CRUSHING PREMONITION

Characters

Kristoph, a quick-witted and slightly mean boy.
Naomi, a headstrong, kind, and optimistic girl. New in town.
Simon, reserved and shy. Seems nerdy, but not very smart.
Khalid, an enthusiastic and friendly jock.
Irene, a hot-headed, loud girl.

Setting: The play takes place in the high school's courtyard, an arcade, and then school's parking lot. It is 1995.

Act I, Scene 1

The school's courtyard. Simon and Khalid are sitting across from each other on a table. Simon is reading a thick physics textbook while Khalid holds an energy drink. Kristopher is sitting at the table to the right on his own, listening to their conversation.

KHALID
Did you see me at the game on Friday? God, I was killing it. Not bad for my first time subbing for receiver!

SIMON
(Looking up from his book.)
Oh, I wasn't there...
(Khalid looks dejected.)
N-not because I didn't want to! I had to study for physics all weekend, and-

KRIS
(He walks up from behind Simon.)
Wow Simon, what a great friend you are.
(Sits on top of their table, looking down at Simon.)
You knew how much the game meant for Khalid and you couldn't bother to go to it?

SIMON
Kris, what are you- It's not like that!

KHALID
Yeah, I get it, bro. You really need a better physics grade... I could help you study if you want!
(Simon nods and Khalid stands to look at the book. Kris rolls his eyes, bored. Just then, Naomi enters stage left. Kris' mood immediately shifts when she passes in front of their table.)

KRIS

(Grinning.)

Naomi!

SIMON

(Distraught.)

Naomi?!

KHALID

(Clueless.)

Huh?

NAOMI

(She looks over and quickly walks up to them, waving.)

Hey guys! I'd love to talk but I promised a freshman I'd help her with piano during lunch. I'll see you all later, yeah?

(She runs off stage right.)

SIMON

B-Bye! Goodbye! See you!

KRIS

...You know she's already gone, right?

SIMON

Yeah, but maybe she didn't hear me, ya know?

KHALID

So that's the Naomi girl you've been talking about, eh? Yeah, she looks nice and she's real pretty, definitely a catch!

SIMON

I'm glad you think so... She seems so perfect.

KRIS

You really like her, don'tchya?

(Simon sputters, looking embarrassed.)

There, there, it's okay. Everybody can tell-

SIMON

Everybody?!

KRIS

Everybody except Naomi, so you're in luck!

(Simon is not relieved.)

KHALID

Man, you've been crushing hard for a while. I'm surprised you haven't made a move by now.

KRIS

I'm not surprised. I mean, look at him.

(Khalid and him look at Simon. Simon frowns.)

KHALID

I hate to admit it, but he's right. You can barely talk to her in full sentences.

(Simon groans and puts his head on his book. Khalid pats his back in an attempt to comfort him.)

KRIS

...You know what, why don't I talk to Naomi and throw in a good word for you?

KHALID

You'd really do that for him?

KRIS

For sure! I can tell Naomi all about Simon's big itchy rash in his-

SIMON

(His head jumps back from the book.)

MY WHAT-

KRIS

Or that one time you farted in class and everyone heard-

SIMON

Th-that didn't happen!

KRIS

It did, in 6th grade. You tried to pretend it wasn't you.

KHALID

Oh, I think I remember that actually!

SIMON
You definitely don't-

KRIS
Fine, should I tell her about that foot fungus of yours?

SIMON
(Sighs.)
I should've known you wouldn't be actually helpful. First off, I don't have a rash, it's called keratosis pilaris, and you know that. I also don't have foot fungus, you just made that up!

KRIS
So you don't deny the fart?

KHALID
ANYWAY, even without Kris' help, it wouldn't hurt to try something with Naomi.

SIMON
It would hurt a lot if things don't work out.

KHALID
You will never know if she likes you back unless you ask!
(Simon looks entirely unconvinced. He sags. Khalid suddenly brightens.)
I have an idea; Homecoming is right around the corner, so it's the perfect excuse to ask her out!

SIMON
Y-you really think she'll say yes?

KHALID
Of course! Who could possibly reject someone as handsome as my bro?

KRIS
(Aside.)
Someone with a pair of working eyes, probably.

SIMON
But if she agrees to go to the dance with me and we don't work well together, what will happen then?

KHALID

Come on, don't be so pessimistic. Even if something goes wrong, I'll always have your back, bro.

SIMON

Thanks, Khalid...

(They look at each other and smile warmly. Kris gags.)

KRIS

Gee, since you guys are so crazy about each other, why don't you go to the dance together instead?

(Simon and Khalid laugh the comment off awkwardly.)

SIMON

Th-that sounds like a bad idea.

KHALID

I agree- I like our plan better. Naomi and you will be going to the dance together for sure!

(He gives Simon a thumbs up and a winning smile. Kris rolls his eyes.)

<u>Act I, Scene 2</u>

Simon now at the arcade, alone . There is a fluffy, colorful rug in the middle of the floor that he is standing on.

SIMON

Oh, man.

(Simon is evidently anxious. He crosses his arms, uncrosses them, then looks around the room. He checks the time on his watch. He begins tapping his foot before sighing and pacing the arcade. He looks around. He uncrosses his arms. He is despaired. Finally, Naomi walks on from stage right.)

NAOMI

Simon?

SIMON

N-Naomi!

(He walks up to her.)

I'm so glad you could here. I mean, that you're make it- that you could make it and that you're here!... Oh, man

NAOMI

(giggle)
I’m also glad I could here too! Sorry if I was late. Did I keep you waiting?

SIMON

No! You’re not late, I got here early.

NAOMI

Oh, okay!

SIMON

Yeah... How have you been lately? Are you having a good day?

NAOMI

Oh, uh, yes! Haha, I’ve been pretty good.

SIMON

That’s good! That’s... great.

NAOMI

And you?

SIMON

Um, good as well.

NAOMI

I see!
(There is silence. Simon fidgets with his hands.)
...Would you like to look around?

SIMON

(Nodding.)
Sure! I mean, yes, if you want to.
(They begin walking.)
So, um, what made you choose this place

NAOMI

I think it's a fun place! I’ve been here a few times before. Since it’s close to the school, it’s easy to swing by after classes.

SIMON
I see. I haven’t been here before, actually...

NAOMI
(Stops walking.)
Wait, really? No way!

SIMON
Yeah, I mean, arcades aren’t really my scene-

NAOMI
How can you know that if you haven’t played any of the games, silly? Come on! Let’s try something.
(She heads to an arcade machine.Simon follows.)
Hmm... Not this one...
(She goes up to another one.)
This one is a bit boring...
(Finally, she tries the machine in the middle.)
Oh, here it is- Tekken 2! It’s a bit new, but it’s already my favorite. I can show you how to play, if you’d like.

SIMON
I-If it’s your favorite, then I’d love to learn.

NAOMI
That’s so sweet of you Simon. Well, this is a fighting game. We have to pick our characters. I’m usually Heihachi-

SIMON
Um, the old, buff guy with the weird hair and the mustache?

NAOMI
Yes! Isn’t he funny-looking?

SIMON
I-I guess, yeah. I’ll be Lee, then...

NAOMI
We’ll be fighting against each other, and you use these buttons to attack and the stick to move. There’s a bunch of combos and strategies, but you don’t really need all that to play. Just press any button for now! Got it?

SIMON
Yeah, I think I get it. Let’s play.
(Naomi smiles at him and presses start. The start tune plays and there is fighting game music.They both press buttons, Naomi more confidently than Simon. After a few seconds, we hear “PLAYER ONE WINS”.)

NAOMI

I won!

SIMON

Never mind, I definitely don't get it. I'm sorry...

(He sighs and steps away from the machine Naomi walks up to him and puts a hand on his shoulder, smiling.)

NAOMI

Hey, it's alright. You will get better if you keep trying.

(Simon sighs and looks down.)

I know it sounds cliché, but it's true! I sucked when I first started; I was so bad that my best friend laughed in my face, but eventually I got so good that he can't win against me anymore. That's what makes a Tekken master, see? Practice. Determination.

(She gently bumps her elbow on his arm. He looks up.)

Don't worry, I'll go easy on you next time. I believe in you, so you should definitely believe in yourself!

SIMON

Um...

NAOMI

Ah, I'm sorry! Was that too cheesy?

SIMON

N-not at all! I feel better now. Thank you. For cheering me up, I mean. And for being here, too. You truly are amazing...

NAOMI

(Uncomfortable.)

Ah... haha, of course! Um, are you ready now?

SIMON

Y-yes!

(They turn to the machine and start playing again. Fighting game music plays. We hear "PLAYER ONE WINS.")

Act I, Scene 3

A week later, Kristopher and Irene are going to the arcade. She carries an empty drink in her hand and is dressed punk-ishly. They are in the middle of conversation.

KRIS

And then I said, "So you don't deny the fart?"- I mean, he set himself up for that one, I couldn't help myself. I wanted to keep it going but Khalid changed the topic-

IRENE

Right.

KRIS
That whole conversation didn't go where I expected it to go. Really, I was just teasing Simon but then Khalid encouraged him to ask Naomi out and now-

IRENE
Simon and her are dating, yes. You've already told me all this, Kris-

KRIS
I just can't believe it. Simon really got himself a girlfriend, huh? And not just any girlfriend- he scored Naomi, of all people!

IRENE
I don't know why you're so surprised-
(He stops walking and turns to Irene.)

KRIS
Have you seen Simon?

IRENE
Yes, but-

KRIS
And have you seen Naomi?

IRENE
Yes Kris, we've all seen Naomi-

KRIS
So you've seen both of them and you still don't get where I'm coming from?

IRENE
I'm not saying I don't get-

KRIS
So you agree Simon is a complete and total loser.

IRENE
Yes, of course, but-

KRIS
And that Naomi-

IRENE

OH MY GOD, STOP TALKING!
(Crushes the cup and throws it on the floor, startling Kris.)

KRIS

Jesus, what was that for?

IRENE

I do not want to hear about Simon and Naomi anymore. Not now, not later, and definitely not again for the rest of my life!

KRIS

Fine, fine. Let's start over.
(He closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Irene blinks. He is grinning when he opens his eyes.)
Hey, Irene! How are you today?

IRENE

I'm not doing this bullshit with you, Kris- I already know you don't care about my day.

KRIS

(Sarcastic.)
How could you say that? Of course I care! Tell me more about your incredibly interesting day and all the amazing things you did. Come on, I'm listening.

IRENE

Hanging out was a bad idea. You make my pretty head hurt...

KRIS

Pretty?

IRENE

I swear to god Kris, If you speak one more time I'll put one of these stupid arcade machines so far up your ass-

KRIS

Woah, no need to get aggressive here! It's not very ladylike.

IRENE

Not very ladylike?! You make it so hard not to punch your face everytime you open your goddamn mouth.

KRIS

Jeez, you'd punch someone with such a pretty face?

IRENE

(snort)
Pretty?

KRIS
Prettier than yours, that’s for sure-

IRENE
You wish you had my looks, fucker-

KRIS
I certainly don’t want your pig face.

IRENE
What did you say?!

KRIS
It probably comes with your miniscule brain and soggy tits-

IRENE
Why are you being meaner than usual?!

KRIS
Come on, I was kidding.

IRENE
I know that, but you usually would’ve stopped, like, three insults ago. Really, what’s up with you today?

KRIS
Nothing! Wanna play some Tekken?

IRENE
What an abrupt topic change... I guess it’s my bad for expecting to get anything out of you. I won’t say no if you wanna be humiliated in a silly fighting game. I beat your ass so fast last time we played.

KRIS
Things change, Irene. I’ve been practicing.

IRENE
Practicing? You need two players for Tekken. Who the hell would want to go to the arcade with you, other than me?

KRIS
(grinning)
Naomi.

IRENE

NAOMI?!

KRIS

Why are you so surprised?

IRENE

I mean, look at you! Naomi is so nice and sweet and you're a...

KRIS

Be careful! Words hurt.

IRENE

I don't want to hear that shit from you of all people. I just can't believe she puts up with you. I mean, I've heard she's hella patient with the freshmen in band but you're way worse than all of them combined-

KRIS

Well, just so you know, Naomi and me are literally best friends-

IRENE

Shut up, you're not.

KRIS

But we are! Ask her.

IRENE

You have to be fucking with me. Angelic Naomi and devil's-spawn Kris, best friends?! Next you're gonna tell me pigs fly.

KRIS

Well, can you?

IRENE

Can I what?

KRIS

Fly?

IRENE

Jesus, fuck-

KRIS

(Laughing.)

See? Unlike you, Naomi is actually really good at keeping up with my jokes. I'm telling you, we just work together!

(Irene squints her eyes.)
You don’t believe me, do you? I swear I’m not lying this time.

IRENE
(Sighs.)
It’s hard to picture, but I wouldn’t know if you’re right. I mean, I haven’t actually talked to her, so...

KRIS
Simon’s just like that, too. Ever since Naomi came to the school, you hear so much *of* her, but I felt like nobody actually knows *about* her. I was interested, so I went and talked with her-

IRENE
What, did you think she had some deep, dark secret? That she was faking her personality? Fucking classic.

KRIS
All I’m saying is that both you and Simon don’t get the full picture of her. You’re just building all these expectations-

IRENE
Maybe that’s true for me, but you can’t say that about Simon. She’s dating the girl- they gotta know each other by now.

KRIS
They’ve been dating for like, what, just a week? I doubt Simon has said more than single sentences to her. I mean, he barely talks to people properly. It took him his whole life to warm up to Khalid, and that was only because he refused to give up on Simon. Khalid got him to *try* to take initiative; Simon usually doesn’t try, he just goes along with what people say.

IRENE
And who says Naomi will give up on him? Maybe she can get him to try, too.

KRIS
(sigh)
Yeah, maybe. I just think she deserves better than someone who doesn’t see her as an equal but rather some... perfect goddess?

IRENE
...Wow, this must be pretty serious if you’re agreeing with me. I don’t even want to beat you in Tekken anymore. You look so emotionally devastated already.

KRIS

Way to ruin the moment, Irene.

IRENE

I mean, I thought you were complaining about Simon and Naomi because you had a thing for one of them, and I didn't think it was Naomi before today. But now...

KRIS

What are you talking about?

IRENE

What I meant is... do you have a crush on Naomi?

(Silence. He stares at her, and she stares back. Kris's face is completely neutral.

What? Do you not?

(He keeps silent.)

Kris.

(A moment more.)

Um....

(He breaks eye contact and turns his back to her. What was that?!)

KRIS

Well, I'll be leaving now!

IRENE

What the-

KRIS

Goodbye, Irene- I'll see you at Homecoming.

IRENE

Why are you so goddamn strange- wait, Kris!

(Kris waves without looking at her and begins exiting. Irene starts following him, then turns around to collect the cup she crushed a while ago. When she turns around. Kris is already gone.)

Why, that stupid little bitch-

(She groans and stomps off.)

Act I, Scene 4

It's the school's parking lot. There is a bench on the sidewalk. Kris sits on the floor, wearing a cheap-looking yet flashy purple suit. It's tacky. He looks upset. After a moment, Naomi walks in from behind Kris, wearing a fancy pink dress and heels.

NAOMI

Kris? What are you doing out here?

KRIS

Naomi?

(He forces a smile.)

I should be the one asking that question. What brings the Homecoming Queen herself to this great parking lot tonight?

NAOMI

Haha, come on, I didn't even win. It's okay, though!

(She tries to sit next to him but her dress won't let her. Kris stands up and brushes dust off his suit.)

KRIS

Of course it's okay. You'll always be homecoming queen in my eyes!

NAOMI

Aw, that's so sweet of you to say-

KRIS

(Grinning deviously.)

Or was it homecoming squire?

(Naomi smiles and raises an eyebrow. She then sighs and shakes her head.)

Come on, You can always steal the school's heart next year.

NAOMI

I really hope I'm not nominated next year, to be honest. Can we sit down? My feet are killing me...

(She moves toward the bench and sits on one end.)

KRIS

Sure! Mine are too, from all that dancing.

(He takes a seat on the opposite side, lifting his legs to sit cross-legged.)

NAOMI

You danced? I'm pretty sure I didn't see you there

KRIS

Maybe your eyes were failing you. You should start wearing one of those huge nerdy glasses. Or maybe you were too busy staring into Simon's eyes,thinking "wow, Simon's hair is so greasy..."

NAOMI
(She sighs and looks away, frowning.)
Simon...

KRIS
Woah, that wasn't a lovestruck sigh. Did he slip on a banana peel in front of everyone and you were too embarrassed to see the aftermath? Is that why you're here?

NAOMI
Metaphorically speaking.

KRIS
Thought so. I'm not surprised he made a fool of himself. I still can't believe you're really dating him.

NAOMI
Well, he's not that bad. He's trying, and I can admire that!

KRIS
(Sarcastically.)
Simon is trying. Right.

NAOMI
I thought that if I kept going out with him I would start liking him as much as he seems to like me. But I'm starting to think that's impossible because, well... Maybe I'm crazy, but I feel like there's these grand expectations he has for me and- and I'm so worried I'm going to mess up all the time! Maybe there's something wrong with me-

KRIS
Something wrong with you? He's the one putting you on a pedestal! It's not *your* fault Simon doesn't see you as an equal. It's his. You're not responsible for meeting Simon's insane expectations. If he only likes you for who he *thinks* you are instead of who you *actually* are, then maybe he is not the one.

NAOMI
But everyone makes it seem like he has to be! I didn't know they had such an interest in my dating life. I don't want to think about what they'll say if we break up.

KRIS
Since when do you care about what people think about you?

NAOMI

Well, I... I don’t know.
(She looks down.)

KRIS
Naomi.
(She looks at him again.)

NAOMI
What?

KRIS
If you actually cared about what people thought about you, you wouldn’t be hanging out with *me*.

NAOMI
Huh?... Wait, yeah, you do have a point!

KRIS
(With a dramatic frown.)
Jeez, really? You were supposed to disagree and say our classmates totally Love me, with a capital L.
(She starts laughing, and Kris’ expression changes to a smile.)

NAOMI
Alright, alright! We can pretend they do. But really, thank you.

KRIS
What are you thanking me for? I don’t think you’re supposed to thank people for being right.

NAOMI
Fine then, I take it back!

KRIS
No, your gratitude is forever mine-

NAOMI
Too late! The thanks is already in my possession again. Who’s the lowly squire now?

KRIS
I don’t think you know what squire means, miss squire.
(They look at each other with serious expressions until it’s clear they’re both trying not to laugh, so they start laughing.)
But it’s my “lowly squire” charm that has you hanging out with me,

don’t you think?

NAOMI

(She gives him a genuine smile.)

No. It’s the fact that you’re Kris. And I like a good Kris charm better than any squire’s.

(Kris looks shocked and flustered. Her smile wavers.)

Sorry, was that weird?

KRIS

(He shakes his head and smiles.)

Maybe, but it’s part of your Naomi charm. Before we get more off topic though, I think you should date whoever makes you happy. And if Simon makes you feel like some Untouchable Virgin Queen instead, then maybe... maybe you should end things there.

NAOMI

...You know, Kris, I’ve never heard you be so sincere-

KRIS

Come on, I’m being serious! What do you actually want to do? I’ve told you what *I* think you should do, so now it’s your turn to act for yourself.

NAOMI

(She gives herself a moment to think.)

I don't want to date anyone right now. I’m not ready for such a big commitment. I’ll be happy with some good friends, you know? And right now I don’t think me and Simon are even at that level...

(She sighs.)

I think I will do what you suggested. I’ll break up with him.

KRIS

And you will do it for yourself, and not because I said so?

NAOMI

Yeah. I will.

KRIS

Good.

(They smile at each other, then Kris’ expression changes to one of confusion.)

KRIS

Wait, if you haven’t broken up with Simon already, does that mean you left him at the dance by himself with no explanation?

NAOMI

W-well, I did tell him that I wasn't having fun and that I wanted to leave. He offered to leave with me, but I told him he should stay and that I needed to be alone for a while. He looked so sad, but I knew Khalid was keeping an eye on him so he would be fine! I mean, I really hope he's fine...

KRIS

(rolls eyes)
If Khalid is there to console him, he will be way more than fine.

NAOMI

I feel like you're implying something here...

KRIS

Have you not seen the way they look at each other? Seriously, it's so…

(His face sours and he pretends to gag. Naomi laughs.)

You know what, I don't even want to talk about them anymore.

NAOMI

I agree. Hmm,y'know I'm craving some root beer floats after this talk. I should go get one right now!

KRIS

Like, right now? What, doesn't Superstar Naomi have any after parties you were invited to?

NAOMI

I do, but... I have piano lessons scheduled for tomorrow morning, so I declined. I can't be doing anything crazy or I'll lose focus.

KRIS

As is expected of my dearest piano freak.

NAOMI

(smiles)
I'm basically free all night for anything that isn't too tiring.

KRIS

What a coincidence! I am too.

NAOMI

Oh! In that case, do you want to get dinner together? Maybe we could give frozen pizza another shot and hope the oven doesn't start smoking like last time. After the floats.

KRIS

Aww, Naomi... Are you asking me out on a date?

NAOMI

Hah, I'd never go out on real dates with someone who can't beat me at Tekken.

(She stands up and smooths down her dress.)

Come on, let's go!

KRIS

I don't know what you're saying! I'm definitely better at Tekken than you.

(He stands. They begin walking off stage.)

NAOMI

Are you sure? It's been at least a month since you won a match. Heihachi beats the Devil, over and over!

KRIS

You've just gotten lucky.

NAOMI

Do you want me to drive to the arcade and prove you wrong?

KRIS

Nah, I'm good.

END