

NOTES

by JJ Lissaris

SETTING

Brooklyn, New York

TIME

1991-1992

SYNOPSIS

Travel back to a time when middle school kids wrote each other notes and talked on the phone, when Reebok Pumps and flannel shirts were in fashion, and when feathered bangs, gelled curls, and high ponytails were a thing. The story focuses on Gabe and his quirky (nerdy, dorky?) group of friends who are in a specialized learning center at Andries Hudde Junior High School. As eighth grade unfolds, Gabe experiences the ups and downs of all the things that made 13-year-olds in the early 1990s tick, and he ultimately learns to appreciate what he has because nothing is permanent.

CHARACTERS

GABE	Sweet; occasionally funny; wears his heart on his sleeve; generally likable
KATIE	Gabe's second love interest but first "long-term" relationship; caring; sometimes emotional and intense; generally likable
ALAN	Gabe's best friend; rich but only occasionally flaunts it; goes out with Manisha
ADAM	Gabe's good friend; particularly odd and perhaps less in touch with reality than his friends, but still likable
MARK	Gabe's good friend; generally supportive; implied that he is likely gay
NATALIA	Really sweet and likable; will do anything for Gabe and clearly has feelings for him, but still strong and independent
STEFFANY	Gabe's first love interest; likable but perhaps somewhat distant and harder to connect with
MANISHA	Gets to the point but not meanly; goes out with Alan; funny in a somewhat unconventional way
MR. DELUCA	Science teacher; absolutely eccentric but cares about his students, making it easy for Gabe to form a bond with
MEGAN	Not very concerned with what others think about her; does her own thing

DANIELLE	Easygoing and fairly pleasant but has her own opinions
ELODIE	Fairly obnoxious but not in a way that makes her completely unlikable; speaks her mind even when negative
STACY	Sweet and likable; part of the main group of friends
SUZIE	Kind and caring; seems to yawn a lot; part of the main group of friends
MS. MORETTI	Math teacher; students seem to like her
AMANDA	Katie's best friend; seems to take pleasure in insulting Gabe
KEITH	Main purpose in life appears to be pulling girls' hair
ELENA	Gabe's mom; impeccable timing to seemingly ruin pretty much everything for Gabe
UNKNOWN BOY	Harasses Katie and almost beats up Gabe
MR. ABRAMS	One of Gabe's former teachers; only in Act I, Scene 1; can be a prerecorded voice
MR. GELLER	One of Gabe's former teachers; only in Act I, Scene 1; can be a prerecorded voice

ACTS & SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1	Gabe's kitchen	09/08/1991
Scene 2	Ms. Moretti's classroom	09/09/1991
Scene 3	Danielle's bedroom; ext. Danielle's house	09/13/1991
Scene 4	Hallway; Mr. DeLuca's classroom	10/25/1991
Scene 5	Manisha's basement	10/26/1991
Scene 6	Gabe's kitchen	10/28/1991
Scene 7	Ext. school	10/30/1991
Scene 8	Gabe's kitchen	10/30/1991
Scene 9	Ext. woods at PEEC; PEEC main building	12/06/1991
Scene 10	Gabe's kitchen	12/13/1991
Scene 11	Ext. school	12/20/1991

ACT II

Scene 1	Cafeteria	01/02/1992
Scene 2	Hallway; Mr. DeLuca's classroom	01/02/1992
Scene 3	Ext. school	01/02/1992
Scene 4	Cafeteria	02/14/1992
Scene 5	Gabe's kitchen	03/11/1992
Scene 6	Ext. school; gymnasium	03/13/1992

ACT I

SCENE 1

CLOSED CURTAIN (09/08/1991)

(Curtain is closed. Various voices are heard in a montage, one slightly overlapping the next, reading the yearbook messages they wrote to GABE.)

MEGAN

Dear Gabe, Have a great summer and see ya in eighth grade. Next year we rock the school! Luv, Megan.

MR. ABRAMS

Dear Gabe, I hope you learned something this year, and I *don't* mean in science. Best of luck. --Mr. Abrams.

DANIELLE

Dear Gabe, Too bad we didn't last as boyfriend and girlfriend. It was a good two days, though. Anyway, have a neat--so original--summer, and I'll see you in eighth grade! Luv, Danielle. PS: Sorry I wrote so big!

STEFFANY

Dear Gabe, You played the piano really well at the recital last night considering you've only been taking lessons for one or two months. We had some good times this year. You've become a great friend. Have fun in camp, and I'll see you in August. Love, your friend, Steffany.

MR. GELLER

Gabe-- I'll be expecting to hear great things about you...and *from* you! Success! --Mr. Geller.

NATALIA

Dear Gabe, I hope this was a good year for you. Have fun in camp! You've always been really sweet and a great friend. Love, Natalia. PS: Like I said right before my confirmation, you always listened to me and

never laughed at what I said, and I love you for that!

ELODIE

Dear Gabe, You're incredibly ugly. I'll never want to ask you out. Have a great summer. --Elodie.

(Curtain opens.)

INT. GABE'S KITCHEN

(Lights up on GABE, seated at the kitchen table, center. There is a small TV or remote control on the table.)

GABE

(To the audience)

Tomorrow's the first day of eighth grade. I'm graduating from Bader Junior High School this year...class of 1992.

(Indifferently)

Yay.

(Slightly troubled)

To be honest, I'm not sure I'm ready to leave. I like where I am. I'm in this special program, the Institute for Advanced Academics. We had to take a test to get in.

(Admitting without shame)

Yeah, we're nerds.

(Somewhat unhappy)

But anyway, now my parents are talking about moving to New Jersey. Have you ever *smelled* New Jersey?

(Sigh; back to normal tone)

So yeah, I had a pretty great summer...or "neat," as Danielle wrote in my yearbook. Me and my friend Adam went to the movies to see *Don't Tell Mom the Babysitter's Dead*.

(Enter ADAM, upstage left.)

ADAM

(To the audience)

Christina Applegate wears these really awesome hats. And in one scene, she has on this crazy tight shirt, and, well...it's pretty much my favorite movie now.

(Exit ADAM left.)

GABE

(To the audience)

I went bowling with Natalia and bowled my first-ever turkey--three strikes in a row.

(Enter NATALIA, upstage right.)

NATALIA

(To the audience)

He's pretty good. I was never able to beat him before. And this time, he was actually winning by ten pins in the last frame, but then somehow I came back and won!

(NATALIA shrugs and exits right.)

GABE

(Implying to the audience that he let NATALIA win)

I always make the seven-pin for the spare, but somehow--that one time--I didn't that. I wonder why.

(Beat)

Anyway, my friend Alan had a party this summer. It wasn't his birthday or anything like that. He's just super rich, so he has lots of parties.

(Enter ALAN, upstage left.)

ALAN

(To the audience)

It was a pool party. Lydia Castro was wearing a bikini.

(Showing with hands)

Like, a *bikini*. And, well...yeah, what else can I say?

(Slowly, with emphasis)

Bikini.

(Exit ALAN left.)

GABE

(To the audience)

I also went with my friend Mark to the beach.

(Enter MARK, upstage right.)

MARK

(To the audience)

There was this lifeguard who came from Europe--
Portugal, I think. And he had this tiny red Speedo
on, and, well...yeah, what else can I say?

(Slowly, with emphasis)

Speedo.

(Exit MARK right.)

GABE

(To the audience)

And I actually just got back from a cruise to Bermuda
with Steffany...the first girl I've ever loved.

(Enter STEFFANY, upstage left.)

STEFFANY

(To the audience, clarifying)

Our moms bowl together, so we went on a cruise...his
whole family, my whole family, and five other
families from their league. It was hardly the *Love*
Boat.

GABE

(Looking at STEFFANY)

But we did have fun.

STEFFANY

(Looking at GABE, smiling, agreeing)

We did.

(Exit STEFFANY left.)

GABE

(Smiles and nods to the audience; beat)

And now for a little TV on my final night of freedom.

(If there is a TV on the table, GABE leans over and turns it on. If there is a remote control, he picks it up and points it offstage to indicate that he is turning on a TV. The theme song from *America's Funniest Home Videos* is heard. Lights fade to black as GABE starts watching the show.)

SCENE 2

INT. MS. MORETTI'S CLASSROOM (09/09/1991)

(Lights up on classroom. STUDENTS are arriving. Indistinct chatter is heard. A buzz of excitement fills the air. ADAM, MARK, and ALAN are in a heated debate.)

ALAN

There's no way that *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II* was better than the original.

ADAM

I'm telling you guys--it was.

MARK

The whole premise was lame. The turtles killed Shredder in the first movie. Like, crushed-in-the-back-of-a-garbage-truck dead. He couldn't have survived that.

ADAM

That's the whole point of the ooze. And why the sequel is called *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze*.

(GABE enters and approaches. As he does, he puts on some cherry ChapStick.)

ALAN

(Making air quotes around "secret")
Yeah, the "secret" was that they didn't expect the *first* movie to be so popular, so when they saw a chance to make even more money, they quickly threw something together for a sequel.

GABE

Another heated debate, I see? What's the topic this time?

ALAN

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles vs. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II.

GABE

The first one...no doubt.

ALAN

Thank you Gabe.

GABE

You're welcome Alan.

(Adding)

But y'know...conversations like this are *probably* why no one thinks we're cool.

ADAM

Mother says I'm cool.

(GABE puts his hands out to say "thanks for making my point." ALAN and MARK shrug. KEITH begins to cross left to right and stops behind ELODIE, center.)

KEITH

(Standing behind ELODIE, pulling her hair and yelling)

Prune Danish and coffee please!

(KEITH continues walking as ELODIE calls to him.)

ELODIE

(Frustrated)

Omigod Keith...what's your damage?

(KEITH shrugs; conversation picks up among STEFFANY, NATALIA, STACY, and MANISHA.)

MANISHA

I think Alan looks kinda cute today...right?

STACY
(Somewhat surprised)

Alan?

MANISHA
Yeah, I don't know. Maybe he got a little taller over the summer or something?

STEFFANY
I think Gabe did too.

NATALIA
You're right Steffany...Gabe definitely did.

STACY
(To NATALIA)
Interesting.

NATALIA
What's that supposed to mean, Stacy?

STACY
I just kinda figured that after you and Gabe were boyfriend-girlfriend for, like, two days last year, you would've moved on.

NATALIA
What? Yeah. No, I mean...of course.

STEFFANY
So wait Natalia...you *don't* still like him?

NATALIA
(As convincingly as possible)
Just as a friend.

STEFFANY
(Secretly pleased)
OK...cool.

(DANIELLE approaches STEFFANY and others.)

DANIELLE
Hey Steffany! Hey Natalia! Hey Stacy! Hey Manisha!

STEFFANY, NATALIA, STACY, &
MANISHA

Hi Danielle!

DANIELLE

I'm having a slumber party this weekend. Wanna come?

MANISHA

I'm in!

NATALIA & STACY

Me too!

STEFFANY

I bet my mom can drive us!

DANIELLE

Awesome! I'll call you later with the details.

(MS. MORETTI enters.)

MS. MORETTI

(Getting class's attention)

All right, all right. Good morning everyone.

STUDENTS

(Singsongy)

Good morning Ms. Moretti!

(STUDENTS quickly take a seat.)

MS. MORETTI

(Once everyone is seated)

I hope you all had a nice summer. Today for homeroom,
I asked Mr. DeLuca to come talk to you about our big
trip this year. In a nutshell, you will love it.

(MR. DELUCA enters, singing.)

MR. DELUCA

(To the tune of "Hands Up" by Ottawan;
fairly eccentric performance as he
makes his way around the classroom)

PEEC, PEEC,

Baby PEEC, PEEC.
Ya do it to me fun, fun,
Baby fun, fun.
We're going to PEEC, PEEC,
Baby PEEC, PEEC.

(Singing ends, but moves right into
next line without missing a beat)

Greetings! I'm Mr. DeLuca, your science teacher this
year. And in a few months, we'll be going on our
overnight trip to PEEC: the Pocono Environmental
Education Center. There'll be nature walks,
team-building exercises, hikes...lots of fun stuff.
All of eighth grade CIG is going, and so are a few
seventh graders who made high honor roll all of last
year. Anyway...we'll be sending home permission slips
soon.

(CLASS cheers; the bell rings.)

MS. MORETTI

All right...head to first period. Have a great day!

(STUDENTS exit; some say "bye.")

MR. DELUCA

Ready for this year?

MS. MORETTI

Ready as I'll ever be. How about you?

MR. DELUCA

Oh, about the same...about the same.

MS. MORETTI

(Smiling)

Enjoy your day.

MR. DELUCA

(Smiling)

You too, ma'am.

(Singing as he exits)

PEEC, PEEC,
Baby PEEC, PEEC.
Ya do it to me fun, fun,
Baby fun, fun...

(Lights fade to black as MR. DELUCA
finishes exiting.)

SCENE 3

INT. DANIELLE'S BEDROOM (09/13/1991)

(Lights up on DANIELLE, STEFFANY, NATALIA, STACY, MANISHA, ELODIE, MEGAN, and SUZIE. They are in their pajamas, playing "would you rather?")

ELODIE

Danielle...would you rather kiss Chris or Jason?

DANIELLE

Ew! Neither!!

ELODIE

You *have* to choose one!

DANIELLE

Ugh, fine. Chris.

(Beat)

Stacy, would you rather kiss Andrew or Dan?

STACY

(Laughing)

Andrew.

(Quickly adding)

But only if there's a cup of mouthwash I can ingest right after that!

(GIRLS laugh.)

STACY

(Calming down)

OK, OK...Natalia. Would you rather kiss Gabe or Jeremy?

NATALIA

(Shyly)

I don't know.

(Pause; uncomfortably)

I pass.

GIRLS

(Taking turns)

No, no! C'mon! You have to answer!!

NATALIA

(Looking toward STEFFANY uncomfortably)

I mean...I just...

DANIELLE

(Intervening; enthusiastically)

Hey, why don't we make some prank calls?

SUZIE

Ooh, good idea Danielle!

(Other GIRLS agree.)

SUZIE

I will add, though...I woulda chosen Gabe.

(Some GIRLS are surprised.)

SUZIE

What? He has gorgeous eyelashes!

DANIELLE

That's true.

MANISHA

I'd, like...totally die to have those eyelashes.

(Some GIRLS agree.)

MEGAN

(Refocusing the group)

OK, so...prank calls.

STEFFANY

Right. Who should we call first?

ELODIE

Adam.

DANIELLE

Elodie, you're always picking on poor Adam.

ELODIE

So? Put it on speaker.

(DANIELLE presses the talk button and
dials; ADAM enters upstage left.)

ADAM

Hello?

ELODIE

(Flirtatiously)

Hey baby...why don't you ever call me anymore?

ADAM

(Confused)

Who is this?

ELODIE

(Flirtatiously)

Don't pretend you don't know who I am.

ADAM

(Still confused)

I mean...should I?

ELODIE

(Perhaps a little angry now)

But honeycakes...we've been secretly dating for three
months now!

ADAM

(Still confused)

What? I don't have a girlfriend.

ELODIE

(Mocking tone; somewhat harsh)

Of course you don't, 'cause you're a *loser*!

(DANIELLE hangs up and everyone laughs;
ADAM exits left. The GIRLS continue to
make calls, but lights are lowered on
them and they are no longer heard.)

EXT. DANIELLE'S HOUSE

(Lights up on GABE and ALAN, who are talking as they enter downstage left wearing all black. They are walking toward DANIELLE's house.)

GABE

This is gonna be totally radical, am I right?

ALAN

(Agreeing)

Bitchin'.

GABE

(Embarrassed)

Shh...what if your mom hears you talk like that?

(ALAN shrugs as he and GABE approach DANIELLE's house and hide. Lights down on them.)

INT. DANIELLE'S BEDROOM

(Lights up on GIRLS. DANIELLE presses play on her boombox and "Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice starts to play.)

DANIELLE

Let's do this ladies!

(The GIRLS get up and start dancing to the song. GABE and ALAN watch and laugh. About 15 or 20 seconds into the song, DANIELLE hears a noise and looks out her window. She notices GABE and ALAN. Lights up on GABE and ALAN. A commotion ensues.)

DANIELLE

(To the other GIRLS, yelling)

They'r spying on us!

(The GIRLS stop dancing and start yelling. They exit in pursuit of GABE and ALAN.)

EXT. DANIELLE'S HOUSE

(As GABE and ALAN are trying to escape, they almost collide with KATIE and AMANDA.)

AMANDA

(To GABE and ALAN, harshly)

Hey buttwives...watch where you're going!

GABE

Sorry.

ALAN

(Realizing who it is)

Oh...hi Amanda. Hi Katie.

(GABE gets lost in KATIE's eyes.)

DANIELLE & FRIENDS

(Offstage)

Get back here! We're gonna get you! We'll get you!!

(ALAN gets GABE's attention.)

ALAN

Uh, hey...Romeo? We need to go.

GABE

(Snapping out of it)

Oh...yeah.

(To KATIE and AMANDA)

Bye.

(GABE and ALAN hastily escape, exiting left. KATIE and AMANDA exit right. DANIELLE and FRIENDS enter moments later from the right, some possibly out of breath.)

ELODIE

Ugh...they're such dweebs!

STACY

I can't believe they were spying on us.

MEGAN

(Distracted, pointing)

Hey, Danielle...is that Sadarf-Barf's house?

DANIELLE

Yup, for sure.

(Adding as a side note)

It's so annoying living right by a teacher.

MEGAN

(Yelling toward house)

Hey, Sadarf-Barf! This is for the B+ you gave me on my report card last year!

(Moons house)

I'm better than a B+!

GIRLS

(Laughing; taking turns)

Megan! Oh my God! Megan!! Put that away!

(GIRLS begin exiting right.)

SUZIE

(To MEGAN)

What if he saw us?

MEGAN

Um...do I look like I care?

(SUZIE shakes her head in disbelief.
Lights fade to black as GIRLS exit
right.)

SCENE 4

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MR. DELUCA'S CLASSROOM
(10/25/1991)

(Lights up on hallway. Indistinct chatter is heard. Some STUDENTS are still arriving. MR. DELUCA is greeting them at the door. If there is an actual entryway, MR. DELUCA is holding the door open with his outstretched arm, causing students to have to walk under his arm to enter the classroom.)

MR. DELUCA

(Individually to STUDENTS as they enter the class)

Greetings. Welcome. Salutations...

(Noticing some shenanigans down the hallway)

Excuse me.

(Racing down the hallway--the commotion itself can be offstage)

Hey, don't make me put you in a headlock again! Knock it off; get to class!!

(Walking calmly back to the classroom door, continuing the greeting process without missing a beat)

Greetings. Welcome. Salutations...

INT. MR. DELUCA'S CLASSROOM

(Lights up on classroom as all STUDENTS have now entered. ELODIE and DANIELLE are finishing a game of MASH as MR. DELUCA looks over their shoulder.)

MR. DELUCA

Ooh, MASH--one of my favorites! Danielle, looks like you'll be living in an apartment and have seven kids. That's a pretty big family, woman.

GABE

You'd better get started soon!

DANIELLE

Ew! Shut up!

ELODIE

Seriously, the boys in this class are the biggest pervs!

MR. DELUCA

All right Elodie...Gabe...everyone: take a chill pill.

(Beat)

Now, take out the packet we started working on yesterday and do something productive.

(CLASS takes out packet. Indistinct chatter begins. Moments later, STEFFANY, via several other STUDENTS, passes a note to GABE. Spotlight follows the note along its journey. Lights fade to black except for spot on GABE when the note reaches him. The chatter subsides. GABE begins reading aloud.)

GABE

October 25, 1991

Dear Gabe,

What's going on? What did I do to you? I don't see why...

(GABE continues to read the letter, but his voice fades out as STEFFANY's fades in.)

STEFFANY

...I don't see why you had to make snotty remarks this morning. How do you know how my foot feels? I didn't treat you like this when you hurt your arm last year. Anyway, write back soon if you have anything worth saying to me.

--Steffany

PS: Don't get mad 'cause of the way I signed this. It's hard to write nice things...

(STEFFANY's voice fades out as GABE's fades back in.)

GABE

...It's hard to write nice things about someone you're mad at.

(Lights back up. GABE turns to ADAM.)

GABE

Great. Steffany's mad at me. Do you think I was making snotty remarks this morning about her foot?

ADAM

Well...saying she was faking it to get out of playing volleyball in gym 'cause she looks like a sea monkey when she serves...yeah, most people would probably find that offensive.

GABE

Oh. I was just trying to be funny.

ADAM

Like last year when you gave me Tic Tacs and deodorant for Hanukkah?

(Making an "I don't know what to tell you" expression, then continuing)

You may wanna try just being nice.

GABE

(Defending himself, but not seriously)

They were the orange Tic Tacs...your favorite.

(Agreeing)

But fine, yeah...I see your point.

(Beat)

I'll write her a note.

(Lights fade to black except for spot on GABE.)

GABE

(While writing note)

October 25, 1991

Dear Steffany,

I'm sorry for being such a jerk before. I shouldn't have made snotty comments. Sometimes I think I'm being funny, but I know it's probably just mean. I promise not to do it again. I'm sorry your foot hurts. I hope you can forgive me.

Love,
Gabe

(GABE folds the note and passes it, via several other STUDENTS, to STEFFANY. Spotlight follows the note along its journey. STEFFANY receives the note, unfolds it, and reads it. Lights back up as STEFFANY turns to GABE and smiles.)

GABE
(To ADAM)
OK, I think we're good.

ADAM
Now don't do anything to mess it up.

GABE
I won't.

ADAM
You will.

(SUZIE yawns without covering her mouth. MR. DELUCA notices.)

MR. DELUCA
Suzie, cover your mouth when you yawn, woman. No one wants to see your uvula.

SUZIE
Sorry.

(Indistinct chatter continues. Moments later, NATALIA, via several other STUDENTS, passes a note to GABE. Spotlight follows the note along its journey. Lights fade to black except for spot on GABE when the note reaches

him. The chatter subsides. GABE begins reading aloud.)

GABE

October 25, 1991

Dear Gabe,

OK, don't take what you're about to read seriously. I'm just joking around. I just want to say that...

(GABE continues to read the letter, but his voice fades out as NATALIA's fades in.)

NATALIA

...I just want to say that you let me down. I, as well as some other people, have the feeling--well, are positive--that you like Steffany. Whenever you first like someone, you usually tell people. When you liked me last year, everyone knew but me in the beginning! I seriously think you should've told me about Steffany. Remember, I'm just kidding! Anyway, I'll talk to you later...

(NATALIA's voice fades out as GABE's fades back in.)

GABE

...I'll talk to you later.
Love,
Natalia

(Lights back up. GABE turns to ADAM.)

GABE

So now *Natalia* thinks I like Steffany.

ADAM

Because you do!

GABE

Well...can you maybe find out if Steffany likes me?

MR. DELUCA

(Addressing the class)

OK everyone, let's change it up. Go work with someone else...make a new friend.

GABE

Unbelievably perfect timing! You can go work with Steffany.

ADAM

What? No!

(Noticing GABE's pleading look)

Ugh...fine.

(STUDENTS all switch partners. ADAM goes to work with STEFFANY; ALAN goes to work with GABE. ADAM can be seen talking to STEFFANY.)

GABE

(To ALAN, who is now seated next to him)

Adam's gonna find out if Steffany likes me.

ALAN

Wait. Likes you? Or *likes* you, likes you?

GABE

Crap. I didn't tell him that. Now he's just gonna find out if she likes me.

(ADAM raises his hand. MR. DELUCA notices.)

MR. DELUCA

Yes, son?

ADAM

I forgot to review an answer with Gabe. Can I go check with him please?

MR. DELUCA

Certainly. Make it quick, though.

(ADAM nods and walks over to GABE and ALAN.)

ADAM
(To GABE)
She said she likes you.

GABE
Likes me? Or *likes* me, likes me?

ADAM
(Obviously not knowing the difference)
Uhhh...

GABE
Like, I like Danielle, but I don't *like* her, like her.
(Adding)
I mean, I *liked* her, liked her last year, but that's when she liked me.

ADAM
(Seeking clarification)
Liked you? Or *liked* you, liked you?

ALAN
Oy vey. Just go ask Steffany if she likes Gabe as...as more than a friend.

ADAM
Fine, whatever. This is so out of my comfort zone.

(ADAM returns to STEFFANY. He can be seen talking to her.)

ALAN
In the meantime, can we talk about *my* problem for once?

GABE
(Understanding the problem right away)
Manisha.

ALAN
Yeah...

GABE

(Nodding)

I gotcha. So maybe ask her to dance at her party tomorrow night?

ALAN

Can you find out if she'd even *want* to?

GABE

Of course! Unlike Adam, I like this kind of stuff.

(MR. DELUCA notices the time.)

MR. DELUCA

(Addressing the class)

Oh Fig Newtons...I totally forgot! Everyone, leave your belongings on your desk; we have an assembly to go to!

(CLASS cheers and begins to scurry about. KEITH begins to cross left to right and stops behind SUZIE, center.)

KEITH

(Standing behind SUZIE, pulling her hair and yelling)

Prune Danish and coffee please!

(KEITH continues walking as SUZIE calls to him.)

SUZIE

(Frustrated)

Gag me with a spoon! You're so lame, Keith!!

(Most of the CLASS has exited. MR. DELUCA calls for GABE.)

MR. DELUCA

Gabe, can I see you please?

GABE

(Approaching MR. DELUCA)

Am I in trouble?

(All of the CLASS has exited.)

MR. DELUCA

(Not overly accusatory)

You know I saw all the note-passing in class today...and you seemed to be at the center of it.

GABE

(Embarrassed)

Oh.

(Beat)

So I *am* in trouble.

MR. DELUCA

(Sincerely)

No.

(Explaining)

Believe it or not, I remember being thirteen. One day I worked up the courage to ask Sally Collins if I could carry her books.

(GABE looks at MR. DELUCA, confused.)

MR. DELUCA

(Explaining)

It's just a thing we did back then.

(Back on topic)

I spent all day worrying about it. Finally I passed her a note, she read it and smiled at me, and--as they say--the rest was history.

GABE

You got married and lived happily ever after?

MR. DELUCA

(Slightly laughing, but not rudely)

No.

(Somewhat melancholy)

I actually ended up moving away a few months later. We promised we'd write to each other...that we'd try and visit over the summer. We had big plans...the plans of two junior high school students in love.

GABE

So *did* you write to each other?

MR. DELUCA

(Implying he never received a response)
I wrote to her...twice.

GABE

Oh.

MR. DELUCA

So look, I know how important all of this is.

GABE

Don't you mean that it just *seems* important to me
right now?

(Adding as an explanation)

That's what my parents always tell me.

MR. DELUCA

(Sincerely)

No.

GABE

But it didn't work out with Sally. Don't you kinda
regret that?

MR. DELUCA

(Gently)

My only regret is how focused I was on wanting to
grow up.

(Breath; refocusing)

So in any event, amid all your note-passing and
friend-making, try to leave a little room for
science...OK?

GABE

(Nods)

Deal.

MR. DELUCA

Great.

(Beat)

Now, let's get to that assembly.

(Lights fade to black as GABE and MR.
DELUCA exit.)

SCENE 5

INT. MANISHA'S BASEMENT (10/26/1991)

(Lights up on KIDS at party, already in progress. "Locomotion" by Kylie Minogue is ending as some KIDS finish dancing. Indistinct chatter is heard. GABE, ALAN, ADAM, and MARK enter together, dressed as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Since they are the only ones wearing costumes, most KIDS point and laugh.)

GABE

(To ALAN, ADAM, and MARK)

It's a Halloween party. Why is no one else wearing a costume?

ALAN

This is so embarrassing. I'm leaving.

MARK

We *can't* leave.

ADAM

That's right. Mother's coming to pick us up in exactly three hours.

GABE

Look...we just have to own it.

(Quoting from the movie; loud enough for everyone to hear)

God, I love being a turtle!

ELODIE

Great, so pretend the oven's your shell and go stick your head in.

(To everyone)

OK everyone...it's time to play truth or dare.

(Most KIDS respond enthusiastically.)

ELODIE

I'll start. Mark, truth or dare?

MARK

Umm...truth.

ELODIE

Have you ever stolen anything?

MARK

Well...at the bake sale last year, I only paid for one cookie, but I took two.

(Most KIDS jeer at MARK's response.)

ELODIE

Ugh...that's it?? Fine, whatever. OK, your turn.

(Adding)

By the way, Mark...I like your costume. Donatello's my favorite.

MARK

(Pleased)

Really?

ELODIE

Psych!

(A little snotty/bossy)

Now go. It's your turn.

MARK

(Shaking his head, somewhat annoyed)

Danielle...truth or dare?

DANIELLE

Dare.

MARK

OK. I dare you to sniff one of Alan's armpits.

ALAN

What? No!

DANIELLE

Barf me out! I'm not doing that.

MARK

You said "dare." And that's your dare.

DANIELLE

Yeah, but that's totally messed up.

(DANIELLE goes over to ALAN and, still
from several feet away, sniffs.)

MARK

That doesn't count!

KIDS

(Chanting)

Sniff it! Sniff it! Sniff it!

(DANIELLE reluctantly complies. KIDS
react with cheers, laughter, and ewws.)

DANIELLE

At least he's wearing deodorant. Some of you other
boys should follow his lead.

ELODIE

OK Danielle...your turn.

DANIELLE

Gabe, truth or dare?

GABE

Truth.

DANIELLE

How many girls have you kissed?

GABE

(Hesitating)

Well, umm...I mean...

(Very quietly, perhaps inaudibly)

None.

ELODIE

None! You said "none"! Why am I not surprised?

GABE

(Sarcastically; this line is a reference to the Bartles & Jaymes commercials and should be delivered as such)

Thank you for your support.

ELODIE

(Scoffing)

You're such a loser. Now go--it's your turn.

GABE

OK, Alan. Truth or dare?

ALAN

Dare.

GABE

I dare you to ask Manisha to slow-dance with you.

KIDS

Ooh!

ALAN

I meant "truth"!

ELODIE

Nope, no switching!

ALAN

(Nervously, quietly)

Manisha, do you wanna dance with me?

MANISHA

What the heck! Sure! Why not!

KIDS

Ooh!

(Lights fade a little as ELODIE turns on the music. "Crazy for You" by Madonna plays. Some KIDS pair off and begin slow-dancing; OTHERS move off to the side. MANISHA and ALAN should be relatively downstage. GABE moves right,

and STEFFANY moves left. ADAM and MARK, who are standing by GABE, encourage GABE to go ask STEFFANY to dance. With reluctance, GABE crosses to speak to STEFFANY.)

GABE

Hey Steffany.

STEFFANY

Hey Gabe.

GABE

So, I was wondering...do you maybe wanna dance?

STEFFANY

With?

GABE

Me?

STEFFANY

I figured that. I was kidding.

GABE

(Laughing nervously)

Oh! Yeah...sorry. I guess I'm kinda nervous.

(Pause)

Wait, so...do you?

STEFFANY

Sure.

(GABE and STEFFANY move downstage center to dance. As they dance, NATALIA notices and, saddened, exits.)

GABE

So...how are piano lessons going?

STEFFANY

Pretty good. How about you?

GABE

Yeah, same.

STEFFANY

Cool.

(Beat)

What song are you learning?

GABE

"You're the Inspiration" by Chicago. How about you?

STEFFANY

It's called "Spinning Song"--it's, like, a classical piece.

GABE

Oh, nice.

(Noticeable pause, somewhat nervous)

OK, so...I know everyone's been saying that, well...maybe I like you, and, um...

STEFFANY

(As if to say "go on")

Yes?

GABE

(Still nervous)

Well, OK...I guess I should just say it.

(Exhales)

Do you maybe wanna...go out with me?

STEFFANY

I don't know. I mean...I don't wanna ruin our friendship.

(Pause)

Can I think about it over the weekend?

GABE

(Smiling, with a sense of relief)

Yeah...of course.

(The song ends. KIDS stop dancing, including GABE and STEFFANY.)

STEFFANY

(Unsure what to say)

OK, well...

GABE

(Somewhat uncomfortably)

Right. OK.

(GABE nods, knowing he needs to retreat to his corner. STEFFANY does the same. As they head back to their respective group of friends, lights fade to black.)

SCENE 6

INT. GABE'S KITCHEN (10/28/1991)

(Lights up on GABE, seated at the kitchen table, center. As in Scene 1, GABE turns on the TV. The theme song from *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* is heard. Moments later, the phone rings. ALAN is calling; he is upstage left.)

GABE

(Shouting so the whole house can hear)

I got it!

(Turning off TV and answering phone)

Hello?

ALAN

Gabe?

GABE

Yeah?

ALAN

It's Alan. I heard from Manisha who heard from Danielle who heard from Elodie that you and Steffany are now officially going out.

GABE

I know...isn't that awesome?!

ALAN

I actually can't believe it.

GABE

Whaddya mean?

ALAN

Well, you've liked her since sixth grade, and she's never wanted to go out with you. And I personally think you've gotten uglier since then, so...

GABE
(Sarcastically)
Thanks. I appreciate that.

ALAN
No problem. So, like...are you gonna actually go on a date or something?

GABE
I don't know...haven't thought about it.

ALAN
Did you kiss her yet?

GABE
We just started going out today!

ALAN
Right. So what are you waiting for?

GABE
Consent?

ALAN
Oh.

(Beat)
Hey, Gabe...I have another call. I gotta go. I'll see you tomorrow, OK?

GABE
Yup! Bye.

ALAN
Congratulations my friend! Bye.

(GABE hangs up; ALAN exits left.)

GABE
(To audience)
Christmas has come early this year to East 48th Street. And Santa knew *exactly* what I wanted.
(Clarifying, almost defensively)
Not that I believe in Santa, obviously.
("Pshh")
That was so last year.

(Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 7

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL (10/30/1991)

(Lights up on STUDENTS as they exit school. GABE, ADAM, MARK, and ALAN are standing together. GABE puts on some cherry ChapStick.)

ALAN

(To GABE)

So did you kiss her yet?

GABE

It's only been two days!

(Adding)

Plus, I hardly even see her. It's like she's trying to avoid me or something.

(Back at ALAN)

Have you kissed Manisha yet?

ALAN

What? We're not even going out!

(Unconvincingly)

And I don't even know if I want to kiss her.

MARK

(Refuting)

Yeah, right...and we don't know all the words to "We Didn't Start the Fire."

GABE

(Singing "We Didn't Start the Fire" by Billy Joel)

Harry Truman, Doris Day, Red China, Gabenie Ray,
South Pacific, Walter Winchell, Joe DiMaggio.

(Pointing to ADAM)

Adam!

ADAM

(Continuing the song)

Joe McCarthy, Richard Nixon, Studebaker, television,
North Korea, South Korea, Marilyn Monroe.

(Pointing to ALAN)

Alan!

ALAN

(Continuing the song)

Rosenbergs, H-bomb, Sugar Ray, Panmunjom,
Brando, *The King and I*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*.

(Pointing to MARK)

Mark!

(While MARK is singing his part, STACY
enters and starts to approach the BOYS.
GABE does not realize.)

MARK

(Continuing the song)

Eisenhower, vaccine, England's got a new queen,
Marciano, Liberace, Santayana goodbye!

(GABE--unaware that STACY has
approached--steps forward to belt out
the chorus, but no one else is
singing.)

GABE

(Singing the chorus)

We didn't start the fire,
It was always burning since the world's been turning.

(Turning to the BOYS; confused)

Guys?

(Some BOYS point to STACY; GABE is
immediately embarrassed.)

STACY

(Shaking her head in disbelief; handing
GABE a note)

Here...Steffany asked me to give this to you.

GABE

(Somewhat confused)

Oh, OK. Why didn't she just give it to me herself?

STACY

(Shrugs, hiding the real answer)

I'm not sure.

(STACY exits. ADAM, MARK, and ALAN start talking among themselves as GABE steps aside and unfolds the note. Lights fade about halfway, and a spot comes up on GABE. STEFFANY is among the other students outside the school building, but she cannot be seen yet. The chatter subsides. GABE begins reading aloud.)

GABE

October 30, 1991

Dear Gabe,

I know you would rather I talk to you, but it's not like I see you all the time. As a matter of fact...

(GABE continues to read the letter, but his voice fades out as STEFFANY's fades in and a spot comes up on her as well. As STEFFANY reads, STUDENTS slowly start exiting and the lights fade to black, ultimately leaving just GABE stage left and STEFFANY stage right.)

STEFFANY

...As a matter of fact, I hardly ever see you at all lately. I think saying we're going out is not by any means bringing us closer. Truthfully, I don't feel comfortable talking to you anymore. Every time I say one word, Alan acts like we're doing something really sick.

For two days people have been coming up to me, asking me all these questions--and I *hate* it. We haven't done anything, and it's not like we're going to. I've been thinking about everything, and it just doesn't make sense. Why do we need a so-called label saying we're going out? As *friends*, we can still do stuff with our other friends--like go to the mall or something--and we'll both be more comfortable.

I have this feeling you're very mad while reading this, but please don't be. But if giving us a label wouldn't change anything, I think we're better off as friends--good friends. Think about it.

Sincerely,

Steffany

(STEFFANY exits right. GABE, noticeably upset, folds the note and exits left. Blackout.)

SCENE 8

INT. GABE'S KITCHEN (10/30/1991)

(Lights up on GABE, seated at the kitchen table, center. As in Scene 1, GABE turns on the TV. The theme song from *The Wonder Years* is heard. Moments later, the phone rings. ALAN is calling; he is upstage left.)

GABE

(Shouting so the whole house can hear)

I got it!

(Turning off TV and answering phone)

Hello?

ALAN

Gabe?

GABE

Yeah?

ALAN

It's Alan.

GABE

Hi.

(Beat)

And before you ask...no, I didn't kiss her yet.

ALAN

(Feeling bad)

Yeah...I heard from Manisha who heard from Danielle who heard from Elodie that Steffany dumped you.

GABE

Oh.

ALAN

Yeah, I can't believe it.

GABE

Why? Two days seems to be my record.

ALAN
(Feeling bad for GABE)

True.

(Beat)

So now what?

GABE
I don't know...I haven't really thought about it.

ALAN
Does she still wanna be friends?

GABE
(Aggravated that this is constantly his
experience)
Friends? Of *course* she wants to be friends! They *all*
wanna be friends. Do I have friends who are girls?
You wouldn't *believe* how many friends I have who are
girls! But do I have a *girlfriend*?

ALAN
No.

GABE
That was rhetorical.

ALAN
Oh. Sorry.

(Beat)
Hey, Gabe...my mom's calling for me, and she sounds
pretty mad. I'll see you tomorrow, OK?

GABE
Yup...bye.

(After GABE hangs up, the phone rings.
It is NATALIA; she is upstage right.)

GABE
(Shouting so the whole house can hear)
I got it!
(Answering phone)
Alan?

NATALIA

(Confused)

Um, no? Natalia.

GABE

Sorry. I was just talking to Alan and thought he was calling back.

NATALIA

No prob.

GABE

So what's up?

NATALIA

I heard the news...Steffany told me.

GABE

(Somewhat surprised)

She did?

NATALIA

Yeah. She said she feels really bad.

GABE

Yeah, well...

NATALIA

She knows how upset you must be, and, well...

GABE

(A little aggressively)

Well, what?

NATALIA

Just that she feels bad.

GABE

Great...me too. So what's that solve?

NATALIA

(Slightly defensively)

I didn't think we were trying to solve anything.

(Pause; more civilly)

I'm just saying that...if you need a friend, I'm here.

GABE

(Feeling bad for attacking)

Oh. Thanks.

(Beat)

I think tonight I'm just gonna play Contra. A guy at work told my dad about this cheat code to start the game with thirty lives instead of three.

NATALIA

(Stating it as common knowledge)

Up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A, start?

GABE

Wait...you knew that?

NATALIA

You didn't?

(Explaining)

It helps having an older brother.

GABE

Ah, gotcha.

NATALIA

(Throwing out an idea)

Hey...it's been a while since our last Kitchen Sink Sundae at Jahn's Ice Cream Parlor. Maybe we can go...y'know, with some friends or whatever.

GABE

I'll check with my parents. I know they wanna go look at more houses in New Jersey, though.

NATALIA

So they definitely wanna move, huh?

GABE

Yeah.

(Pause)

Well, anyway...I should probably go. I'll see you tomorrow.

NATALIA

All right. Bye.

GABE

Bye.

(GABE doesn't hang up right away;
neither does NATALIA.)

NATALIA

Gabe?

GABE

Yeah?

NATALIA

(Gently)

Why didn't you hang up?

GABE

(Plaintively)

I don't know.

(Softly, not accusatory)

Why didn't you?

NATALIA

(Still fairly softly)

I don't know.

(Pause)

Do you want me to stay on a little longer?

(Adding)

You can still play Contra...and if you wanna talk,
I'm here.

GABE

(Appreciatively)

OK, sure...

NATALIA

Things'll get better before you know it...they always
do.

GABE

(Semi-smiling; feeling reassured)

I know.

(Beat)

Thanks.

(GABE picks up a video game cartridge
and blows into it to clean it. Lights
fade to black.)

SCENE 9

CLOSED CURTAIN (12/06/1991)

(Curtain is closed. STUDENTS can be heard singing the PEEC song.)

STUDENTS

(To the tune of "Hands Up" by Ottawan)

PEEC, PEEC,
Baby PEEC, PEEC.
Ya do it to me fun, fun,
Baby fun, fun.
We're going to PEEC, PEEC,
Baby PEEC, PEEC.
Ya do it to me fun, fun,
Baby fun, fun.

MS. MORETTI

All right everyone. We have arrived!

(STUDENTS cheer.)

MS. MORETTI

You know your cabin assignments. Boys, follow the path to the left...girls, to the right. Unpack and we'll meet back here in 30 minutes.

(STUDENTS noisily make their way to their cabins. After a few seconds, the curtain opens and lights come up as STUDENTS start shuffling back in--BOYS from left, GIRLS from right.)

EXT. WOODS

MR. DELUCA

(Once STUDENTS have reassembled)

All right, let's start with some team-building and trust activities. Ms. Moretti and I'll pair you off right now.

(Adding)

And no whining when we give you your partner please.

(MR. DELUCA and MS. MORETTI assign partners. Some STUDENTS inevitably whine. GABE and KATIE are paired together.)

GABE

(Once paired with KATIE)

Hey...Katie, right?

KATIE

(Not quite sure how GABE knows her)

Yeah?

GABE

(Explaining)

I was with Alan that night a few months ago when I kinda, well...ran into you.

KATIE

(Remembering)

Oh...yeah! I remember.

(Beat)

By the way, what were you guys running from?

GABE

It's, um...a long story.

(KATIE looks at GABE with some skepticism.)

MS. MORETTI

(Getting everyone's attention)

All right, all right. Our first exercise will be quite simple. It's called "eye contact." In a nutshell, we know it's *important* to make eye contact, but for some people it's difficult. So what you're going to do is turn to your partner and just look into their eyes for 30 seconds straight...no looking away.

(Some STUDENTS react by laughing or asking "what?")

MS. MORETTI

(Looking at her watch to keep track of time)

Ready? Go!

(STUDENTS begin the exercise. Some STUDENTS try to stifle their laughter.)

MR. DELUCA

(About 10 seconds into the exercise)

Um...this isn't a staring contest. You're allowed to blink!

(Some STUDENTS let out an "ohhh" or a sigh of relief.)

ELODIE

(About 10 seconds later)

This is...so...awkward.

(Some STUDENTS express agreement.)

MS. MORETTI

(Looking at her watch, several seconds later)

And...time's up!

(Most STUDENTS laugh or breathe a sigh of relief. GABE and KATIE continue looking into each other's eyes. After a couple of seconds, ALAN intervenes.)

ALAN

(Nudging GABE)

Uh, hey...Romeo? The exercise is over.

(To KATIE)

Sorry...he has this weird genetic abnormality that causes him to create abnormally awkward moments such as this.

KATIE

He does?

ALAN

He does.

GABE

I do.

(GABE thanks ALAN for "saving" him.)

MR. DELUCA

(Announcing)

OK, now it's time for a scavenger hunt!

(STUDENTS cheer.)

MR. DELUCA

(While walking toward GABE and KATIE)

Keep working with the same partner...

(Side comment to GABE)

You're welcome, Gabe...

(Continuing)

And we'll give each pair a list of ten things you need to find.

(MR. DELUCA and MS. MORETTI start handing out papers.)

MS. MORETTI

(While handing out papers)

You'll have 30 minutes to complete this activity.

We'll reassemble in the main building just down the hill.

(Once all the groups have papers)

All right...is everyone ready?

(STUDENTS yell "yeah" and cheer)

MR. DELUCA

(Once all the groups have papers)

Great! Then we'll see you in half an hour. Go!

(STUDENTS exit in pairs in different directions.)

MR. DELUCA

(To MS. MORETTI)

Hopefully no one gets lost this year.

(MS. MORETTI laughs as she and MR. DELUCA exit right. A few seconds later, GABE and KATIE enter.)

KATIE

(Reading from the list)

A rock with different colors...where're we gonna find that?

GABE

(Looking for the rock)

Hmm...let's keep looking.

(While looking, slight upspeak)

So you're one of the lucky seventh graders who got to come with us.

KATIE

(Also looking for the rock)

Yeah.

GABE

Straight A's all last year, huh?

KATIE

Does that make me a nerd?

GABE

Nah.

(Adding)

No more than some of my other friends.

KATIE

Not you, though?

GABE

(Slightly laughing)

I mean...in theory, maybe. But on my report card...not so much.

(Admitting)

I have a problem doing homework...and studying.

KATIE

Oh.

GABE
(Noticing a rock offstage)

Oh hey...

(GABE exits to retrieve the rock and
then returns.)

GABE
(Holding up the rock)
We've got our rock.

KATIE
Nice!

GABE
OK...what's next?

KATIE
(Referring to the list)
Umm...a feather.

GABE
Stick a feather in my cap and call it macaroni!
(Beat; self-deprecating)
Dammit. This whole time I've been telling myself,
"Don't say anything lame, Gabe; don't say anything
lame"--and then that! C'mon, man.

KATIE
(Smiling; teasing)
OK, so you're not a nerd...you're a *dork*!

GABE
(Acceptingly)
I deserved that.
(Beat)
So, uh...what are you doing over winter break?

KATIE
Florida...my grandparents live down there.

GABE
Oh cool.

KATIE

Yeah. How 'bout you?

GABE

Not much. Just family and stuff.

KATIE

Oh, hey...look!

(KATIE goes offstage to fetch a feather. Seconds later, still offstage, she cries out in pain. GABE hurries toward her.)

GABE

(While running toward KATIE offstage)

Katie!

(GABE returns with KATIE, helping her walk.)

GABE

What happened?

KATIE

I tripped on a branch or something.

GABE

(Panicked, completely overreacting)

Is it broken? It must be broken. It's broken, isn't it?

KATIE

Relax...I don't think it's broken.

(Adding)

But it *does* hurt a lot.

(Quick beat)

Can you help me walk back to the main building?

GABE

(Still panicked)

Walk? You can't walk! You just broke your foot!

KATIE

(In a calming voice)

It's not broken...but yes, that's why I'm asking for your help.

(Reminding, pointing offstage)

Like how you just helped me a few seconds ago?

GABE

(Still frantic, but a little more focused now)

Right, yes. Got it. Let's go.

(KATIE exhales, unsure how helpful GABE will be. GABE helps KATIE but practically drags her along as they exit together. Moments later, MR. DELUCA and MS. MORETTI enter.)

INT. MAIN BUILDING

MS. MORETTI

(Looking at her watch)

I'm guessing some students will be coming back soon.

MR. DELUCA

(Putting his finger over his lips)

Shh. No need to rush it. I'm enjoying the peace and quiet.

(MS. MORETTI smiles. Moments later, GABE and KATIE enter. GABE sees the teachers and starts to run toward them, accidentally allowing KATIE to almost fall. MS. MORETTI immediately goes to assist.)

MS. MORETTI

What happened?

(MS. MORETTI helps KATIE sit.)

GABE

(Completely overreacting)

She's not gonna make it!!

KATIE

I'm gonna make it. I just twisted my ankle.

MR. DELUCA

Ooh...ouch.

(Adding)

Thanks for helping her, Gabe.

(Not sincerely)

You seem to have handled the pressure with the utmost of poise.

GABE

(Trying to be all cool)

Yeah, well...y'know.

MS. MORETTI

(To KATIE)

Do you think you can make it to the nurse? She's just across the way.

KATIE

I think so.

GABE

I can help.

MS. MORETTI

You've probably done enough.

KATIE

No, it's OK. I don't mind.

(MS. MORETTI shrugs as she and GABE help KATIE exit. Moments later, the remaining STUDENTS start trickling in.)

MR. DELUCA

(Greeting STUDENTS as they enter)

Greetings, welcome, salutations...

(Once everyone is assembled)

So, how'd we all do on our scavenger hunt?

(STUDENTS respond in appropriate ways.)

MR. DELUCA

All right...then let me tell you about our plans for the remainder of the day. First we'll head down to the stream and check out the wildlife there. After that, we'll have dinner and then walk through the woods...at night...wearing blindfolds!

(STUDENTS respond with a mix of fear and excitement.)

MR. DELUCA

Let's go! To the creek!

(MR. DELUCA and STUDENTS exit. Moments later, GABE, KATIE, and MS. MORETTI enter. GABE and MS. MORETTI help KATIE sit and elevate her leg.)

MS. MORETTI

Gabe, you've been extremely helpful...and remarkably more composed. But I'm sure you want to join the rest of the group now down by the--

GABE

Actually, I don't mind keeping Katie company...if she wants me to.

KATIE

(Smiling)

I'd like that.

MS. MORETTI

All right then. I'm going to rejoin Mr. DeLuca and the others. There's always someone from the PEEC staff in the office right over there, but I'll be back to check on you soon.

(MS. MORETTI exits.)

GABE

So...how's it feeling?

KATIE

I'll survive.

GABE

(Nods; long pause, unsure what to say)

So...

KATIE

(Trying to get the conversation going)

Who's your favorite singer?

GABE

(Pleased that KATIE has started the conversation)

Billy Joel. How 'bout you?

KATIE

Debbie Gibson.

(Quick beat)

Favorite color?

GABE

Black.

KATIE

That's an unusual choice.

GABE

Thank you.

(Quick beat)

What's yours?

KATIE

Purple.

(Quick beat)

Do you play any sports?

GABE

Baseball.

KATIE

Oh cool! I play softball.

GABE

Nice. What position?

KATIE

Second base. And I pitch sometimes. You?

GABE
First base...and I also pitch.

KATIE
(Perhaps a bit doubtfully)
Really?

GABE
I do. I throw sidearm.

(GABE gets up and demonstrates pitching
sidearm. KATIE watches.)

GABE
(While sitting back down)
Was it weird that I just demonstrated that?

KATIE
I mean, I knew what you meant by sidearm.

GABE
Sorry.

KATIE
It's OK.
(Adding)
Your demonstration was cute.

GABE
Favorite baseball team?

KATIE
Mets. You?

GABE
(Jokingly)
Well...it's been nice knowing you.
(Explaining)
Yankees obviously.

(KATIE smiles.)

GABE

(In a more serious tone)

So hey...I was wondering...when we get back to school, do you think we'll still, like...see each other?

KATIE

I dunno...you're, like...this big eighth-grade hotshot, and I'm pretty much just a seventh-grade nothing.

GABE

I'm flattered you think I'm a hotshot.

(Lightly adding)

I also think it's kinda hilarious that you used the word "hotshot."

(Back to normal tone)

But I mean, I wanna see you too, so...

KATIE

What period do you have lunch?

GABE

Fifth.

KATIE

Oh, me too! I'm surprised I haven't seen you there.

GABE

Well, it's a big cafeteria, and I actually monitor for Mrs. Russo in her classroom a lot during lunch.

KATIE

(A little disappointed)

Oh.

GABE

But I can start coming to the cafeteria more often.

KATIE

OK, then I'll find you there.

GABE

Not if I find you first.

(Beating KATIE to the punch)

Yeah, I know...I'm a dork.

KATIE

(Teasing; smiling)

Stick a feather in your cap!

(GABE smiles at KATIE as the lights
fade.)

SCENE 10

INT. GABE'S KITCHEN (12/14/1991)

(Lights up on GABE, seated at the kitchen table, center. As in Scene 1, GABE turns on the TV. The theme song from *The Golden Girls* is heard. Moments later, the phone rings. KATIE is calling; she is upstage right.)

GABE

(Shouting so the whole house can hear)

I got it!

(Answering phone, then turning off the TV)

Hello?

KATIE

Hi...is Gabe there?

GABE

This is Gabe.

KATIE

Oh, sorry...I wasn't sure if it was your mom.

GABE

(Not seriously)

Ah...the words every 13-year-old boy loves to hear.

KATIE

Yeah...sorry.

GABE

Oh, it's all good.

KATIE

By the way...were you watching *The Golden Girls*?

GABE

(As if to say "that's crazy!")

What? No...

(Hesitantly admitting to it)

Yeah.

(Beat)

So anyway...did you ask your mom?

KATIE

I did. And...

(Hesitantly; regretfully)

She said no.

GABE

(Disappointed)

Oh.

(Beat)

Did she give you a reason?

KATIE

She said I'm not allowed to date until high school.

(Adding)

My dad said not till I'm 40.

(Beat)

Either way, it's not happening now.

(Beat)

But you know I *wanna* go out with you, right?

GABE

Yeah...so then, whadda we do?

KATIE

Well...we can still see each other at lunch and after school...write notes...y'know, that sorta thing.

GABE

So like...going out without actually...*going out*?

KATIE

(Knowing it's not the best solution)

I guess...

GABE

(Implying that he accepts)

OK. I mean, I like you, so...

KATIE

Good.

(Beat)

Hey, just curious...if we actually *could* go out,
where would you wanna go?

GABE

Ah, fantasy dating...my specialty!

(Quick beat)

But yeah...I mean, I dunno.

(Short inhale, like "I got it!")

Actually, I do. The Hayden Planetarium.

KATIE

Oh, wow. I thought you were gonna say the movies or
something more, y'know...typical.

GABE

Nah...movies are for amateurs. If we're fantasy
dating, we might as well live it up.

KATIE

So why the planetarium?

GABE

Remember at PEEC how there was the nighttime walk
but, well...you couldn't walk...so we just hung out
in the main building together?

KATIE

(Waiting to hear more)

Yeah...

GABE

Well, if we go to the planetarium, we can see the
stars.

(Waiting to hear more)

I mean, we can see *some* here in Brooklyn, but,
y'know...there's just too much...

GABE & KATIE

(At the same time; completing GABE's
previous line)

Ambient light.

GABE

Right...ambient light.

KATIE

That sounds perfect to me.

GABE

(Teasing)

Well...call me when you're in high school--or 40, I guess--and we'll make it happen.

KATIE

(Smiling)

I'll keep my calendar open.

(Beat)

Anyway...I'll let you get back to watching Blanche, Dorothy, Rose, and...uh...

GABE

(In a "this should be obvious" tone)

Sophia.

KATIE

Right.

(Not too harshly)

You're really weird, you know that?

GABE

I am who I am.

KATIE

(Smiling)

I know.

(Beat)

Anyway...see you Monday, OK?

GABE

OK. Bye.

KATIE

Bye.

(Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 11

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL (12/20/1991)

(ALAN, ADAM, and MARK have already exited school, along with other STUDENTS.)

ALAN

You guys ready for winter break?

ADAM

So ready! I'm going skiing in the Alps.

MARK

You can't even afford a happy meal at McDonald's.

ALAN

I'm going to the Virgin Islands.

MARK

I'm surprised your family doesn't own them.

(ADAM is stifling laughter.)

ALAN

(To ADAM)

What's so funny?

ADAM

(Letting out the laughter)

"Virgin."

ALAN

This is seriously why you're never gonna have a girlfriend.

(Adding)

That, and your strange infatuation with Mother.

MARK

I don't think I'm ever gonna have a girlfriend either.

(GABE enters and approaches ALAN, ADAM, and MARK.)

GABE

Hey guys.

ALAN, ADAM, & MARK

Hey.

GABE

I hope everyone has a good winter break.

(KATIE enters and waits for GABE
downstage right, their "usual spot.")

MARK

(Pointing to KATIE)

Your girlfriend is waiting.

GABE

She's technically not my girlfriend. Y'know...her mom
being a strict nun and all.

(Adding)

So we just have this school romance thing going...a
"school-mance," if you will.

MARK

(Shaking head)

I won't.

(Beat; motioning)

But anyway, go to her.

GABE

All right guys. Remember I won't be on the bus today,
so...see you in 1992!

ALAN, ADAM, & MARK

Bye!

(As GABE crosses downstage right to
meet with KATIE, ALAN starts narrating
what will happen.)

ALAN

(Making air quotes around "usual spot")

OK, so now he's gonna meet Katie in their "usual
spot"...

(ALAN points downstage right. GABE and KATIE cannot be heard, but their actions coincide with ALAN's narration.)

ALAN

First he'll probably say something dorky that she'll pretend is funny.

(Beat)

Now she'll tell him something that he'll pretend is fascinating even though it's probably lame.

(Beat)

Now she'll brush her hair back, bite her lip, and tilt her head down a little.

(As a side comment)

Apparently that's a thing girls do to flirt.

(Beat)

And now he'll wipe his sweaty palm as discreetly as possible and then go in to hold her hand.

ADAM

(Noticing the bus has arrived)

Bus is here!

(ALAN, ADAM, and MARK exit. The conversation between GABE and KATIE can now be heard.)

KATIE

(Somewhat shyly)

Yeah, fine, OK? I knew what you were talking about at lunch today long before you mentioned the movie *My Girl*.

GABE

(A little surprised; curiosity piqued)

Oh...you did?

KATIE

Yeah. I'm just ever so slightly...nervous?

GABE

But like...you'd want to?

KATIE

I guess...yeah. Just...try surprising me one day--or now...y'know, when I won't expect it.

GABE

OK...yeah.

KATIE

Or you could handle it the way Anna Chlumsky did in the movie.

GABE

(Joking)

Should we practice on our arms first?

(GABE and KATIE look at each other and move a little closer. It becomes evident that they may kiss. Suddenly ELENA can be heard offstage calling for GABE.)

ELENA

Gabe!

(While entering)

Gabe, c'mon...it's time to go.

(GABE and KATIE immediately separate.)

ELENA

(Noticing KATIE)

Oh, hi. Who's this?

GABE

Mom, this is Katie. Katie...this is my mom, Elena-- who has *impeccable* timing.

ELENA

(Enthusiastically)

Oh, Katie! I've heard so many great things about you.

(Adding)

Mainly from overhearing Gabe talking on the phone.

GABE

(Embarrassed; in a hushed tone)

Mom!

ELENA

(Defending herself)

What? You're not the most soft-spoken person in the world.

(To KATIE)

I tell him all the time that his voice carries...

KATIE

(Unsure how to respond; some upspeak)

It's nice to meet you.

ELENA

Likewise.

(Beat)

We have to go, though. Gabe, I have some great news!

GABE

Oh?

(Most STUDENTS have exited by now.)

ELENA

We sold our house!

GABE

(Surprised, not pleasantly)

Sold it?

ELENA

And we found the perfect place in New Jersey.

GABE

(Overwhelmed, not happily)

Oh...wow.

KATIE

(Completely blindsided by the news)

Wait...you're moving?

ELENA

(Confirming)

In March actually.

(All STUDENTS have now exited.)

GABE

This March? Like, in three months?

ELENA

March 13 will be your last day at Hudde.

(Starting to exit)

C'mon, let's get going...we're gonna have a busy winter break. Isn't this great?

(The lights fade as ELENA continues to exit and GABE and KATIE stare at each other in disbelief.)

(End of act.)

ACT II

SCENE 1

INT. CAFETERIA (01/02/1992)

(Lights up on STUDENTS at lunch.
KEITH begins to cross left to
right and stops behind NATALIA,
STACY, DANIELLE, ELODIE, MEGAN,
MANISHA, and SUZIE, who are seated
at a table downstage center.)

KEITH

(Standing behind STACY, pulling her
hair and yelling)

Prune Danish and coffee please!

(KEITH continues walking as STACY calls
to him.)

STACY

(Frustrated)

Omigod, Keith! Bag your face!!

(KEITH shrugs as he exits.)

NATALIA

I can't believe Gabe's moving.

STACY

I mean...he told us he would be, but I didn't think
it'd be so soon.

DANIELLE

Yeah, I just figured after eighth grade was over.

SUZIE

I couldn't imagine missing our dance...yearbook
signing...graduation.

ELODIE

I say good riddance.

MANISHA
(Scolding)

Elodie!

ELODIE
(Shrugging)
What? I'm just speaking my mind.

MEGAN
Yeah, well...you should try to be nicer.

ELODIE
(Rolling eyes)
I'll work on it. I'm going to buy an ice cream.

(ELODIE gets up and exits. The
conversation shifts downstage left to
GABE, ALAN, and ADAM.)

GABE
I dunno if Katie wants me to go over and talk to her.
Can one of you go ask her for me?

ADAM
(Shaking head no)
Sorry Charlie. Not this time.

GABE
(To MARK, commenting on his expression)
Lame.
(Short beat; to ALAN)
Alan?

ALAN
I think you should do this on your own.

GABE
Fine.

(GABE gets up, but then AMANDA
approaches.)

AMANDA
I'm assuming you were gonna talk to Katie?

GABE

Yeah, I guess.

AMANDA

Don't bother.

(Handing GABE a note)

Here.

GABE

Thanks?

AMANDA

(Rolling eyes)

Drop dead.

(AMANDA starts to return to her table.)

GABE

(As AMANDA is walking away, calling to her)

It was nice seeing you, Amanda!

(AMANDA turns and makes an obnoxious gesture, then returns to her table.)

ALAN

Wow. Amanda *really* doesn't like you.

GABE

No duh.

(Explaining)

But that's how it is...they either love me or they hate me.

(Coming to terms with reality)

Mostly they hate me.

(ALAN and ADAM nod in agreement.)

ALAN

So...you gonna read the note?

GABE

I dunno...it's probably bad.

ADAM

You want me to read it to you?

GABE

You mean, like they do on TV shows so the audience can hear? Sure, why not?

(GABE hands ADAM the note. ADAM unfolds it and begins reading.)

ADAM

January 2, 1992

Dear Gabe,

I basically spent all of winter break at my grandparents' house in Florida thinking about this, and I'm just so frustrated. I can't believe you're moving. I mean, you've been so nice to me from the day we met, and I *really* like you. But I think maybe we should just forget about each other now. That way March 13 won't be so bad. It's not like I don't like spending time with you. You're the only person I can *really* talk to. But I think this is for the best.

Love,
Katie

(The bell rings as ADAM folds the note and hands it back to GABE. STUDENTS get up to exit, but GABE remains seated.)

ALAN

(To GABE)

You coming?

GABE

I just...need a minute, OK?

(ALAN and ADAM sit back down with GABE as all remaining STUDENTS exit. MR. DELUCA approaches.)

MR. DELUCA

You guys coming to sixth period?

GABE

I'm moving to New Jersey.

MR. DELUCA

Before sixth period?

GABE

In March.

MR. DELUCA

(To ALAN and ADAM)

Why don't you two head up and ask Mr. Abrams if he can keep an eye on the class for a minute?

ALAN

Sure...no problem.

(ALAN and ADAM exit.)

MR. DELUCA

(Assessing the situation)

All right, so...two more months.

GABE

Yeah. Not nearly enough.

MR. DELUCA

(Sighs)

I get it. Going someplace new can be scary. You've got a whole world here...you're happy.

GABE

Yeah.

(Beat)

So why are my parents trying to take that away from me?

MR. DELUCA

I don't think that's what they're doing. I'm sure they're trying to give you something--something they think is better.

GABE

Well....I wish they'd asked me what *I* wanted.

MR. DELUCA

Sometimes grownups have to make grownup decisions.
But I can promise you...they only want what's best
for you.

GABE

(Shrugs)

I guess.

(Pause; changing topics)

Katie said she thinks we should forget about each
other now.

MR. DELUCA

Is that what you want?

GABE

No...not at all.

MR. DELUCA

Does *she* know that?

(GABE puts his head down and shrugs,
indicating that the answer is no.)

MR. DELUCA

Well...maybe she just needs a little reassurance.

(Beat)

Now c'mon...I'll walk you to science class.

(MR. DELUCA and GABE begin to exit
right.)

GABE

Thanks for always being there for me.

MR. DELUCA

Thanks for always letting me be there for you.

(Lights fade to black as GABE and MR.
DELUCA finish exiting.)

SCENE 2

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MR. DELUCA'S CLASSROOM
(01/02/1992)

(Lights up on hallway. Indistinct chatter is heard. Some STUDENTS are still arriving. KATIE and AMANDA are passing by.)

KATIE

(Pointing to the classroom)
Gabe has science now.

AMANDA

(Couldn't care less)
Fascinating.

KATIE

I wonder if I should talk to him.

AMANDA

The note I gave him for you suggested otherwise.

KATIE

You read it?

AMANDA

Was I not supposed to?

KATIE

(Shrugging)
Whatever.

AMANDA

Do you wanna talk to him?

KATIE

I dunno...

(As KATIE and AMANDA keep walking, an UNKNOWN BOY touches KATIE's butt and then runs away.)

KATIE
(Speechless)
Did that boy just...

AMANDA
(Angry)
He grabbed your butt! Omigod...what a creep!!

KATIE
What should I do?

AMANDA
What *can* you do? We have no idea who he is.

KATIE
Ugh...ridiculous.

AMANDA
This is why I hate boys. They're scum.

(KATIE and AMANDA exit. Lights down on hallway.)

INT. MR. DELUCA'S CLASSROOM

(Lights up on classroom as all STUDENTS and MR. DELUCA have now entered. SUZIE can be seen yawning without covering her mouth.)

MR. DELUCA
(Approaching SUZIE)
Suzie, what did we say about that uvula of yours?

SUZIE
No one wants to see it?

MR. DELUCA
So cover your mouth, woman! And class hasn't even started yet. How bored could you possibly be?

SUZIE
Sorry...I've had a couple of long nights.

MR. DELUCA

(Referring to lyrics from "Crocodile
Rock")

Crying by the record machine? Dreaming of your Chevy
and your old blue jeans?

SUZIE

(Not getting the reference; unsure how
else to respond)

No?

MR. DELUCA

Not an Elton John fan, I see.

(Beat; addressing whole class)

All right, folks...time for some partner work! Keep
working on the assignment we started before winter
break.

(STUDENTS get to work; GABE approaches
MR. DELUCA.)

GABE

Mark's absent today. What should I do?

(NATALIA approaches MR. DELUCA.)

MR. DELUCA

Hmm...

NATALIA

Steffany's also absent.

MR. DELUCA

Then I now pronounce you partner and partner. You may
get to work.

(GABE and NATALIA walk toward an open
place to sit together.)

NATALIA

(About MR. DELUCA)

He's so...odd.

GABE

But also kinda groovy.

(GABE and NATALIA sit.)

NATALIA

What is this, the *Brady Bunch*?

GABE

Sorry...got my decades confused for a moment.

NATALIA

No problem.

(Beat)

Anyway...um...I just want you to know I think it totally sucks that you're moving.

GABE

Yeah...

NATALIA

How'd Katie take it?

GABE

Not well.

(Adding somewhat optimistically)

But I think I know what I need to do.

NATALIA

What's that?

GABE

Write her a note.

NATALIA

Seems to be a theme I've picked up on.

(GABE nods. Lights fade to black except for spot on GABE.)

GABE

(While writing note)

January 2, 1992

Dear Katie,

The thought of moving in two months makes me really sad. But the thought of being here for two more months and *not* having you in my life makes me

absolutely miserable. You're the best thing that's ever happened to me, and I don't want to lose you. So please don't give up on us yet.

Love,

Gabe

PS: If you're willing to talk, meet me in our usual spot after school?

(Light back up as GABE folds the note and raises his hand.)

MR. DELUCA

(Noticing GABE's raised hand)

Yes, son?

GABE

Can I go to the bathroom?

MR. DELUCA

Here??

GABE

(Knowing MR. DELUCA isn't serious)

In the bathroom.

MR. DELUCA

May the force be with you.

(GABE exits the classroom. MR. DELUCA gets the class's attention.)

MR. DELUCA

All right...so you know Gabe's kinda bummed about moving, and I know at least a few of you will miss him. So I was thinking maybe we could do something fun for him on his last day in March. Any thoughts?

(Noticing NATALIA's raised hand)

Natalia?

NATALIA

Well...since he's gonna miss our senior dance, maybe we can...I dunno...have, like...a mini-dance or something?

MR. DELUCA

That's a perfectly good idea.

(Noticing STACY's raised hand)

Stacy?

STACY

Will we have a yearbook by then?

MR. DELUCA

I can pull a few strings.

STACY

Maybe we can sign it and give it to him at the dance.

MR. DELUCA

Excellent.

(Noticing ALAN's raised hand)

Alan?

ALAN

He likes mixtapes. Maybe we can make him a couple?

ADAM

Lordy I hope there are tapes.

(Noticing some STUDENTS are staring)

What? I love mixtapes.

MR. DELUCA

Great--then that's your job, son.

DANIELLE

OK...and what about food?

NATALIA

Well, I know he likes black and white cookies. I can make some with my mom.

(GABE enters as MEGAN is speaking.)

MEGAN

I can bring chips.

GABE

Ooh...chips? For what?

MEGAN

(Thinking on her feet)

Um...Mr. DeLuca was telling us about this bingo game for charity, and I have those chips you put on your board when they call your number.

GABE

Oh, cool! That sounds like fun. When is it?

ELODIE

(Responding quickly)

April.

(Adding)

You'll be in New Jersey by then.

(Beat)

Sorry.

GABE

(Somewhat sadly)

Oh.

MR. DELUCA

OK everyone...back to work.

(GABE sits back down next to NATALIA.)

GABE

(Pointing to the packet)

So...what number are we up to?

NATALIA

Seven.

GABE

(Reading from the packet)

Describe four mechanisms that make air rise.

NATALIA

(Thinking)

Hmm...well, there's orographic lifting...and convergence...and, um...

GABE

There's one with a wedgie, right?

NATALIA
(Laughing)
Oh...you mean frontal wedging?

GABE
You sure? That kinda sounds worse.

NATALIA
(Gently laughing)
Hey...can I ask you something kinda awkward?

GABE
(Somewhat randomly)
Does it have to do with wedgies?

NATALIA
(Shaking head)
No.

GABE
OK then...go for it.

NATALIA
Well, Alan said you were thinking about kissing
Katie.

GABE
He told you that?

NATALIA
I think he's trying to live vicariously through you.

(GABE semi-shrugs and nods.)

NATALIA
So...have you yet?

GABE
No.

NATALIA
OK, I know this is gonna sound weird, but just bear
with me.

GABE
(Unsure where this is going)

OK...

NATALIA
Well, remember when I agreed to be your girlfriend
last year for, like...

GABE
Two days?

NATALIA
(Almost regretfully)
Yeah, two days.
(Pause)
Anyway...I didn't know if that meant, like...I had to
kiss you.
(Adding)
I was actually *really* nervous about it.

GABE
'Cause you didn't want to?

NATALIA
No. Just 'cause it woulda been my first kiss, and
so...
(Refocusing; implying GABE should go
for it)
But I guess my point is...if Katie's telling you she
wants to--and if you want to--then...
(Voice trails off as she shrugs)

(GABE nods and realizes that the
conversation feels a little
uncomfortable.)

GABE
Thanks.
(Helping change the topic; pointing to
the paper)
So...I guess we should get back to our assignment,
right?

NATALIA
Sure.

GABE

(Remembering the correct term)

We were on...frontal wedging.

NATALIA

That's right.

(GABE looks down at his paper and starts working. NATALIA looks at him with a wistful smile and then gets back to work. Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 3

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL (01/02/1992)

(Lights up on STUDENTS as they exit school. As KATIE is exiting, the UNKNOWN BOY touches her butt again. GABE happens to notice and chases after him.)

GABE

(Confronting UNKNOWN BOY)

Hey! I saw what you did!

UNKNOWN BOY

And?

GABE

I think you owe her an apology.

UNKNOWN BOY

(Attempting to leave)

I don't care what you think. Get outta my way.

GABE

(Blocking UNKNOWN BOY's path)

You gonna go apologize?

(Some STUDENTS have gathered around GABE and UNKNOWN BOY.)

UNKNOWN BOY

No, but I *am* gonna pound your face in if you don't move.

STUDENTS

(Chanting)

Fight! Fight! Fight!

(GABE looks around and realizes he must make a decision.)

GABE

Look...just go apologize.

UNKNOWN BOY

I warned you...

(As it looks inevitable that GABE is going to get punched, MR. DELUCA intervenes.)

MR. DELUCA

(Separating UNKNOWN BOY from GABE)

Hey, hey...if you wanna punch somebody, punch me.

(UNKNOWN BOY backs away; the commotion dies down.)

MR. DELUCA

(To STUDENTS)

The rest of you, get outta here.

(STUDENTS scatter; UNKNOWN BOY tries to leave but MR. DELUCA grabs him by his collar.)

MR. DELUCA

(To UNKNOWN BOY)

Not you.

(Pause)

What happened?

(KATIE approaches.)

UNKNOWN BOY

(Shrugging)

Nothing.

KATIE

(Embarrassed)

He...he touched my butt...twice today.

MR. DELUCA

(Angry)

You did *what*?

UNKNOWN BOY

(Shrugging; trying to downplay it)

She's cute.

MR. DELUCA

Katie, I can only imagine how uncomfortable that made you feel. It should never have happened.

(Firmly; while looking at UNKNOWN BOY)

And I can guarantee you it won't happen again.

(MR. DELUCA drags UNKNOWN BOY along as they exit. GABE and KATIE start walking toward their usual spot.)

KATIE

(To GABE)

Thanks for standing up for me.

GABE

Well, it was really all Mr. DeLuca.

(Admitting)

I was about to get the crap kicked out of me.

KATIE

(Taking GABE by the hands)

I still think you were brave. Thank you.

(GABE and KATIE look at each other and move a little closer. It becomes evident that they may kiss. Suddenly ELENA can be heard offstage calling for GABE.)

ELENA

Gabe!

(While entering)

Gabe, c'mon...it's time to go!

(GABE and KATIE immediately separate.)

GABE

(Frustrated that this kiss was thwarted)

I mean, c'mon! What are the odds?!

ELENA

Hi Katie.

KATIE

Hello.

ELENA

Gabe, let's go. We have to get to the dermatologist.

(To KATIE, as if telling her a secret)

He has a little rash.

(KATIE smiles or laughs a little.)

GABE

(Embarrassed)

Mom!

ELENA

What's the big deal? We've all had rashes...right
Katie?

KATIE

(Somewhat uneasily)

Um...I don't know?

ELENA

(Beat)

At least I didn't tell her where it is.

GABE

(Embarrassed again)

Really?!

(KATIE smiles but also displays
compassion toward GABE.)

GABE

(Bowing head)

See you tomorrow?

KATIE

Bye.

(Lights fade to black as GABE and ELENA
exit.)

SCENE 4

INT. CAFETERIA (02/14/1992)

(Lights up on STUDENTS at lunch. STEFFANY, NATALIA, STACY, DANIELLE, ELODIE, MEGAN, MANISHA, SUZIE, ALAN, ADAM, and MARK are seated at a table downstage center. ALAN is sitting next to MANISHA.)

MANISHA

Adam, have you started working on the mixtapes yet?

ADAM

We still have a month before Gabe moves. I have a whole process for this. Trust the process.

MANISHA

(Thinking ADAM is kinda weird)

OK.

STEFFANY

Maybe we can get him stationery so he can write to us, y'know?

MEGAN

I like that idea!

(GABE enters and approaches. DANIELLE notices and quiets everyone down.)

DANIELLE

Oh, hey Gabe! I thought you were monitoring for Mrs. Russo today.

GABE

Turns out she's absent.

(Beat)

Why are you all sitting together?

STACY

(Coming up with a reason; slight
upspeak)

We're, um...trying something new for Valentine's
Day...sharing the love.

ALAN

(Reaching into his backpack and taking
out a teddy bear)

Speaking of which...

(Handing the bear to MANISHA)

Happy Valentine's Day Manisha.

(FRIENDS respond with oohs and ahhs.)

MANISHA

Aww...thank you!

(Beat; stated straightforwardly)

I didn't get you anything.

ALAN

That's OK.

(Beat)

I was wondering, though...

(Noticing that all of his FRIENDS are
staring at him)

Um...why don't we go talk over there for a minute?

(FRIENDS groan in disappointment; ALAN
and MANISHA walk to a quieter spot
downstage left.)

MANISHA

What's up?

ALAN

OK, I know this is totally cliché 'cause it's
Valentine's Day, but...we generally seem to like each
other, right?

MANISHA

(Confirming)

It would appear that way.

ALAN

OK, so then...do you think you maybe wanna be my girlfriend?

MANISHA

What the heck! Sure! Why not!

ALAN

(Doubtfully)

Wait...were you being serious or sarcastic?

MANISHA

(Sincerely)

Serious.

ALAN

(Processing)

Oh, wow. OK. This is...awesome!

(Throwing it out there)

Do you wanna kiss?

MANISHA

Not really.

ALAN

All right, then.

(GABE has made his way over to KATIE's table downstage right. AMANDA--who is dressed all in black, including a skull and crossbones--and a couple of other FRIENDS leave.)

GABE

I was hoping Valentine's Day would soften her a bit.

KATIE

No...she's one of those who complains about it being a commercialized holiday that only profits the greeting-card industry. I, on the other hand, think it's sweet...now that I have someone to celebrate it with.

(Taking a gift out and handing it to GABE)

Happy Valentine's Day!

GABE

(While unwrapping his gift)

You didn't hafta get me anything.

KATIE

(Pointing to the gift GABE has with him)

You didn't have to get me anything either.

GABE

(Joking, but said seriously enough)

What, this? It's for Mr. DeLuca.

(Finishing opening the gift he received)

Oh wow! A Billy Joel piano book! Awesome!!

KATIE

If you have it already, the guy at Sam Ash said you could exchange it.

GABE

I actually *don't* have this one.

(Beat)

It's great...thank you.

(Handing KATIE the gift he has for her)

Happy Valentine's Day.

KATIE

(Opening the gift to reveal a cassette tape)

Oh cool!

GABE

Do you already have it? I know you like Debbie Gibson, so...

KATIE

No...I have her first two albums, but not this one. Thank you so much! I love you.

(Quickly correcting herself)

I mean "it." I love *it*.

GABE
(Not letting it slide)
Mmm...you definitely said "you" first.

KATIE
(Hesitantly)
Right. I mean, I guess I've been thinking, and well...

GABE
(Politely interrupting)
Katie?

KATIE
Yeah?

GABE
I love you.

KATIE
(Smiling)
I love you too.

(GABE and KATIE hug. The bell rings.
STUDENTS exit. Lights fade to black as
GABE and KATIE exit holding hands.)

SCENE 5

INT. GABE'S KITCHEN (03/12/1992)

(Lights up on GABE, seated at the kitchen table, center. Cardboard boxes for moving are scattered about. As in Act I, Scene 1, GABE turns on the TV. The theme song from *Brooklyn Bridge* is heard. Moments later, the phone rings. ALAN is calling; he is upstage left.)

GABE

(Shouting so the whole house can hear)

I got it!

(Turning off TV and answering phone)

Hello?

ALAN

Gabe?

GABE

Yeah. Has anyone else ever answered?

ALAN

Good point.

(Beat)

So anyway...how's everything?

GABE

Aside from the fact that I'm leaving the only home I've ever known in two days?

ALAN

(Not sincerely)

Well, yeah...aside from that.

GABE

Oh. Then great!

ALAN

Are you all packed?

GABE

Pretty much.

(Beat)

It's weird, y'know? I wish I could just take you all with me.

ALAN

We'll still keep in touch.

GABE

I hope.

ALAN

How's it going with Katie?

GABE

Y'know...

ALAN

Yeah.

GABE

You wanna hear the note she gave me today?

ALAN

(Not seriously)

More than anything.

GABE

(Picking up the note and unfolding it)

March 12, 1992

Dear Gabe,

All these songs were on the radio this morning:

"Lonely Is the Night"

"I Don't Wanna Live Without Your Love"

"Look Away"

"If I Could Turn Back Time"

"Missing You Now"

"Every Road Leads Back to You"

ALAN

(Interrupting)

That must've been one *really* depressed DJ.

GABE

Whatever...maybe she was channel surfing. Anyway, may I continue?

ALAN

Yeah, sorry.

GABE

(Continuing from the note)

It was hell listening to one sad song after another...thinking of you--which is pretty pathetic. Just kidding!

In class today, Amanda told Ms. Barton that I was upset because you're moving. I was flabbergasted! Why did I use that word? Clearly I'm not thinking straight.

But she was right--I will miss you so much. I wish I could just hold you and never let you go so you won't have to leave. You know, I really like being with you. So much for not crying when we say goodbye...I'm almost crying now.

Anyway, I'll see you on--as I like to call it--the day from hell.

Love,
Katie

ALAN

"Day from hell"?

GABE

That's what she wrote.

ALAN

Pretty dramatic.

GABE

(Sighs)

I guess.

(Pause)

Well anyway...I'm gonna get going now, OK? I have a little more packing to do.

ALAN

OK...bye.

GABE

Bye.

(GABE hangs up; ALAN exits left. The
lights fade to black.)

SCENE 6

EXT. FRONT OF SCHOOL (03/13/1992)

(Lights up on STUDENTS as they exit school for the day. KATIE is waiting for GABE in their usual spot. As GABE enters and approaches KATIE, he puts on some cherry ChapStick.)

GABE
(Sadly)

Hey.

KATIE
(Sadly)

Hey.

GABE
So this is it.

KATIE
(Knowing the answer)
You sure you're moving tomorrow, right?

GABE
(Knowing the idea isn't plausible)
I have an idea! I can move in with you.

KATIE
My mom wouldn't even let me *go out* with you. There's no way she's letting you *move in*.

GABE
Yeah, OK...I see your point.

KATIE
Yeah.
(Faking pain in her foot, but GABE isn't supposed to know she's faking)
Ow! Ow!

GABE
(Somewhat alarmed)
What--what's the matter?

KATIE
(Still in "pain")
In gym today I hurt my foot. It's bothering me again.

GABE
(Panicked, starting to overreact)
Is it broken? It's broken. It's the same foot you
hurt at PEEC, isn't it? It probably didn't heal right
and now--

KATIE
(Interrupting)
Relax...I don't think it's broken.
(Beat)
But Mr. Silver said to see him if it started hurting
again, so can you help me walk back to the gym?

GABE
(Still frantic, but a little more
focused now)
Right, yes. I got this. Let's go.

(GABE practically drags KATIE along as
they exit together.)

INT. GYMNASIUM

(Moments later, STUDENTS and TEACHERS
enter. There is a surprise party for
GABE in the gym. Once STUDENTS and
TEACHERS are in place, lights fade to
almost black. GABE and KATIE enter.)

GABE
(Confused)
Uhh...why's it so dark in here?

(Lights back up.)

STUDENTS & TEACHERS
(Yelling)

Surprise!!

GABE
(Still confused, to KATIE)
Why is everyone yelling "surprise" for your broken
foot?

KATIE
Not for *me*, you moron. For *you*!
(Adding)
And for the hundredth time, it's *not* broken!

GABE
(Starting to feel overwhelmed)
Wait...what? This is for me?

(STEFFANY, NATALIA, STACY, DANIELLE,
ELODIE, MEGAN, MANISHA, SUZIE, ALAN,
ADAM, and MARK approach.)

GABE
(Still in awe; looking for an
explanation)
Guys?

NATALIA
We all agreed--well, everyone except Elodie...

(ELODIE nods/shrugs in confirmation.)

NATALIA
We all wanted to do something special for you on your
last day.

GABE
(Humbly)
Wow. This is amazing...thank you.
(To KATIE)
So wait...your foot's fine, right?

KATIE
(Dismissively but not rudely)
You're so dense.

ALAN

(For everyone to hear)

All right, let's get this party started!

("Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice starts to play.)

DANIELLE

Ladies!

(The GIRLS dance to part of the song. When they finish, STUDENTS cheer. Next, "One Hand, One Heart" by Debbie Gibson starts to play. The lights fade about halfway. Some STUDENTS pair off and begin to slow-dance. MANISHA and ALAN dance together, as do GABE and KATIE. Spotlight on MANISHA and ALAN, who are dancing downstage right.)

MANISHA

I think Gabe was really surprised.

ALAN

Definitely. Did you see the look on his face?

MANISHA

(Smiling, perhaps laughing a bit)

It was classic.

ALAN

I still can't believe he's leaving, y'know?

MANISHA

Yeah.

ALAN

Well, I'm glad you're not going anywhere at least.

(MANISHA looks away.)

ALAN

Why'd you look away?

MANISHA
(Sighing)

Well...

ALAN
(Nervously)

Manisha?

MANISHA
I was gonna wait till after Gabe moved to tell you this...y'know, one thing at a time...but I kinda found out yesterday I got accepted to Brentwood Academy for high school.

ALAN
(Happy for MANISHA, but realizing what this means)
Oh wow...that's--that's awesome! Good for you.

MANISHA
(Quietly)
Thanks.
(Trying to provide some comfort)
But yeah, I mean...just 'cause we won't be going to the same school doesn't mean we can't... We can still, y'know...maybe see each other on weekends or...
(Voice trails off, knowing she's probably not speaking the truth)

ALAN
(Sincerely)
I'm happy for you. You're gonna do great there.

MANISHA
(Quietly)
Thanks.

(ALAN and MANISHA continue dancing as their spotlight goes off. Spotlight on GABE and KATIE, who are dancing downstage left.)

GABE
Is this Debbie Gibson?

KATIE

Yeah. Do you know the song?

GABE

No. Is it ever on the radio?

KATIE

Not really. It's on the tape you got me for Valentine's Day. And when I heard it, it made me think of, well...us.

GABE

Oh.

KATIE

So I asked Natalia if they could play it here today.

GABE

This'll be "our song."

KATIE

OK. I'll think of you whenever I listen to it.

(GABE and KATIE hold each other a little closer and continue dancing as their spotlight goes off. Spotlight on ALAN and MANISHA, who are still dancing downstage right.)

ALAN

Tomorrow's our one-month anniversary.

MANISHA

I know!

(Almost admitting a secret)

I'm glad you asked me out.

ALAN

(Pleasantly surprised)

Really?

MANISHA

Well, I mean...I always kinda liked you, y'know?

ALAN

I've always liked you too. And you're my first real girlfriend.

(Starting to ramble)

I mean...I met this girl at camp last summer, but it wasn't the same. And then this whole year I've wanted to ask you out, and then I finally got the nerve to and--

MANISHA

(Interrupting)

Alan?

ALAN

Yeah?

MANISHA

Are you gonna keep talking or are you gonna kiss me?

ALAN

(Knowing it's time)

Oh...OK.

(Beat)

I'm comin' in.

(ALAN kisses MANISHA. After the kiss, they move closer to each other and continue to dance as their spotlight goes off. Spotlight on GABE and KATIE, who are still dancing downstage left.)

KATIE

So...you ready for your new school?

GABE

No. It's like...all of a sudden on Monday, I'll be sitting in class with complete strangers.

KATIE

And I'll be standing there after school, all alone.

GABE

Well...I'll think of you at 2:30.

(Not sure whether KATIE will go for it)

And maybe, if you think of me, it'll feel like we're together.

(KATIE rests her head on GABE's shoulder. A few moments later, the song ends and STUDENTS stop dancing. Lights up as NATALIA makes an announcement.)

NATALIA

All right everyone. Can I have your attention please?

(Once everyone is listening)

Gabe, we have a few things we'd like to give you to remember us by.

(Calling on ADAM to present first gift)

Adam?

(ADAM approaches with two cassette tapes and an envelope.)

ADAM

(Handing the tapes and envelope to GABE)

OK, so here are two specially made mixtapes with songs we all know you like and/or that remind us of you and/or something funny.

GABE

(Poking fun)

Thank you. This is great and/or awesome!

ADAM

And in the envelope is an explanation of why each song was chosen--in case you couldn't figure it out.

GABE

Adam, you're the mixtape master. Thank you.

(STEFFANY approaches with a stationery set.)

STEFFANY

(Handing the stationery to GABE)

OK, so passing notes in class won't be an option for us anymore, but we got you this stationery so you could at least mail us letters every now and then.

GABE

I will...I promise. Thanks Steffany.

NATALIA

(Handing GABE a yearbook)

OK, and finally...we have this for you.

GABE

(Confused and surprised as he looks at
the book)

Wait...it's only March. How'd you get a yearbook?

NATALIA

Mr. DeLuca knows a guy.

GABE

Wow--thank you! This is incredible.

NATALIA

And it's all signed and everything.

GABE

I'm...I'm speechless. Thank you.

(NATALIA hands GABE a bag to put his
gifts in. GABE walks centerstage right
to a table and puts the bag down. MR.
DELUCA approaches.)

MR. DELUCA

I didn't wanna get all mushy in front of everyone,
but this is for you.

(MR. DELUCA hands GABE a box.)

GABE

(Amazed and grateful)

A Cross Pen? Wow! You didn't hafta...

MR. DELUCA

Well, we all know your note-passing game is pretty
strong. I figured now you could also do it in style.

GABE

Thanks Mr. DeLuca. I really appreciate it.

MR. DELUCA

By the way, hold on to all those notes. Put 'em in a shoebox somewhere. Trust me...one day when you're older, you'll be glad you did.

GABE

I will. Thank you.

(GABE and MR. DELUCA shake hands, which turns into a hug.)

GABE

(Noticeably sad)

I'm just gonna...go get a breath of air.

(MR. DELUCA nods as GABE takes the yearbook and exits. The curtain closes, and GABE reenters downstage right, in the same spot where he and KATIE usually meet. The curtain opens to reveal ALAN, ADAM, MARK, DANIELLE, STEFFANY, NATALIA, STACY, MANISHA, ELODIE, MEGAN, SUZIE, MS. MORETTI, MR. DELUCA, and KATIE. Similar to the opening scene, they read the yearbook messages they wrote to GABE. Spotlight on each person when it's their turn. Each person exits after speaking.)

STEFFANY

Dear Gabe, You've been a great friend these past three years. We've had a lot of good times together, and I'll miss you. Let's keep in touch--call me sometime. I hope you enjoy New Jersey! I will come and visit you. Good luck. Love, Steffany.

ADAM

Gabe--A riddle for you: what do Dolly Parton and Pamela Anderson have in common? Answer: if you don't know, you're not the real Gabe. I'll talk to you soon! Mets rule. --Adam.

MS. MORETTI

Dear Gabe, It has been a pleasure knowing you. Try to have fun wherever your future leads--these really are the best years of your life. Please keep in touch.
--Ms. Moretti.

DANIELLE

Dear Gabe, We've been through a lot this year. Good luck in New Jersey. Have a cool summer, and call Katie. Love, Danielle. PS: Sorry I wrote so big!

MANISHA

Dear Gabe, Wow! How could this year go by so quickly? I can't believe I won't see you every day. I'll miss ya much. (Don't ask where I got that from--"much"?) Anyway, good luck with everything. You've been a great friend! Love, Manisha.

MARK

Dear Gabe, I'm trying to write very small. Let me know how the beaches are in New Jersey. Long live the king. Invite me to the wedding. --Mark.

STACY

Dear Gabe, I'll miss you! You've been a true friend these past three years. You listened to my problems and were great. Thank you! Good luck in New Jersey. Love, Stacy.

ELODIE

Dear Gabe, You're the best. I'll miss you. Love ya, Elodie. PS: You *do* appreciate how difficult that was for me, right?

SUZIE

Dear Gabe, I can't believe I'll never see you again. I'll definitely never forget you--that's for sure. Have a great life, and good luck with Katie. You are a wonderful friend. Love, Suzie.

MEGAN

Dear Gabe, Though we didn't know each other well in seventh grade, we're friends now in eighth grade. You're nice, and I'll miss you. Love, Megan.

MR. DELUCA

Dear Gabe, It's hard to put this year into words. Actually, it's feelings that are hard to put into words. But of all the kids in your class, what you had to say and the look in your eyes meant the most to me. At first, I wasn't so sure. But as time went by, I knew you could be trusted. Doesn't often happen. I'm glad it did. When you finally find what you want to do, I'm sure you'll do it. Best of luck, Mr. DeLuca.

ALAN

Dear Gabe, You have been one of my best friends for so long because you were always there for me. I remember when we first met in sixth grade. I thought you were weird, and you thought I was weird--so we hit it off right away. Good luck in the future. I hope we can keep in touch. Your friend, Alan.

NATALIA

Dear Gabe, I can't even put into words all the fun--and heartache--we've been through. Just because you're moving to New Jersey doesn't mean we can't keep in touch. Thinking about it makes me miss you already. Please call. Love, Natalia. PS: I know we've grown apart this year--I just hope that doesn't mean you'll forget me.

(GABE and KATIE are the last two on stage. KATIE approaches GABE downstage right.)

GABE

(Sighs; melancholy)

So...

KATIE

(Equally as sad)

Yeah.

GABE

I'm really gonna miss you.

KATIE

I'll miss you.

(Softly adding)

I've never felt this sad in my entire life.

GABE

Me neither.

(Adding)

I promise I'll write to you...call you...

KATIE

Me too.

GABE

And maybe we can visit over the summer or something.

KATIE

I'm gonna be in Vermont...sleepaway camp.

(Realizing they likely won't see each
other again but trying to be
reassuring)

But...we'll figure something out.

GABE

(Not feeling very reassured)

Yeah.

KATIE

(Sadly)

Yeah.

(Pause)

Well...I guess I should get going now.

(KATIE puts out her arms to initiate a hug. After the hug, GABE uses his thumb to wipe a tear that has fallen from KATIE's eye. Then, with his hands on her face, GABE kisses KATIE.)

KATIE

(Sadly)

Bye.

GABE

(Offering)

I can walk you to your mom's car.

KATIE

(Declining)

That's OK. I wanna remember you just like this...here
in our usual spot...with that same look in your eyes
as when we met at PEEC.

(Quietly)

Bye Gabe.

GABE

(Quietly)

Bye.

(KATIE exits. GABE gently clutches the
yearbook to his chest and looks down,
sad.)

(End of act.)

CURTAIN CALL

GROUP 1: UNNAMED CHARACTERS (if applicable)

GROUP 2: UNKNOWN BOY, ELENA, KEITH, AMANDA

GROUP 3: SUZIE, STACY, DANIELLE, ELODIE, MEGAN

GROUP 4: MS. MORETTI, MR. DELUCA

GROUP 5: MANISHA, STEFFANY, NATALIA

GROUP 6: MARK, ADAM, ALAN

GROUP 7: KATIE, GABE