE

YOU WANT HER PICTURE IN YOUR LOCKER?

FIRST WANNABE

YOU WANT HER RIDING IN YOUR CAR?

ALL WANNABES

I'M A TROPHY YOU CAN OWN

JAKE and STANLEY

LEAVE US ALONE

STANLEY

(to all, perhaps including Jake)

LEAVE ME ALONE!

JAKE

(to Stanley)

ME TOO?

STANLEY

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO
 HOW FAR CAN I GO WITHOUT A STELLA
 WITHOUT A STAR WITHOUT A SUN
 THE BEST YEAR OF MY LIFE
 AND IT WON'T BE ANY FUN

(The Wannabes, rejected, give Stanley room. Jake hangs near him, but cautiously, as Stanley drops to his knees.)

STANLEY

Stella!

(pause)

Stella!

JAKE

What are you doing?

STANLEY

Making a stand.

JAKE

You're on your knees.

STANLEY

I'm not moving 'til I find her.

JAKE

Who?

(Stella, in the crowd, moves closer.)

STANLEY

Stella!

(Three ASPIRING COOL GIRLS watch Stanley.)

FIRST ASPIRING GIRL

He's so brave.

SECOND ASPIRING GIRL

Macho.

THIRD ASPIRING GIRL

It's the undershirt.

FIRST ASPIRING GIRL

It's magnetic.

SECOND ASPIRING GIRL

He's magnetic.

JAKE

Dude, there hasn't been a Stella in this school since 1975. I checked the yearbook.

STANLEY

Stella!

(A BELL RINGS. The other students slowly move toward the exits—except for Stella, who approaches Jake and Stanley.)

JAKE

Come on—that's the first bell.

STELLA

Excuse me. Do you know where room 101 is?

JAKE

There is no 101.

STELLA

But it says—

JAKE

The wall between 101 and 102 blew up, so if it says room 101, you're in the library.

STELLA

Oh. And the library would be . . .

STANLEY

Stella!

STELLA

(to Stanley)

Yes?

JAKE

(beat)

First Stella since '75.

STELLA

(to Stanley)

Nice undershirt.

STANLEY

(tries to say "thanks" but is too speechless)

Th . . . Tha . . .

(Jake whacks Stanley in the back of the head.)

Thanks. Want it?

(to himself)

Did I say that out loud?

STELLA

Keep it for me.

STANLEY

WHEN SHE'S IN SIGHT MY HEAD EXPLODES
HER SMILE CRACKS ALL OF THOSE SECRET CODES
THE THOUGHTS I'D NEVER FIND THE GIRL FOR ME
I WAS AFRAID, I WAS AFRAID
AN ANGEL SAW ME DOWN HERE ON MY KNEES
NOW LET'S START THE PARADE

WISH WE COULD STAY IN THIS PLACE, THIS TIME
LIVIN' LIKE THE KINGS WE'RE MEANT TO BE
CAN'T GET BETTER, BETTER THAN THIS, SO I'M
WISHIN' TO BE HERE ETERNALLY

STELLA

WOULD YOU WALK ME TO THE LIBRARY?
AND WHEN WE GET THERE HOLD THE DOOR FOR ME
I NEVER THOUGHT THAT WHEN I MOVED AGAIN
I'D MAKE FRIENDS THIS FAST
WHY SHOULD WE GIVE AWAY THIS YEAR IF
WE CAN MAKE IT LAST

I WANT TO STAY IN THIS PLACE, THIS TIME
IS THERE ANYTHING THAT WE CAN DO?
COULD THERE BE AN ANSWER, AN ANSWER TO FIND
THAT WOULD MAKE OUR DREAM COME TRUE?

STANLEY

HEY JAKE WHY YOU STANDIN' OVER THERE?

JAKE

NOW THAT SHE'S HERE, DO YOU REALLY CARE?

STANLEY

YOU'LL ALWAYS BE MY GO TO GUY
IT'S NOT GONNA' CHANGE, IT'S NOT GONNA' CHANGE

JAKE

I SEE YOU TWO AND I TRY AND TRY, BUT I CAN'T LIE
IT FEELS A LITTLE STRANGE

STANLEY

I WANT TO STAY IN THIS PLACE, THIS TIME
(to Stella and Jake)
AS LONG AS I CAN BE WITH YOU

JAKE

(beat)

ME TOO

(The three embrace. A BELL RINGS.)

STELLA

Are we late?

STANLEY

Don't worry—we're seniors.
(to Jake, pulling out a sheet of paper)
Do I still have to fill this out?

JAKE

What is it?

STANLEY

College app. If we get to do this year over and over, what's the point?

JAKE

(beat)

Maybe you ought to do one. Just in case.

STANLEY

I suppose *one* wouldn't kill me.

(to Stella)

Library?

(They exit. Beat. Skeeter emerges from his hiding place, checks to make sure the coast is clear. Before he can go anywhere, enter Erika, carrying a reporter's pad.)

ERIKA

Do you have a pass?

SKEETER

(throws himself on the ground)

Don't kill me!

ERIKA

If you don't have a pass, you're late to first period.

SKEETER

(holds out his wallet without necessarily looking up)

Here. Take my money.

ERIKA

What are your impressions of your new school so far?

SKEETER

(beat)

What?

ERIKA

Sorry—you're a freshman, right?

(to herself)

Speak slowly. Use small words.

(to Skeeter, speaking stereotypically to a foreigner)

What do you think of your new school so far?

(beat)

Let's go—the bell rang five minutes ago, and you don't have a hall pass.

(Erika pulls Skeeter to his feet, but he breaks away.)

SKEETER

THE BELL HAS RUNG
MY BELL'S BEEN RUNG
THREE TIMES ALREADY THIS MORNING
OR WAS IT FOUR—I'M HARDLY THROUGH THE DOOR
AND I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE

I DIDN'T ASK TO BE IN HONORS MATH
OR FOR THAT GIRL TO CHOP MY LUNCH IN HALF
AND LEAVE ME FOR DEAD
WITH THE FOOD CHAIN WRAPPED AROUND MY HEAD

I WISH I COULD RUN BUT MY LEGS WON'T MOVE
SOMEBODY TELL ME MY LIFE WILL IMPROVE
WHAT IS THIS MESS I'VE GOTTEN INTO
THIS PLACE ISN'T LIKE MY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

SKEETER (cont'd)

IF I COULD ADVANCE TO THE SOPHOMORE CLASS
 MAYBE THOSE KIDS WOULDN'T KICK MY—
 MUHAMMAD ALI, DO YOU NEED SOME EXTRA MONEY
 WOULDN'T IT BE FUNNY, IF I FLOATED LIKE A BUTTERFLY
 WHILE YOU STOOD IN,
 STINGING LIKE A BEE

I TOLD MY PARENTS SCHOOL WOULD BE GREAT
 NOW ALL I WANT TO DO IS ESCAPE
 WHO'S SKEETER BARNES TO ARGUE WITH FATE,
 UNLESS I COULD GET THE GREATEST LESSONS,
 HIT AND RUN WITH A SUCCESSION OF PUNCHES,
 RAINING IN BUNCHES, LIKE MUHAMMAD ALI . . .
 I SAW HIM YESTERDAY ON TV
 HE'S NOT AS TOUGH AS HE USED TO BE
 HE WAS SHAKING, JUST LIKE ME
 If you'll excuse me, I have to hide now.

ERIKA

What's your name?

SKEETER

Why?

ERIKA

For my article.

SKEETER

You're gonna' print my *name*?

ERIKA

Is that a problem?

SKEETER

Yeah—a health problem. Can't you call me an anonymous source or the player to be named later?

ERIKA

Sorry—strains my credibility.

(beat)

I'll make you a deal: be my assistant and I'll put you under my official protection.

SKEETER

What do I have to do as your assistant?

ERIKA

If you don't, I'll get your name from the office and print it anyway.

(beat)

Come on—it'll be fun. You'll get to work on the newspaper, the student council, the yearbook—

(hands him an official-looking sheet of paper)

here's my current resume.

ERIKA

I WAS A BABY OF THREE, RESTING ON MY FATHER'S KNEE
HE HELD ME CLOSE AND SAID THIS GIRL IS GOING TO ACHIEVE
AND I BELIEVE THAT I WILL
I KEEP CLIMBING THAT HILL
I'M AT THE SUMMIT
I'M AT THE SUMMIT BUT SOMETHING IS STILL OUT OF REACH
AND THE SOLUTION IS CLEAR
WE DO AWAY WITH THIS YEAR
I'D BE A SENIOR

SKEETER

AND I'D BE A SOPHOMORE AND FREE
FROM THE PAIN,

(Enter the Wannabes.)

NINE MONTHS OF CRYING OUT LOUD
WHAT CAN WE DO BUT WAIT THEM ALL OUT?

ERIKA

IT WOULD NOT BE SCHOOL WITHOUT YOU
TAKE CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE
YOUR AGE IS JUST AN EXCUSE TO EXCLUDE
YOU FROM THEIR PLANS AND DESIGNS
YOU FROM YOUR PLACE IN THE LINE
WHEN THEY'RE THE ONES THAT SHOULD STEP ASIDE

FIRST WANNABE

WHAT ARE YOU OFFERING US?

SECOND WANNABE

PLEASE GIVE US TIME TO ADJUST

THIRD WANNABE

SLOW IT DOWN, YOU'RE DISTURBING THE HIERARCHY

ERIKA

I KNOW YOU SYMPATHIZE, IT'S TIME TO ORGANIZE
 AND ROOM BY ROOM WE'LL LIFT THE GLOOM
 YOU'LL HELP ME CHANGE THIS PLACE FOREVER
 INTO A PLACE WHERE IT'S IDEAS AND NOT YOUR AGE THAT IS THE
 MEASURE

(The lights flicker.)

SKEETER

Hear ye, hear ye. All rise.

(looks around and realizes that all are standing)

All keep standing for the Honorable Erika Golddigger, President of the Junior Class,
 Editor of the Nameless High School Newspaper, Staff Photographer of the Yearbook, et
 cetera. Et cetera.

ERIKA

And for her personal assistant, Skeeter Barnes.

(A Wannabe becomes a REPORTER. Another Wannabe
 pretends to be a CAMERA PERSON. Another Wannabe
 pretends to clean his clothes and do Skeeter's make-up.)

REPORTER

Skeeter—may I call you Skeeter?

SKEETER

It's my nickname.

REPORTER

But it's a derogatory reference to your being the size of a mosquito.

SKEETER

Yes, but in this fantasy it's a term of endearment.

REPORTER

Absolutely. It's because we love you so much, and "Skeeter" expresses that love.

SKEETER

And respect.

REPORTER

You have an important job. Of course we respect you.

CAMERA PERSON

Not everyone can be personal assistant to Erika Golddigger.

REPORTER

You're so special.

MAKE-UP WANNABE

Hey, Skeeter, I want to be you.

REPORTER

You're so cute.

MAKE-UP WANNABE

Hey, Skeeter.

REPORTER

That name is so . . . sexy.

(The lights abruptly flicker. All but the Make-Up Wannabe, Erika and Skeeter exit. The Make-Up Wannabe becomes a Bully.)

BULLY

Hey! Freshman, I'm having a lunch money shortage.

SKEETER

Sorry—I'm her
personal assistant.

(points to Erika)

BULLY

So?

ERIKA

(to the Bully)

What are your thoughts on the first day of school so far?

BULLY

Ask me after lunch.

(to Skeeter, pretty much ignoring Erika)

Money—now!

ERIKA

How about a front-page interview?

BULLY

How about you gimme a couple bucks?

ERIKA

How about I print a front-page story on how you bully defenseless freshmen?

SKEETER

Defenseless? You said I was under your personal protection.

(Enter Blaise, unnoticed by the others.)

ERIKA

I meant your *reputation* was under my personal protection.

(beat)

Sorry—I don't do violence well.

BLAISE

I do.

BULLY

Oh god—I didn't know you were . . . I was just takin' his lunch money so I could give it to you.

ERIKA

(quietly to Skeeter)

Don't make any sudden movements—

SKEETER

Why?

ERIKA

And no matter what, don't make eye contact.

BULLY

I swear.

BLAISE

I see you botherin' him again,

(Blaise tosses a quarter at the Bully.)

call yourself an ambulance.

(The Bully runs away.)

SKEETER

(tries to follow Erika's advice)

Thank you so much.

(gives up and bounds after Blaise, who already walks away)

I thought she was gonna' pound me.

BLAISE

(doesn't break stride)

She was.

SKEETER

But then you're like, "call—

BLAISE

Freshperson, you don't even blip across my screen.

(She exits.)

ERIKA

Do you want to make it through your first day?

SKEETER

Not my fault people pick on me. And I thought you were supposed to protect me.

ERIKA

I meant you talked to Blaise Deadgirl. It's a miracle you're still alive.

SKEETER

Her last name is Deadgirl?

ERIKA

It's Deckearl. They call her Deadgirl because—look at her . . . and there's a rumor she killed a kid when she was in junior high.

SKEETER

She did?

ERIKA

I heard that she pushed some kid out a window, but my assistant editor says she set a boy on fire.

SKEETER

How come she's not in jail?

ERIKA

I heard she was. Nobody knows for sure—she didn't go to junior high around here.

SKEETER

She seemed kind of nice.

ERIKA

She called you a blip. Not even a blip.

SKEETER

Blip's kind of a cool word.

(beat)

At least *she* helped me.

ERIKA

My power has its limits—OK? I'm not a senior. Yet.

(Music resumes.)

SO THE SOLUTION IS CLEAR
WE DO AWAY WITH THIS YEAR
I'D BE A SENIOR

(Enter Blaise on the other side of the stage.)

SKEETER

AND I'D BE A SOPHOMORE AND
FREE

BLAISE

AND I'D BE A GRADUATE, FREE

BLAISE

FROM THIS GRIND, FOUR YEARS OF STIFLING MY MIND
NO MORE PRETENDING THAT I'M BEHIND

ERIKA

Now go to class. Tell your teacher you had a newspaper interview. I'm sure she'll understand.

(Exit Skeeter. Erika watches Blaise.)

BLAISE

IT'S BEEN SO LONG I DON'T REMEMBER HOW IT STARTED
OR WHY THE GRADE SCHOOL ROCKET SCIENTIST DEPARTED
THE CLOCK IS TICKING ON THIS EINSTEIN DRESSED IN LEATHER
DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN HOLD THIS ACT TOGETHER

BUT THE SOLUTION IS CLEAR
I DO AWAY WITH THIS YEAR

(Beat. Erika approaches Blaise.)

ERIKA

Hi. I don't think we've met.

Nope.

BLAISE

I'm Erika—

ERIKA

What do you want?

BLAISE

I saw you. I heard you. Excuse me—I'm nervous talking to you.

ERIKA

So don't.

BLAISE

I heard what you said about wanting the year to be over.

ERIKA

So?

BLAISE

I'm on your side.

ERIKA

You've got thirty seconds.

BLAISE

I'm going to be Senior Class President soon. If I can get a little muscle on my transition team, maybe I can be President sooner.

ERIKA

So I'm the muscle.

BLAISE

In return, I'd make your final days at this school as comfortable as possible.

ERIKA

Time's up.

BLAISE
(starts to walk away)

Do we have a deal?

ERIKA

(Exit Blaise. Beat. Exit Erika. Enter Jake, Stanley, Stella and other SENIORS with chairs. A TEACHER enters pushing a blackboard filled with physics formulas. Jake raises his hand.)

Yes? **TEACHER**

I have a question. **JAKE**

You do? **TEACHER**

Yes. **JAKE**

Questions are good. **TEACHER**

I have one. **JAKE**

Good. **TEACHER**

Lay it on me. (tries to be cool)

What? **JAKE**

Ask your question. **TEACHER**
(beat)

Has anybody found a way to slow down time? **JAKE**

In what way? **TEACHER**

In a way that makes it go slower. **JAKE**

Yeah—what if we wanted to slow it down? **STELLA**

TEACHER

(leafs furiously through a textbook)

That is a really exciting question. I'm so pleased that we're having a dialogue like this on the first day.

STANLEY

What if we tried talking slower?

(speaks in slow motion)

What if we tried talking slower?

TEACHER

(speaks in slow motion)

I don't think—

(catches herself, speaks normally)

I don't think that would work.

STANLEY

You mean all those equations, and none of 'em does anything?

TEACHER

They explain a great deal about our world.

STELLA

But they don't *do* anything.

(Enter THYME, hip, mysterious, female—so cool that even Stanley pales by comparison.)

TEACHER

You're late.

THYME

BACK WHEN I STARTED I'M CHASING THE DINOSAURS
THEN CAME SOME REPTILE THAT LOOKED LIKE A HOSE
AND NOW HERE WE ARE WHERE NO MAN'S EVER GONE BEFORE
I'M JUST RELIEVED THAT YOU INVENTED CLOTHES

JAKE

Do you feel different?

STELLA

I feel . . .

STANLEY

Something . . .

THYME

I'M LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN, NO WAY YOU CAN SLOW ME DOWN
 WHEN I LEAVE THE STATION YOU'RE COMING ALONG
 BUT WHAT IF I CIRCLED AND CAME ALL THE WAY AROUND
 SOMEHOW IT GETS EARLIER, WHEN I FINISH THIS SONG

ALL THROUGH HISTORY
 I'M A MYSTERY
 FIRST I'M THERE AND THEN I'M GONE

VARIOUS STUDENTS

(either Wannabes who enter or other students from the
 class)

DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?
 I NEED A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME
 I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME
 GIVE ME SOME EXTRA TIME
 HOW 'BOUT A FEW MORE MINUTES?
 I'M IN THE MIDDLE
 I COULD FINISH
 IF YOU'D GIVE ME JUST A SECOND
 ONE MORE HOUR WOULD BE HEAVEN

THYME

STEP ON UP TO THE BANK OF BORROWED TIME
 WOULD YOU BE MY VALENTINE?
 OR MAYBE I'LL MAKE IT CHRISTMAS—
 WOULD ANYBODY MIND?

(checks her watch)

TAKE YOUR FIFTEEN MINUTES OF FAME,
 'CAUSE IT'S GREAT
 I'M TAKING FIFTEEN MINUTES BACK—

(She sits.)

NOW I'M NOT LATE
 Boys, anybody into older women?

(The stage should look exactly like it was at the beginning
 of class. Jake raises his hand.)

TEACHER

Yes?

JAKE

I have a question.

TEACHER
You do?

JAKE
Yes.

TEACHER
Questions are good.

JAKE
(beat)

I think I asked it already.

TEACHER
You did?

JAKE
Did I?

THYME
I heard it.

STANLEY
(to Jake and Stella)
Who's she?

JAKE
I don't know.

STELLA
This is gonna' sound really weird, but it's like I remember her being late for class, but I remember her being here the whole time too.

TEACHER
Do you have a question, Jake?

JAKE
I don't know.

(The lighting changes, and the room changes from a classroom into a lunchroom, bustling with activity. Jake, Stanley and Stella sit together. The Wannabes sit together, watching Jake and Stanley's every move. Erika passes out flyers, skipping the senior table. Skeeter, notepad in hand, trails Erika, taking notes.)

ERIKA

Come to my rally after lunch.

(to another group)

Come to my rally.

(Blaise has a table to herself. Occasionally, she sneaks a glance in Jake's direction. Erika tries to give Blaise a flyer, but Blaise crumples it and throws it at her. Thyme moves around. In her wake, people seem to move slower or faster, according to her whim. MUSIC STARTS for "Melt Into Me." Enter a RAGGED-LOOKING FRESHMAN, clothes looking like they've been through an explosion, clutching the remains of what was once a book. He—the character could also be female if it's easier to cast—staggers toward Stanley, Jake and Stella. Stanley catches him just as he's about to fall over.)

RAGGED FRESHMAN

It's . . . horrible.

STANLEY

What's horrible?

RAGGED FRESHMAN

The library. So horrible.

(The Ragged Freshman tries to stumble away, but can only go a few steps before he loses his balance and nearly falls.)

Got to run . . . away.

(Enter HELEN, mysterious and dangerous. Everyone stops what they're doing, even Thyme, to watch her. People shiver, as if a cold wind blows.)

Save yourselves!

(The Ragged Freshman staggers a few more feet, then collapses.)

HELEN

SOMEBODY GET THESE BAGS UNPACKED
PAY ATTENTION YOUR PRINCESS IS BACK
RIDING ON RAIN, WIND, HURRICANE
I'VE BLOWN IN FROM THE OUTSIDE AGAIN

SMELL THE SMELL OF CHEMICALS IN THE LAB STILL BURNING
A SIGNAL FOR ME TO RETURN

HELEN (cont'd)

(to Jake)

LIKE A GOOD BOY I KNEW YOU'D STAY
I DIDN'T WANT YOU PINING AWAY
PROMISE TO BE WORTH THE WAIT
I PROMISE YOU YOU'LL NEVER CONCENTRATE AGAIN

I'LL SHOW YOU MAGIC FROM BEYOND
DANCE, DANCE WITH ME, FLOAT OVER THE DUCK POND
COZY AS WE CONJURE THE WEATHER
SPEND OUR DAYS AND NIGHTS TOGETHER

I'VE BEEN WALKING THROUGH YOUR DREAMS, YOUR MIND IS BURNING
FAN THE FLAME—HAVE NO FEAR, HAVE NO FEAR
MELT INTO ME AND DISAPPEAR

JAKE

Helen.

HELEN

(to the rest of the lunch room crowd, which still hasn't moved)

As you were, people.

(to Jake)

Tell me how much you missed me.

STANLEY

You should've heard him.

(starts to imitate Jake)

Helen—

HELEN

I did.

JAKE

Where did you go?

HELEN

I'll tell you about it sometime. I'll tell you—

(She kisses Jake quickly on the lips—just a teaser.)

all about it. Stanley, don't just sit there being strong and silent—get my bags!

(Stanley gets up and gets Helen's bags.)

STELLA

Hi, I'm—

Stella.

HELEN

How did you—

STELLA

Witchcraft.

HELEN

(starts to exit, indicates that Jake and Stanley should follow)

Boys.

(to Stella)

I suppose you can come too.

(Beat. Stanley gestures for Stella to join them. Helen starts to exit, followed by Jake, Stanley and Stella. Helen stops suddenly and sniffs the air.)

I smell something.

JAKE

Cafeteria food?

HELEN

Something else. I smell . . . fear.

STANLEY

You can smell that?

HELEN

But that's not it.

STANLEY

You don't smell fear?

(Helen walks up to Thyme. All freeze.)

HELEN

I can smell *you*.

THYME

I am getting both barrels of a rotting coconut. You showered since you got back?

HELEN

I know who you are.

(Helen starts to walk away.)

I break clocks.

(Helen sniffs in the air.)

I think that *is* fear.

(Helen rejoins Jake and the others. All unfreeze.)

I noticed they were teaching chemistry in the library this year.

(Helen exits, followed by Jake, Stanley and Stella. Erika, with Skeeter's help, drags off the Ragged Freshman—one more person at her rally.)

FIRST LUNCH WANNABE

Life is so unfair.

SECOND LUNCH WANNABE

Jake and Stanley aren't the only cute guys in this school.

THIRD LUNCH WANNABE

This wouldn't happen to us if we were seniors.

FIRST LUNCH WANNABE

I showed that new girl where the bathroom was. And then she steals Stanley from me.

THIRD LUNCH WANNABE

That's nothing. Jake looked at me three times today, until Helen—

FIRST LUNCH WANNABE

Shhh!!!

THIRD LUNCH WANNABE

What?

FIRST LUNCH WANNABE

Do you want her to hear you?

THIRD LUNCH WANNABE

She's not even here.

FIRST LUNCH WANNABE

What if she's a . . .

(almost whispered)

witch?

SECOND LUNCH WANNABE

She's not a witch, at least not that kind.

(beat)

Guess what I heard? There's a Swedish exchange student. His first flight got canceled, so he's not getting here until this afternoon. He's blond-haired, blue eyed, totally gorgeous and he's a junior!

THIRD LUNCH WANNABE

Helen'll probably steal him anyway, just in case she gets tired of Jake.

(The Wannabes who sing do not have to be the ones who participated in the lunch conversation, though they could be.)

FIRST LUNCH WANNABE

JUST LIKE A CRISP PIECE OF BACON
THE BEST ONES ARE ALREADY TAKEN
I'D GIVE UP MY GRANDDADDY'S FARM
FOR THOSE EYES, FOR THOSE LIPS
I'D EVEN SETTLE FOR ONE OF HIS ARMS

SECOND LUNCH WANNABE

IT PAINS ME SO MUCH WHEN A FELLA
GETS HOGTIED BY A HELEN OR STELLA
GOOD GUYS ARE IN SUCH SHORT SUPPLY
HONEY, CAN I BORROW YOUR HANKIE
I CAN FEEL MYSELF STARTING TO CRY

WANNABES

A GOOD BOY IS SO HARD TO FIND
LIKE A LINE FROM A LOVE SONG THAT DON'T WANT TO RHYME
BUT WHEN YOU WANT A MAN WHO AIN'T SLIPPERY AS SAND
THAT MISSION IS DOWNRIGHT IMPOSSIBLE

THIRD LUNCH WANNABE

I WISH I KNEW WHAT COURSE OF ACTION
MIGHT GIVE US SOME SMALL SATISFACTION
IT WOULD BE NICE IF WE HAD A BETTER CHOICE THAN BEFORE
WOULD IT BE TOO MUCH FUSS TO CHARTER A BUS
AND DROP OFF A DOZEN OR TWO DOZEN MORE

WANNABES

A GOOD BOY IS DARN HARD TO FIND
LIKE THE MEAT IN THE SANDWICH IN THE SCHOOL LUNCH LINE
BUT WHEN YOU NEED A MAN THAT YOU CAN UNDERSTAND
THAT MISSION IS DOWNRIGHT IMPOSSIBLE

(Erika returns and approaches the Wannabes.)

ERIKA

Don't forget to come to my rally!

(The Wannabes follow Erika. A curious Thyme follows, leaving Blaise alone on stage. Jake enters, with Stanley close behind. Neither pays attention to Blaise.)

JAKE

You don't have to come with me. I can find my own book.

STANLEY

I can't believe she gave out books on the first day.

JAKE

I'll find it.

STANLEY

That's just not right.

JAKE

Go already. I'll meet you guys in the library.

STANLEY

In?

JAKE

By the police line.

STANLEY

Don't keep Helen waiting.

JAKE

(gestures for Stanley to go)

Don't keep *Stella* waiting.

(Stanley exits. Jake looks for his book. Blaise watches. Jake finds his book, and their eyes meet for a moment. Jake exits, sneaking a look at Blaise.)

BLAISE

I SNEAK A GLANCE ACROSS AT YOU
 AND WONDER IF YOU'RE LOOKING TOO
 IF YOU LOOKED AT ME YOU'D FIND—
 I GUESS YOU'VE NEVER HAD THE TIME

MAYBE YOU WATCH WHEN I'M NOT THERE
 MAYBE LAST JUNE UNDER THE STAIRS
 YOU TOUCHED MY HAIR WITH YOUR HAND
 WAS IT AN ACCIDENT?

ARE YOU WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF INFINITY
 FOR THAT LONG SLOW DANCE PERMANENTLY CHEEK TO CHEEK
 IN THAT OTHER FUTURE WHERE WE'RE TOGETHER
 IS IT TOO FAR FROM HERE TO SEE
 WAY OUT PAST INFINITY?

AND WHEN I BLINK YOU'RE GONE AGAIN
 SAFE IN THE CASTLE OF YOUR FRIENDS
 THEY'RE LIKE A LADDER I CAN'T CLIMB
 OUT OF A MAZE THAT WINDS AND WINDS

IS THERE A SIGNAL I CAN SEND
 BEFORE MY HOPES AND CHANCES END?
 I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START
 I KNOW WE'LL ALWAYS BE APART

WILL YOU WAIT FOR ME ON THE OTHER SIDE OF INFINITY?
 SAVE THAT LAST SLOW DANCE AS WE HOLD EACH OTHER ON THE
 BALCONY
 IN THAT OTHER FUTURE WHERE WE'RE TOGETHER
 IN MY MIND I CAN SEE
 YOU STARING BACK AT ME
 WAY OUT PAST INFINITY

(Blaise fades into the background as Erika enters at the head of the Wannabes, several of whom drag the Ragged Freshman on and deposit his prone body on the ground. Thyme strolls on during the rally and observes from a similar background position.)

ERIKA

My underclass sisters and brothers, do the seniors work harder?

WANNABES

No!

ERIKA
How many juniors get senioritis?

WANNABES
None.

ERIKA
How many sophomores?

WANNABES
None.

ERIKA
Freshpersons?

WANNABES
None.

ERIKA
So there must be some other reason we let them push us around. Are they smarter?

WANNABES
No!

ERIKA
So there must be some other reason. Are they better in any way?

WANNABES
No!

ERIKA
So there must be some other reason. Are they older than us?

WANNABES
Yes!

ERIKA
And what is age?

WANNABES
Just a number!

ERIKA
And what is your grade?

WANNABES

Just a number!

ERIKA

So what do we want?

WANNABES

Equal credit. Equal rights. Equal power.

ERIKA

When do we want it?

WANNABES

Now!

ERIKA

When?

WANNABES

Right now!

ERIKA

Tomorrow?

WANNABES

Today!

ERIKA

(to a Wannabe)

Hey, where's that Skeeter kid? He's supposed to be writing down my speech.

(Lights dim on Erika and the Wannabes, who freeze.
Lights up elsewhere on stage, Jake, Stanley and Stella flank
Helen, who looks very much like a witch.)

HELEN

Does anyone have a chicken?

STANLEY

A chicken?

HELEN

I need the blood of a chicken to stop time.

STANLEY

Lunch was hamburgers.

HELEN
I said chicken, not dog.

STELLA
I brought tuna.

JAKE
You know I'm a vegetarian.

HELEN
We'll have to make do. Make the circle.
(Helen exits. Jake, Stanley and Stella make a circle using books, papers, pencils and other typical school supplies. Helen returns dragging a petrified Skeeter.)

A CHICKEN'S NICE FOR A MAGIC RITE
BUT IT'S THE BLOOD THAT MATTERS
DON'T LET IT SPLATTER

(to Skeeter as she deposits him in the middle of the circle—
a raised platform would be great)

HEAR ME SING YOU WON'T FEEL A THING
CLOSE YOUR EYES AND YOU'LL BE OVER

(to Jake)

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU, LOVER

JAKE
(to Skeeter)
I PROMISE YOU, YOU'LL BE GOOD AS NEW

HELEN
ROCK AND SHAKE 'TIL THE BUILDING QUAKES
FEED THE FRENZY GHOSTS OF HAITI
DRINK UNTIL HE'S EMPTY

SKEETER
JUST ONE TOUCH, PLEASE DON'T TAKE TOO MUCH

HELEN
ONE TINY PRICK, JUST A LITTLE BIT
SO MY SPELL CAN BURN, AND THE CLOCKS WON'T TURN

SKEETER
MUHAMMAD ALI, RESCUE ME!

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