

### Order of Scenes

Prologue — The stage.  
 Scene 1 — The stage.  
 Scene 2 — The kitchen.  
 Scene 3 — Wallace's bedroom.  
 Scene 4 — The schoolyard.  
 Scene 5 — The stage.  
 Scene 6 — Psychiatrist's office.  
 Scene 7 — The park.  
 Scene 8 — Grandmother's kitchen.  
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 Scene 10 — Wallace's bedroom.  
 Scene 11 — Wallace's bedroom.  
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 Scene 13 — Psychiatrist's office.  
 Scene 14 — The stage.  
 Scene 15 — Wallace's dormitory room.  
 Scene 16 — Wallace's dormitory room.  
 Scene 17 — Wallace's dormitory room.  
 Scene 18 — The stage.  
 Scene 19 — Wallace's dormitory room.  
 Scene 20 — Grandmother's kitchen.  
 Epilogue — The stage.

"The great question that has never been answered, and which I have not been able to answer, despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, is: What does a woman want?" — Sigmund Freud.

## WOMEN AND WALLACE

### PROLOGUE

*Wallace is standing to the left with a tomato in his hand and a crate of tomatoes at his feet. Nina is standing to the right, wearing a white dress. Pause. Wallace lobbs the tomato. It splatters on Nina's dress. Pause.*

Look & Contemplate

①

WALLACE. I love you. (Pause.) → decisive.

② Sink in

### SCENE ONE

Wallace. standing center

yay!! ①

WALLACE. "Mommy". By Wallace Kirkman. Age six. I love Mommy because she makes me peanut butter and banana sandwiches on Wonder bread and it tastes better than when I order it at a restaurant. And Mommy never looks at me funny like the waiters in restaurants do. And Mommy crushes aspirins and mixes them into jelly when I get sick. Because I can't swallow aspirins. They just sit on my tongue and wait for me to finish the whole glass of water. And then I spit them out. But when they're mixed into jelly, I hardly have any problem at all. I just eat the jelly and feel better. And Mommy washes my clothes, so I don't have to. And she does it so they all smell nice when they come out. They come out smelling clean. And they even smell a little like Mommy, because she folds them for me, and her smell rubs off onto my shirts. She smells like perfume. Not really sweet, like Billy Corkscrew's mother. Mommy smells like she's getting ready to go out to dinner. And Mommy's read every book in the library downstairs. I couldn't do that. She can read three books in a week with no trouble at all. Real books, not The Hardy Boys. Mommy's really smart. She can read and take care of me. Both. That's why I love Mommy. period

Build up / over flow

→ embarrassed

→ miracle!

→ imagine

→ selling it

→ Amazed

aww ②

EW ←

Back on track ③

New thing! ④

Wallace  
enter SR

on the move

①

WALLACE. I'm going to miss the bus! Is my lunch ready? → urgent

MOTHER. All set. (Wallace grabs the lunchbox and kisses Mother on the cheek.) RUSHES to finish

WALLACE. Bye, Mommy.

MOTHER. Bye, Wallace.

WALLACE. (To the audience.) I love the second grade! Pure excitement

Sink line

MOTHER. Don't shout, Wallace. (Wallace runs out. Mother watches after him. She writes a note on a slip of paper and puts it on the table. She takes off her turtleneck shirt, so she is in her brassiere. She slits her throat with the large knife. She falls to the floor. Pause. Wallace runs in.) Attempts to clean but she cannot do

Oh...

③

WALLACE. Mommy, I'm home! (Wallace sees Mother on the floor. He picks up the note. Reading the note.) "Cremate the parasite." → Read w/ confusion/hard to pronounce

### SCENE THREE

Looks @  
Wallace for  
moment SL

Wallace's bedroom. Wallace is laying on his bed. Grandmother walks in, holding a gift and a photograph.

Oh

①

GRANDMOTHER. Here you are. Your teacher gave me this gift for you.

WALLACE. It's not my birthday. → grumpy

GRANDMOTHER. Well, something bad happened to you. When something bad happens, you get gifts to make you feel better. matter of fact

WALLACE. Why do I get gifts on my birthday? → genuine

GRANDMOTHER. Well, because you're a year older.

WALLACE. Being a year older isn't bad.

GRANDMOTHER. It adds up. Open your gift. (Wallace opens his gift.) → done w/ the conversation

WALLACE. Peanut brittle. disappointed

GRANDMOTHER. Isn't that lovely — making the best

WALLACE. I hate peanut brittle.

→ NO!!

Grma is moving around cleaning

Grma  
putting  
Wallace  
in his  
place

GRANDMOTHER. So do I. Don't forget to send your teacher a thank you note.

WALLACE. Why should I send her something? I see her every day. — why 2, 2, 2.

GRANDMOTHER. So give her a thank you note. — please

WALLACE. But I hate peanut brittle. — UGH

GRANDMOTHER. So throw the peanut brittle at her during the pledge of allegiance. Just give her something in return for her gift. It's good manners. → getting fed up

WALLACE. Okay. → Fine

GRANDMOTHER. She's a very pretty woman.

WALLACE. I guess so.

GRANDMOTHER. Why aren't you downstairs?

WALLACE. Too many people. Why'd they all come back home with us? → genuine

GRANDMOTHER. I don't know. They didn't get enough grief out, maybe. → sarcastic for herself

WALLACE. I think they just like free food.

GRANDMOTHER. You're probably right. They're all bunched together like a big black cloud of perfume and cologne munching on little corned beef sandwiches. Horrible. → UGH

WALLACE. What's that? → glances

GRANDMOTHER. What? This? → tries to hide it

WALLACE. Yeah.

GRANDMOTHER. Oh, it's a photograph of your mother. The last one, as far as I know. Your father took it six days ago. I wanted to have it. → defensive

WALLACE. I wish Mommy would come back.

GRANDMOTHER. I know, Wallace, but for whatever reasons, she wanted to go —

WALLACE. She didn't want to. — intense/a burst

GRANDMOTHER. What? Wallace —

WALLACE. I know she didn't want to, Grandma, I know. A pirate came in while I was at school and tore her open. He took everything inside of her and put it in his sack and escaped through the kitchen door. She didn't want to go, Grandma. And if I was here — if I pretended I was sick and stayed home — I could have saved her —

GRANDMOTHER. No. You couldn't have. Don't think

→ calmly putting  
her foot down

Oh no  
not again

Jumps  
up  
running  
around

moving  
on

②

Both are dsl

ruffles hair

[you could have saved her, because I'm telling you, you couldn't have. Nobody could have. It was time for her to go. It'll be time for me to go soon, too. And someday, it'll be your time to go—

WALLACE. Not me. I'm going to live forever. → definitive

GRANDMOTHER. I wish you luck. You'd be the first person to do it. → chuckles

WALLACE. I'm going to. → stands strong

GRANDMOTHER. If anybody can, Wallace, I'm sure it'll be you. → sarcasm again w doesn't see

WALLACE. And I'm going to find the pirate who did this. You wait and see.

GRANDMOTHER. I will, Wallace. I certainly will. (Pause.)

You look very handsome in your suit.

WALLACE. Thank you.

→ changing the subject

#### SCENE FOUR

The schoolyard. Wallace is sitting on a bench, eating a sandwich. Victoria walks in.

DSL

hi! ①

VICTORIA. Hi, Wallace.

WALLACE. Hi, Victoria.

VICTORIA. Can I sit down?

WALLACE. Free country. (Victoria sits down next to Wallace.) → heard an adult say that

VICTORIA. What you got for lunch?

WALLACE. Peanut butter and banana.

VICTORIA. Want to trade?

WALLACE. What do you have?

VICTORIA. Tuna.

WALLACE. No, thanks. Besides, I already ate some of mine.

VICTORIA. Peanut butter and banana's my favorite. Bet it's good.

WALLACE. It kind of sucks. My Dad made it. Dads can't make lunch. You can barely taste the banana. → UGH!

VICTORIA. (Pause.) I'm sorry about your mother. → gentle

WALLACE. Yeah. Me, too.

VICTORIA. She killed herself? → a little

WALLACE. Who told you that?

too harsh

↓  
defensive

casual & innocent

going in

defense

gives up ←  
confused & scared

VICTORIA. I don't know. Somebody. → starts to retreat

WALLACE. She didn't kill herself. A pirate slit her throat, I think. I haven't finished checking things out yet.

VICTORIA. Uh uh. That's not what they said. They said "suicide". → genuinely confused

WALLACE. Who cares?

VICTORIA. I don't know. (Pause.) You want a hug? → gentle

WALLACE. (Quiet.) Yeah. (Victoria hugs Wallace for a few moments. He pushes her away suddenly and she falls.) Get away from me! (Pause.) I gotta go. (Wallace runs out. Pause. Victoria walks over to Wallace's sandwich and looks at it. She picks it up and takes a bite.)

#### SCENE FIVE Center

Wallace.

I'm angry ①

throw away joke

sees it

sees her ③  
grows anxious

moment

WALLACE. "Broken Glass." By Wallace Kirkman. Age thirteen. It's past four in the morning and I can't sleep. I go downstairs to get something to drink and maybe see what's on television. I open the refrigerator and take out the orange juice. I drink orange juice because I'm susceptible to colds.

And because I heard that Coke rots your teeth. Whether it does or not makes no difference, because after you hear something like that, it stays in your brain. So I pour some orange juice into a glass and put the carton back in the fridge. And I drink. It goes down smooth and cold, and I just swallow it all without stopping. When I'm done, I look at the empty glass in my hand. My parents got a truckload of glassware for their wedding, and the glass in my hand is one of the set. It's older than me. Respect your elders. I think, but then I see her. She's laughing at me. She's inside the glass, laughing at me. I throw the glass against the refrigerator and hear it crash. I look at the shards on the floor. Like an invitation. I know that glass is made of sand, and I like walking on the beach, and I almost step towards the glass, but I don't. I think of blood. My blood. And I just kneel down and stare at the broken glass on the floor, watching for any reflection of the moonlight outside the kitchen window and waiting for my father to come downstairs, because he can't sleep through anything.

period

sunken & angry ②  
down stairs

matter of fact

build w anxiety

Wallace SR

Chair SL

SCENE SIX

Psychiatrist's office. Psychiatrist is sitting in a chair, writing in a notebook. Wallace walks in.

welcome ①

PSYCHIATRIST. You must be Wallace.

WALLACE. Yeah, I'm him. → *amused already*

PSYCHIATRIST. Pleased to meet you. Would you like to have a seat?

WALLACE. Can I lie on the couch? → *genuine question*

PSYCHIATRIST. If you'd like.

WALLACE. It seems like the proper thing to do. → *why not*

alright

PSYCHIATRIST. Go right ahead.

WALLACE. I should warn you that I've had my head measured by a close friend, and if you shrink it by so much as a millimeter, I'm taking you to court. → *suddenly nervous*

chuckle

PSYCHIATRIST. I don't shrink heads.

WALLACE. If I say "I do", does that make me insane? → *pushing buttons*

PSYCHIATRIST. It's not that simple. (Wallace lies down on the couch.)

WALLACE. Nice couch. Where'd you get it?

PSYCHIATRIST. Bloomingdale's.

WALLACE. Really? I would have thought there'd be some store that would sell special couches for psychiatrists. It doesn't feel as good when you know that anybody with a few bucks can get one. → *wasting time*

to the point ②

PSYCHIATRIST. Tell me why you're here, Wallace.

WALLACE. It was either this or a straitjacket, I suppose.

PSYCHIATRIST. Why's that?

WALLACE. Come on, didn't my father tell you all this?

PSYCHIATRIST. I'd like to hear what you have to say. → *gentle/inviting*

WALLACE. Can't argue with that. You see, I've been breaking glasses. In the kitchen.

PSYCHIATRIST. Any particular reason?

WALLACE. I like to live dangerously. You know, in perpetual fear of slicing the soles of my feet open. I don't know what it is, but ever since they cut the umbilical cord, I've been obsessed with sharp things. Especially knives. I'm attracted to knives. I'm incredibly attracted to doctors with knives. Do you have a knife, doctor?

tries to mess w/ her

does not want to be there

trying to distract

pushing

not having it diving in ③

feels overwhelmed → jumps to offensive

harsh

harder w/ time

enter SR

small talk ①

PSYCHIATRIST. No—

WALLACE. Do you want to buy one?

PSYCHIATRIST. No.

WALLACE. Oh. (Long pause.)

PSYCHIATRIST. Tell me about your mother, Wallace.

WALLACE. She was like Sylvia Plath without the publishing contract. → *deflecting*

PSYCHIATRIST. Do you remember much about her?

WALLACE. Nothing.

PSYCHIATRIST. Nothing at all? → *Really?*

WALLACE. Nope.

PSYCHIATRIST. Are you sure?

WALLACE. Why are you asking me this? Tell me, would you ask me this if my father weren't paying you?

PSYCHIATRIST. You're upset because your father made you come here.

WALLACE. No, I'm upset because he didn't pick a prettier psychiatrist.

PSYCHIATRIST. Was your mother pretty, Wallace?

WALLACE. (Pause.) Yeah, she was pretty. Pretty pretty. Pretty suicidal. And now she's pretty dead.

PSYCHIATRIST. You know, Wallace, you don't have to say anything you don't want to say. → *Retreats slightly*

WALLACE. Okay. (Long silence.)

PSYCHIATRIST. What are you thinking about, Wallace?

(Pause.) Wallace? (Pause.) Wallace? → *please*

SCENE SEVEN

The park. Wallace and Victoria walk in. Wallace is eating a Mallo Cup and drinking something pink out of a bottle. Victoria is eating juicy fruits. bench SR

VICTORIA. Good movie.

WALLACE. Yeah.

VICTORIA. I like the kissing stuff. → *hinting*

WALLACE. I like when the girl died. → *ya!*

VICTORIA. You want to sit down here? → *Ohhh*

WALLACE. Here?

VICTORIA. Yeah. Sure. ] *OK*



Pushing ②

WALLACE. Yeah. Sure. (Wallace and Victoria sit down on a bench.) A moment

VICTORIA. You want a Juicyfruit?

WALLACE. No, they stick to your teeth. You want a Mallo Cup?

VICTORIA. Chocolate makes you break out. → uhh no!

WALLACE. Oh. (Wallace takes a bite out of a Mallo Cup and drinks from his bottle.) A moment

VICTORIA. What is that? → ummm?

WALLACE. What is what? → oh no she saw

VICTORIA. That. In the bottle. The pink stuff.

WALLACE. Oh. You don't want to know. → Play it off

VICTORIA. Sure I do. Wouldn't ask if I didn't want to know. matter of fact

WALLACE. Uh, well, it's Pepto Bismol mixed with seltzer.

VICTORIA. What?

WALLACE. I've got this perpetually upset stomach, and drinking this helps. It isn't all that bad, actually. Want some?

VICTORIA. No, thanks. I'll pass. (Pause.) It's such a nice day.

WALLACE. Yeah, it's not bad.

VICTORIA. I don't want to go back to school. Do you?

WALLACE. Oh, I'm just dying to sharpen my pencils and do tons of homework every night.

VICTORIA. Do you think eighth grade is going to be any different than seventh grade? genuine

WALLACE. No chance in hell. It's all the same. I don't think it matters. They just keep us in school until we're safely through our growth spurts and all of the puberty confusion, then send us out to make the best of the rest of our lives. And we get so terrified of the real world that we pay some university to keep us for four more years or eight more years or whatever. It all depends on how terrified you are. My grandmother's brother is sixty-two, he's still taking classes up in Chicago. If they keep you long enough to get comfortable when you're young, they've got you for life.

VICTORIA. Not me, that's for sure. Once I'm out, I'm out. I'm not going to college, no way

WALLACE. What are you going to do?

VICTORIA. Who knows? Sit on the beach and get a really

→ lost in her own world

okay ③  
lets try this

desperate

④ getting on track

he thinks he sounds smart

victoria nervous

solid tan. Watch a lot of movies. Dance.

WALLACE. Sounds pretty stimulating, Victoria.

VICTORIA. Don't tease me. → trying to flirt

WALLACE. I wasn't.

VICTORIA. Yes, you were.

WALLACE. I swear, I was not teasing you. Why would I

tease you? → genuinely worried

VICTORIA. I don't know. (Pause.) You didn't like the kissing stuff?

⑤ what she wants

WALLACE. Huh?

VICTORIA. You know, in the movie. ] gentle

WALLACE. Oh, I don't know.

VICTORIA. Sure you do. → direct

WALLACE. I was getting candy. I missed it. Leave me

alone. makes him nervous he hasn't really

VICTORIA. You want to try? → gentle Thought about it

WALLACE. Try what?

VICTORIA. That.

WALLACE. What's that?

VICTORIA. Kissing.

WALLACE. You mean, with you?

VICTORIA. Yeah.

WALLACE. You mean, now?

VICTORIA. Yeah.

WALLACE. Umm—

VICTORIA. Scared?

WALLACE. Yeah, right. Go ahead. Kiss me.

VICTORIA. You sure?

WALLACE. As Shore as Dinah.

VICTORIA. Dinah?

WALLACE. Forget it. Will you kiss me already?

VICTORIA. Okay. (Victoria takes out the Juicyfruit she was eating and throws it away. They kiss.)

WALLACE. You didn't fade out. → Shocked

VICTORIA. Nope.

WALLACE. I think I love you, Victoria. → wow!

VICTORIA. Really? (Wallace grabs Victoria and starts kissing her with great passion, holding her in his arms. After a few moments, she breaks away.) nervous

WALLACE. What's wrong?

→ Oh no what did I do

like a little kid sword fight

quick back & forth w/ w on defense

Wallace's dream ⑥

→ Are you joking me

VICTORIA. What's wrong? You're too fast for me, Wallace, that's what's wrong. (Victoria walks out.) → UGGG

WALLACE. Too fast? (Pause.) I mistook love for a girl who ate fuzzy fruits. (Wallace drinks from his bottle.)

Kicks ground → ew how could I ever think that

SCENE EIGHT

Grandmother's kitchen. Wallace is sitting at the table. Grandmother walks in with a glass of milk and a plate of cookies

A quiet afternoon ①

walks in SL

GRANDMOTHER. Tollhouse cookies, baked this morning especially for you.

WALLACE. Thanks.

GRANDMOTHER. You look wonderful. Such a handsome thing. → squishes cheeks

WALLACE. This is delicious. → !!!

GRANDMOTHER. Of course it is. Would I serve you anything but? The first batch went to Grandpa, so terrible. (Pause.) I'm so happy you came to visit. → content

WALLACE. I love to visit you guys.

GRANDMOTHER. That's like sugar on my heart. It makes me feel so good. (Wallace points to a photograph in a frame on the table.)

What? ②

WALLACE. Who's this?

Wtry to build the nerve

GRANDMOTHER. That's Grandpa's second cousin, Jerry. He just died. That's the last picture of him, taken two minutes before he went. He was at a wedding there, sitting at his table, in between two pretty young girls—you see? The photographer snapped this picture, Jerry was joking and flirting with these young girls—he was like that, Jerry, so bad—two minutes later, he just shut his eyes. (Pause.) Gone. But still smiling.

WALLACE. (Pause.) Nice picture. (Pause.) Grandma, can I ask you something stupid?

GRANDMOTHER. If it makes you happy, I don't see why not.

WALLACE. What was your first kiss like?

GRANDMOTHER. My first kiss? You really have faith in my memory, don't you?

→ on wow!!

WALLACE. You don't have to tell me.

GRANDMOTHER. No, no, no. Let's see. It was with Grandpa, and we were — Likes to think back

wow

WALLACE. Your first kiss was with Grandpa?

GRANDMOTHER. Sure. We were steady in high school, you know. But ofc!!

WALLACE. I just never really thought about it. (Pause.) Was it nice?

in her own world

GRANDMOTHER. I was petrified, but he made me feel comfortable. Still petrified, but in a comfortable way. Comfortably petrified. It was on a Saturday night, in nineteen-thirty-six, I think. We were in Wentworth Park, about four blocks from here.

WALLACE. Wow. — can't believe

getting more lost

GRANDMOTHER. I remember thinking he kissed really wonderfully. I mean, we were just in high school, and kissing him made me feel like the movie stars must have felt. I almost fell backwards, I was so taken away. Then I got suspicious, asking myself where'd he learn to kiss like that. When I asked him —

firm oh yes I did

WALLACE. You asked him? → Excuse me!??

GRANDMOTHER. I asked him, and he told me he had been practicing on his pillow for almost five years. That made me feel better. Besides, with those eyes, I couldn't help but believe him. (Pause.) I was sixteen then. Generations are different. ③ A has train of thought

WALLACE. Yeah.

GRANDMOTHER. Each generation changes. It either improves or declines. Wave of the hand

almost drifts off

WALLACE. Yeah, trouble is, you can't tell one from the other. I mean, what your generation calls decline, mine calls improvement. It's so confusing. Along with everything else.

GRANDMOTHER. Don't waste your time thinking of it. I will say one thing, though. Hair is important. Secondary, but important nonetheless. Find a girl with hair.

WALLACE. Hair?

GRANDMOTHER. Sure. I mean, I can't run my fingers through Grandpa's hair. All I can do is rub his scalp. (Pause.) Which some say brings good luck.

WALLACE. I think that's when you rub Buddha's scalp.

Where  
all thoughts  
go

⑤

GRANDMOTHER. Well, Grandpa's certainly not Buddha.  
And I'm certainly not lucky. → To themselves

WALLACE. (Pause.) Do you ever miss Mommy?

GRANDMOTHER. All the time.

WALLACE. (Pause.) Me, too. (Pause.) All the time.

GRANDMOTHER. (Pause.) Drink your milk. It's good for  
your teeth.

SCENE NINE

Center

Wallace.

stands straighter  
& a little more open w/ a  
lightness

Let's  
begin ①

WALLACE. "My Mother's Turtlenecks." By Wallace Kirkman. Age sixteen. My mother loved my father and hated her neck. She thought it was too fleshy or something. If I hated my neck, I'd have it removed, but my mother never trusted doctors, so she wore turtlenecks. All the time. In every picture we have of her, she's wearing a turtleneck. She had turtlenecks in every color of the rainbow, she had blacks, she had whites, she had greys, she had plaids, she had polka dots and hound's-tooth checks and stripes and Mickey Mouse and even a sort of mesh turtleneck. I can't picture her without a turtleneck on. Although, according to Freud, I try to, every moment of every day. I have a photograph of me when I was a baby wearing one of my mother's turtlenecks. Swimming in one of my mother's turtlenecks is more like it. Just a bald head and a big shirt. It's very erotic in an Oedipal shirtwear sort of way. It's a rare photograph, because I'm smiling. I didn't smile all that much during most of my childhood. I'm taking lessons now, trying to learn again, but it takes time. I stopped smiling when my mother stopped wearing turtlenecks. I came home from a typical day in the second grade to find her taking a bath in her own blood on the kitchen floor. Her turtleneck was on top of the kitchen table, so it wouldn't come between her neck and her knife. I understood then why she had worn turtlenecks all along. To stop the blood from flowing. To cover the wound that was there all along. They tried to cover the wound, when they buried her with one of her favorite turtleneck dresses on, but

trying  
to imagine

Knows  
he has  
trouble  
to work  
through

gentle  
anger

A harshness

18

throw away

it didn't matter. It was just an empty hole by then. My mother wasn't hiding inside. (Pause.) She wrote a note before she died, asking to be cremated, and I asked my father why she wasn't. He said my mother was two women, and the one he loved would have been scared of the flames. (Pause.) I look at that photograph of little me inside my mother's shirt all the time. It's the closest I can get to security. There are no pictures of me inside mother's womb, but her turtleneck is close enough.

Confusion  
&  
anger

soft  
again

period

Spit  
it  
out

SCENE TEN

Sitting on the bed

Wallace's bedroom. Wallace and Sarah are sitting on the bed. Sarah is reading something on a piece of paper.

Wallace? ①

SARAH. Oh, I really like it.

WALLACE. Really?

SARAH. Really. It's very good.

WALLACE. Why?

SARAH. Well, it's funny, but it's also sad. It's really sad. And it's so true. I mean, there's so much of you in there. I mean, if I didn't know you, I'd know you after I read this. You know what I mean? I think it's really talented work. What's it for?

WALLACE. For?

SARAH. I mean, is it for English class or something?

WALLACE. No. I just sort of wrote it. Not really for anything. For me, I guess. → humbled

SARAH. You should submit it to the school newspaper. I bet they'd publish it. → you must

WALLACE. I don't think I want the whole school reading this. hesitant

SARAH. Why not? I mean, you shouldn't be ashamed or anything — tries to comfort

WALLACE. I'm not ashamed. It just seems a little sensationalist, you know?

SARAH. I don't know. I guess so.

WALLACE. So. (Pause.) What do you want to do?

SARAH. Oh, I don't know.

WALLACE. We could go see a movie.

SARAH. Sure.

19

She is timid

WALLACE. Or we could stay here.

SARAH. Sure.

WALLACE. Well, which one?

SARAH. Whichever.

WALLACE. Come on, I'm horrible with decisions.

SARAH. So am I.

WALLACE. Sarah, you're the valedictorian of our class, for Chrissakes. If you can't make a decision, who can?

SARAH. Umm, do you want to stay here?

WALLACE. Yes. Gives him the wrong idea

SARAH. Okay. Let's stay here, then.

WALLACE. Settled. Do you want something to drink? tries to be adult

SARAH. Umm, sure. Making moves

WALLACE. What do you want? Some wine? A screwdriver?

SARAH. Oh, you mean something to drink. I don't drink. taken back

WALLACE. Oh. (Pause.) Do you mind if I drink something? Still trying to seem adult

SARAH. Oh, no, don't let me stand in your way. Exit SL

WALLACE. I'll be right back. Sarah snoops

SARAH. Okay. (Wallace walks out. Sarah looks around the room. She looks at a photograph in a frame by the bed. Wallace walks in, sipping a glass of wine.)

WALLACE. In vino veritas.

SARAH. Who's this? ④ She knows just trying to be sneaky

WALLACE. It's my mother.

SARAH. She was beautiful.

WALLACE. She was okay. I'm going to light a candle, okay?

SARAH. Sure. (Wallace gets a candle. He takes a lighter from his pocket.)

WALLACE. My great-grandfather was lighting a pipe with this lighter when he died. It's a Zippo. Pretty sharp, huh? tries to flirt more

SARAH. It's very nice. (Wallace tries to light the lighter. It won't light.)

WALLACE. I think it has to warm up. (Pause. Wallace tries to light the lighter a few more times. It won't light.) Uhh, I guess my great-grandfather forgot to refill it before he died. It's just as well. I hate candles. They're so cliched. (Pause.) You want to listen to some music?

SARAH. Sure.

WALLACE. What do you like?

SARAH. Oh, anything.

↳ Whatever

Wallace trying to flirt

takes that the wrong way

Never mind

A sword fight

This isn't what girls want?

tries to receive

⑤ Okay lets try this

WALLACE. You like James Taylor?

SARAH. Sure. Way 1.

WALLACE. Let me just find the tape. (Wallace looks for the tape.) I don't know where I put it. Maybe it's out in the car. I can go check — Oh no this isn't working

SARAH. That's okay. We don't need music. Do we?

WALLACE. Uhh, no, I guess not. (Pause.) Well.

SARAH. What was your mother like, Wallace?

WALLACE. What was she like?

SARAH. Yeah.

WALLACE. She was like Sylvia Plath without a Fulbright scholarship. Thinks he's funny

SARAH. What do you mean? genuinely confused

WALLACE. I mean — I don't know what I mean. I'm sixteen. (Wallace drinks his glass of wine.) Would you mind if I kissed you? ⑥ going for it

SARAH. The wine works fast.

WALLACE. No, I do. Can I? → Thinks this is what to do

SARAH. Umm, can't we talk for a while — uncomfortable

WALLACE. I don't want to talk. I want to kiss. Can I kiss you?

SARAH. I'd really feel better if we just —

WALLACE. Oh, come on — (Wallace kisses Sarah, long and hard.) ↳ Trying to be cool

SARAH. Maybe I should go. → enjoys it but freaked out

WALLACE. What? Oh, come on —

SARAH. No, I mean, maybe this wasn't such a good idea.

WALLACE. Don't you like me? ⑦ Never mind

SARAH. Very much, Wallace. But I don't want this to be just — I don't know, a lot of stupidity. Just kissing and nothing else. I wanted to talk to you, you know? Standing up for herself

WALLACE. Yeah, whatever. → hurt

SARAH. Oh, Wallace, don't do that —

WALLACE. Just go, please.

SARAH. What?

WALLACE. You said maybe you should leave, so leave. I don't want to — I just don't want to deal with this, okay?

SARAH. But —

WALLACE. But nothing. Just, please, go, okay?

SARAH. I — fine. Bye, Wallace. → pence

tries to be cool

Enter SL

play it off don't want to talk



WALLACE. Yeah, yeah, see you — *→ Sincere*  
 SARAH. I'm sorry this didn't work out. (Pause.) I'll see you *→ growing more upset*  
 in school on Monday. Okay? (Pause.) Okay, bye. (Sarah walks *→ fine*  
 out.)

wallace looks after her *→ immediate regret*

SCENE ELEVEN

*Pacing  
h/s bedroom*

Wallace's bedroom. Wallace is sitting on his bed, talking on the phone.

*① Trying anything*

WALLACE. Yeah, I wanted to see if I could make a song request and a dedication . . . Umm, "Something In The Way She Moves". . . . By James Taylor. *② You don't?*  
 I mean, it's on "Greatest Hits". You see, I'm trying to right a wrong, as they say. . . . I don't know, it's an expression. . . . Umm, do you have any, I don't know, like, Cat Stevens or something, somebody close to James Taylor? You know, one man and a guitar, that sort of thing. . . . Only top forty? . . . Who's in the top forty? Anybody named James? . . . No, that's not really appropriate. *③ Umm,*  
 could I just make a dedication, then? . . . Well, I know it's supposed to be for a song, but you don't seem to have the song I need, so if I could just maybe make the dedication and then you could maybe not play anything for about three minutes in place of the song I need and that way — hello? (Pause.) Shit. (Wallace hangs up the phone.)

*scramble*

*last resort*

*desperation grows*

wallace paces before getting to door

SCENE TWELVE

Sarah's front door. Sarah inside, Wallace outside.

*Let's do this ①*

SARAH. Wallace. *→ shocked*  
 WALLACE. Sarah. *→ Timid/shocked/desperate*  
 SARAH. What are you doing here?  
 WALLACE. I wanted — umm, I wanted to apologize. *→ Ah okay*  
 SARAH. You don't have to — Oh god  
 WALLACE. Yeah, I do.  
 SARAH. Okay. (Pause.) So? fed up but wants the apology  
 WALLACE. You know, I just — it's funny, you know, some-  
 → haven't thought b/c all thinking has stopped

*Trying to Explain → Scrambling*

times I just wish I were a little kid again, when "sorry" was okay, you know?

SARAH. Yeah, well, we're not little kids. Wallace. *What is happening*

WALLACE. We're *not* Umm, no, no, we're not. We're certainly not. Umm — okay. Well, I was acting really stupid before. I mean, just very — stupid. It was — I was being, umm —

SARAH. Stupid. *→ This is a waste of time*

WALLACE. Yeah. And it was wrong, and it was — you know, it made you — it was unfair. And I apologize. *oh okay*

SARAH. Okay —

WALLACE. And I thought maybe we could try again. *Shyer*

SARAH. Again? *on no is this what i think it is*

WALLACE. Yeah, you know, maybe I could come in —

SARAH. My parents are sleeping. *→ Defense!!*

WALLACE. Oh. (Pause.) I could try to be quiet. *→ Clinging*

SARAH. It's kind of late.

WALLACE. Umm, well, you know, maybe you could come back over to my house and we could start from the beginning.

SARAH. Wallace — *PLEASE NO*

WALLACE. I mean, I know it sounds like a stupid idea but trust me, I'll behave this time. I know what to do. We can talk. We can have a conversation. We don't even have to kiss. We'll just talk and then you can go. (Pause.) Or we can just sit in silence for a while. We don't have to talk.

SARAH. I don't think that's a very good idea, Wallace.

WALLACE. All I'm asking for is another chance, Sarah. Don't make me beg.

SARAH. There's no need to beg, Wallace, I just don't think —

WALLACE. Okay. I'll beg. (Wallace drops to his knees.) I'm begging. Sarah, give me another shot. *FINE!!*

SARAH. Wallace —

WALLACE. I'll be good.

SARAH. Wallace —

WALLACE. Look at the moon, Sarah. It's full. It's romantic.

SARAH. Wallace, get off your knees. *→ done w/ him*

WALLACE. (Pause.) That's okay, I kind of like it down here. (Pause.) I was going to bring a guitar and maybe serenade you.

*→ Stays on the ground*

*Sarah trying to be responsible*

*sinks*

*Last Chance ③*

*Settling ④*

*A little manic*

Trying to relate

A calm has settled they both know

on ①

laughs to himself

but I can't sing. And I don't play the guitar. I did have Romantic Thoughts, though.

SARAH. That's very sweet, Wallace. (Pause.) I really should go back inside— doesn't get it

WALLACE. Yeah, I understand. You know, I tried to dedicate a song to you on the radio, you know, something by James Taylor, and they didn't have any James Taylor. Can you believe that?

SARAH. That's pretty funny.

WALLACE. Yeah. Pretty Funny World.

SARAH. Sure is.

WALLACE. So, umm, you wouldn't want to maybe try again, say, next weekend? A movie or — Maybe one more time

SARAH. Wallace. Come on

WALLACE. No, I understand. Okay. Ah okay

SARAH. I'm sorry, Wallace.

WALLACE. Yeah, no, I'm sorry.

SARAH. (Pause.) Are you going to stay down there?

WALLACE. For a little while, yeah. If you don't mind.

SARAH. No. I don't mind.

WALLACE. Thanks.

SARAH. Yeah, well, okay. Goodnight, Wallace.

WALLACE. 'Night.

SARAH. Bye.

WALLACE. Bye. (Sarah walks out, closing the door behind her.

Pause. Wallace looks up at the moon.) Thanks a lot, Moon. You really came through for me. Bitter

### SCENE THIRTEEN

Psychiatrist's office. Psychiatrist is sitting in a chair, writing in a notebook. Wallace walks in.

Wallace walks in w/

vicious manic energy

PSYCHIATRIST. Hello, Wallace. It's been a long time since I've seen you. Surprised

WALLACE. About five years. Short

PSYCHIATRIST. Yes. Nice to see you again.

WALLACE. I'll bet. Short

PSYCHIATRIST. Would you like to have a seat? Ummm

WALLACE. No.

Pacing around the office

interested

② Take off running

Trying to break everything down

how can he

Oh and another thing

Who am I?

Back to mom

Manic energy grows

PSYCHIATRIST. Okay, then. What's on your mind?

WALLACE. Lots. (Pause.) I came here last time because my father made me, but now I'm here because I want to talk to you. You see, I'm confused. My mother makes me a sandwich for lunch. I take it. She, in turn, slits her throat. And after the funeral, when I go back to school for the first time, my father makes me a sandwich for lunch, or at least he tries, so as not to screw up my daily routine any more than it already has been. And I'm thinking, all day while I'm in school, that he's going to be lying on the kitchen floor when I get home. It's the same thing, you see, because I took the sandwich. If I didn't take, I think, they'll be okay. But I take, and that kills them. And when I came home from school and he wasn't on the floor of the kitchen, but instead sitting in his study, alive. I was disappointed. Let down. Because my system didn't work. It failed me. Everything was failing me. And when I expected my father to fail me, he failed me by not failing me. He was just sitting there in his study. Alone, deserted by the woman he loved and planned to — I don't know, move to Florida with, and he can manage to stay alive, to go on living. And, I mean, Victoria, this twelve year old girl, is sitting there, practically begging me to kiss her. I mean, she would have been on her knees in a second, in more ways than one, that's how it seemed, and when I finally let down and actually do what she's been asking me to do — I kiss her and bang — all of a sudden, I'm too goddamn fast for her. I told her I loved her, and she runs off, giggling, and the next week she's kissing somebody else, and I heard he got up her shirt, and he's not too fast. I'm the one who was too fast. So I get this reputation that scares the hell out of me, because, not only will no decent girls look at me, I can't even think about any of the indecent girls, because I'm scared to death of having to live up to my own reputation. And, now, I mean, when my big mistake has always been talking too much, so I try, finally, on this girl I really like, okay, I mean, bright, pretty, actually nice, caring, I try not to screw it up by talking too much, and I go right for the kiss and she won't ever see me again because I didn't talk too much. I mean, I can't win. They desert. Women desert. And I know it all stems back to my fucking coward mother, and if she hadn't offed herself, I'd

logic

Slows

dark humor

how??  
↑ opposite

Speed

Just trying to do the right thing

A weird calm from being tired of screaming

have no problems, but what I'm trying to say is I don't know what the hell to do about all of this, Doctor, and it's my life, so can — you know (can you give me some advice or something.) Doctor? (Pause.) Doctor? (Pause.) Doctor?

→ please → please → please

SCENE FOURTEEN

DSE

Wallace and Psychiatrist.

① lets get started

reeling up

WALLACE. "Tyrannosaurus Rex." By Wallace Kirkman. Age eighteen. (Psychiatrist gets up and starts to walk out.) Don't go. I need help with this one. Stay right there. Please. You'll like this. It's very Freudian. In fact, it's a dream. (The lights change rather dramatically. Psychiatrist sits and Wallace walks out. He walks in a moment later with a crate of props.) I need a mother. (Pause.) I need somebody who can act like a mother.

okay

Please. (Victoria walks in.) You'll do. I always wanted to be a dinosaur when I was young. Younger. I have a lot in common with Tyrannosaurus. We both walk on two legs, we both eat meat, and we both occasionally answer to the nickname "King of the Tyrant Lizards." Anyhow, the recipe for this dream is something like two parts "Oedipus Rex," two parts Freud, and nineteen parts me. In the beginning, the eventual parents are both thirteen years old. (Wallace pushes Psychiatrist and Victoria onto their knees.) And Jewish. (Wallace pulls two pairs of gag glasses out of the crate of props. He puts one — with a plastic nose — on Victoria and the other — with a plastic nose and a plastic moustache — on Psychiatrist.) They get bar mitzvahed and bat mitzvahed on the same day and sleep with each other on the same night. Kids today. God bless 'em. On with the dream. The girl gets pregnant, as girls will do. (Wallace pulls a baby doll out of the crate of props and hands it to Victoria.) She wants to get an abortion so the baby won't get in the way of the seventh grade, but neither of the partners got any cash for their mitzvahs, only savings bonds. Lots of savings bonds. So, they pack several pairs of underwear and go to stay with the girl's grandmother, a mentally ill fortune teller from Boston. (Grandmother walks in — a grand entrance — wearing a turban.)

Think he's clever

A rhythm

Moving on

⑤ what do I do

into the narrative

Cartoonish

Condescending

run USL

on god

③

GRANDMOTHER. This baby is trouble. He's going to fight with you and shtoop you.

VICTORIA. Shtoop?

PSYCHIATRIST. How do you know the baby's going to be a "he"?

GRANDMOTHER. I'm a fortune teller. Give me a break.

WALLACE. When the baby is born, they immediately sell it on the black market. (Victoria tosses the baby doll to Wallace. Wallace pulls a packet of play money out of the crate of props and hands it to Victoria.) They use the money to pay a few months worth of rent on a Beacon Street apartment. (Wallace takes the packet of play money from Victoria and replaces it in the crate of props. He pulls a pair of boxing gloves out of the crate of props and hands them to Psychiatrist, who puts them on.) The father starts to take boxing lessons. The mother spends her spare time in their spare apartment reading spare Japanese literature. (Wallace pulls a Mishima paperback out of the crate of props and tosses it to Victoria.) They earn rent money and grocery money and boxing lesson money and Japanese book money by becoming kiddie porn stars. (Psychiatrist and Victoria look at one another in horror.) Cut. And, at this point, the dream leaps ahead about seventeen years or so. The father is a very popular amateur boxer. (Wallace pulls Psychiatrist up off her knees so she is standing. Wallace pulls Victoria up off her knees so she is also standing.) The mother is about to commit ritual suicide. (Wallace pulls the large knife Mother used to slit her throat out of the crate of props and hands it to Victoria.)

VICTORIA. I've tried and tried and tried. And I'll just never be Japanese. (Victoria plunges the large knife into her bowels and falls to the floor. Dead. Wallace stares at her for a moment, then tosses the baby doll into the crate of props and pulls out a pair of boxing gloves. He puts them on.)

WALLACE. The son is a boxing necrophiliac who masturbates. A lot. (Wallace approaches Grandmother.) Hello.

GRANDMOTHER. Shalom. Ready

WALLACE. (To the audience.) I hate when people say "shalom". I never know whether they're coming or going or just a pacifist. Annoyed

GRANDMOTHER. How may I serve you?

Like an omniscient narrative he moves w/ familiarity

matter of fact

over dramatic

Now to him

Gma gets more annoyed

Angel sound

Quick exchange keep up the pace

WALLACE. I'd like to know my fortune.  
GRANDMOTHER. Easy. You're going to fight with your Dad and shtoop your Mom. Ten bucks, please.  
WALLACE. This is horrible. I don't want to fight with Dad. I love Dad. *on god*  
GRANDMOTHER. Ten bucks, please.  
WALLACE. And I don't want to shtoop Mom. Because Dad would get mad. And we'd fight. *Spiral*  
GRANDMOTHER. Ten bucks, please.  
WALLACE. And I don't want to fight with Dad. I love Dad. Boy, this makes me tense. I need some release. *tension*  
GRANDMOTHER. Ten bucks, please. (Wallace punches Grandmother and knocks her out.)  
WALLACE. I wonder if there's anything good over at the morgue. (Wallace looks at Victoria.) She's beautiful. She's everything. She's dead. And she's a nice Jewish girl. I wonder where her bowels are. (Wallace leaps onto Victoria, kisses her madly for a few moments, then rolls off onto the floor.) It's time to box. (Wallace approaches Psychiatrist. A bell rings. Psychiatrist punches Wallace and knocks him out.) *Angry* → *Boxing*  
PSYCHIATRIST. 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. (Psychiatrist slaps Wallace's face and he comes to.)  
WALLACE. Did I win?  
PSYCHIATRIST. Nope.  
WALLACE. Shit.  
PSYCHIATRIST. Come on, I'll buy you a beer.  
WALLACE. I'm underage.  
PSYCHIATRIST. You don't have a fake i.d.?  
WALLACE. I was always too busy masturbating to buy one.  
PSYCHIATRIST. Oh. (Pause.) Come on, I'll buy you a ginger ale.  
WALLACE. Yeah, okay. You're on. (Psychiatrist helps Wallace up and they walk a few steps.)  
PSYCHIATRIST. One beer and one ginger ale, barkeep.  
WALLACE. Excuse me for a moment, I've got to go to the bathroom.  
PSYCHIATRIST. But you haven't had anything to drink.  
WALLACE. (Pause.) Excuse me for a moment, I've got to go to the bathroom.  
PSYCHIATRIST. Oh. Sure, go right ahead. → *Am okay*

Wake up

⑤

Where is this going ① nervous energy

Radiate Confidence

Actually amazed

moving on

Sound

What?

WALLACE. Be right back. (Wallace walks out. He runs in a few moments later, without the boxing gloves on, his hands covering his eyes. He is screaming. Grandmother, Psychiatrist, and Victoria clear the stage and walk out. The lights change back. Wallace takes his hands off his tightly closed eyes, opens them, sees nobody around, and stops screaming. He yawns, as if waking up.) I've been having this dream every night for the past two months. It's always pretty much the same, although sometimes it's in color and sometimes it's in black-and-white, and once the black-and-white version was colorized, which pissed me off. I mean, it's more or less my life story, and who wants their life story colorized? → *Annoyed*

He is so tired

# SCENE FIFTEEN

Wallace's dormitory room. Wallace and Lili walk in.

WALLACE. This is my room. *gestures* *is slightly*  
LILI. Nice. How did you get a single room your first year?  
WALLACE. I had a psychiatrist write the school a note saying essentially that if I had to live with another person I'd probably kill them.  
LILI. Seriously? → *What the hell*  
WALLACE. Not really. But the school believed it. (Pause.) You must be tired.  
LILI. Why?  
WALLACE. Well, I mean, you were on the stage for practically the entire time. *flatter her? will that work?*  
LILI. It's an important part. → *I know*  
WALLACE. And you did it so well. Really. The whole thing was — beautiful.  
LILI. The choreographer's pretty talented.  
WALLACE. I mean, who the hell would ever think to do "Catcher in the Rye" as a ballet?  
LILI. The choreographer would. → *come on dude*  
WALLACE. I — well, I mean, I know, but it's just — wow. You know, I never realized there was so much stuff about lesbians in "Catcher in the Rye."  
LILI. It's all in the subtext. → *She's so smart*  
WALLACE. Yeah. But I think, you know, having you — you

Really checking her out



# cat & mouse game

Turn it on

Trying to sound smart

know, having a woman as Holden Caulfield really made everything quite clear.

LILI. I'm glad you liked it. (Pause.) You're very cute, Wallace.

WALLACE. Me? <sup>Approach/stalk</sup> <sup>Looks him up & down</sup>

LILI. Yes, you. I'm really drawn to you, you know?

WALLACE. Umm, sure. <sup>Wrest</sup> <sup>panic</sup>

LILI. What are you waiting for?

WALLACE. Huh?

LILI. Kiss me. <sup>Come on you won't</sup>

WALLACE. Umm, are you — umm, sure. (Wallace kisses Lili.)

How was that? <sup>Winces</sup>

LILI. That was nice. Do you want to sleep together? <sup>On yet</sup>

WALLACE. What?

LILI. Do you want to make love? <sup>grass him out</sup>

WALLACE. Umm, with you? <sup>Retreat retreat</sup>

LILI. Yes, with me.

WALLACE. Umm, sure, yes, yeah, sure. (Pause.) What do we do?

LILI. Are you a virgin? <sup>getting annoyed</sup>

WALLACE. Umm, technically, no. <sup>stumble</sup>

LILI. What do you mean, "technically?" <sup>On god</sup>

WALLACE. Well, what is the definition of male virginity?

LILI. Is that a rhetorical question?

WALLACE. A male virgin is a male who has never had his thing inside a female's thing. Right?

LILI. Anybody still calling it a "thing" is probably a virgin. I know that much.

WALLACE. Well, when I was born, I had a thing. A very tiny, bald thing, but a thing nonetheless. And I entered this world through my mother's thing — the infamous "tunnel of love". Therefore, my thing has been inside of a female's thing, although it had to share the space with the rest of my body. In fact, pretty much all men are born nonvirgins. The only exceptions would be men born Caesarean style.

LILI. You're saying you lost your virginity — with your mother? <sup>Why am I here but now has a challenge</sup>

WALLACE. Yeah.

LILI. You're pretty weird, Wallace.

WALLACE. Thank you. <sup>yay!</sup>

What is going on

weird & nerdy really earnest

Reel him back in

Let's do this @

Back on track

LILI. So, will this be your first time having sex with somebody outside your immediate family?

WALLACE. You've got me there. Yes.

LILI. I'm honored.

WALLACE. I'm terrified.

LILI. It's simple. Don't worry, you'll be fine. Before we get started, do you have any protection?

WALLACE. Umm, no. <sup>I'm ready</sup>

LILI. Here, take this. (Lili hands Wallace a condom.)

WALLACE. You really come prepared.

LILI. I don't want to even joke around with AIDS, you know? <sup>NO Thank you</sup>

WALLACE. I know. Remember when AYDS was just a dietetic candy? There's a stock that must have done real well. Can you picture the president of the company right before the end? "Call the damn thing Dexatrim, it's a superb name for a disease!"

LILI. You don't have to make jokes, Wallace, everything's going to be fine. Better than fine.

WALLACE. How did you know I was nervous? I thought I was covering it pretty well.

LILI. A woman knows.

WALLACE. Hey, tell me something.

LILI. Yeah?

WALLACE. What can you possibly see in me?

LILI. What do you mean?

WALLACE. I mean, how did I end up here with you? You're a beautiful senior, I'm a nervous little freshman.

LILI. You've got great eyes. <sup>geniune</sup>

WALLACE. I do.

LILI. Really intelligent eyes. Like they've seen a lot. That's what they look like. <sup>looks into him</sup>

WALLACE. You're here with me because of my eyes?

LILI. Yeah, sort of.

WALLACE. The brochures don't do college justice.

LILI. Let's get on the bed, Wallace.

WALLACE. Let me just hit the lights.

LILI. No, keep them on, I want to see you.

WALLACE. You keep the lights on with a guy named Biff who pumps iron and gasoline. With a Jew from Jersey, you

timid but curious

Oh hell yes!

please

SCENE SIXTEEN

Wallace's dormitory room. Wallace and Nina are sitting on the bed. She is looking at a photograph in a frame by the bed.

NINA. Is this your mother? → genuine  
WALLACE. Yeah. She's dead. → matter of fact  
NINA. Oh. I'm sorry. → oh no  
WALLACE. For what?

NINA. For asking.  
WALLACE. I don't mind. I mean, I've lived without her for so long—it's not all that bad, really. → eh its okay  
NINA. What was she like?

WALLACE. Like Sylvia Plath without talent.

NINA. She killed herself?

WALLACE. Yeah. When I was six.

NINA. That's too bad. How'd she kill herself? → How is this happening

WALLACE. You really want to know?

NINA. Yeah. If you don't want to talk about it, though—

WALLACE. No, I do. It's just that it freaks most people out.

(Pause.) She slit her throat with a kitchen knife. matter of fact

NINA. Oh, God. I never understand why people don't just take pills and die painlessly. → searching

WALLACE. I guess if you hate yourself enough to want to die—it's just like if you wanted to kill someone else. If you hate something, you want it to die painfully. I mean, I guess that's what it is. I know that pain belongs in there somewhere.

NINA. How did you deal with all that? I mean, how'd you get through it?

WALLACE. I used to break glass.

NINA. Huh?

WALLACE. I used to break glasses on the kitchen floor. That helped a little. It was destructive, but it eased the pain.

NINA. How sad—

WALLACE. It's no big deal. I mean, I guess it made me who I am today, and who knows what I would have been if she was still alive. Maybe I'd be somebody I'd hate, you know. Sure.

do it in the dark. (Wallace flips the light switch. Blackout.)

LILI. (Pause.) Why do you wear so many layers?

WALLACE. Wearing layers of clothing keeps you warmer than wearing one thick garment. → matter of fact

LILI. But it's not cold out.

WALLACE. Alright, so I hate my body. I'm too skinny. Is that such a crime? → Ugh fine

LILI. You've got a nice body.

WALLACE. In the dark, maybe. You're so sweaty— → hungry

LILI. I want to see you, Wallace, I want to see all of you. Can't you turn the lights on?

WALLACE. If the lights go on, I go in the closet.

LILI. Do you have a candle or something, at least?

WALLACE. I hate candles. (Pause.) Am I doing okay?

LILI. You're doing fine. Just fine.

WALLACE. (Pause.) Why did the chicken cross the road?

LILI. This isn't the time, Wallace.

WALLACE. Sorry. (Long pause. Wallace flips the light switch. The lights come up. They sit up in bed together.) Wom. (Pause.)

You know, I always wondered what this would be like, I always tried to imagine, and it's just—now it's actual. Now it's real. Now—I just slept with an older woman. An older woman who dances. Billy Corkscrew would never believe it.

LILI. Who?

WALLACE. This kid I was friends with growing up, Billy Corkscrew. He talked about sex all the time. He told me everything, little Mister Know-It-All. You know, told me that the only way to really satisfy a woman was to put Spanish Fly in her drink, and if you were dating a girl who spoke French instead of Spanish, you had to get your Spanish Fly "translated" which Billy said could only be done at the French embassy and it cost a hell of a lot of money, and he said we would probably just be better off paying professionals. (Pause.) He moved to Arizona when we were eleven. Last I heard about him, he couldn't find a date for his senior prom.

LILI. (Pause.) You have to meet my little sister.

→ ohmygod

Wallace gets lost in his own thoughts

there are times I'd kill to have her back, just for a day. So I could show her something I've written, or talk to her about my thoughts, or just even to see her smile when I did something silly. (Long pause.) ⑤ Dig deeper

NINA. What are you thinking about?

WALLACE. I don't know. About my mother, and about how you listen to me talk, and — and about how I'd love to kiss you right now. → Im gonna do it

NINA. So why don't you?

WALLACE. What? Well, umm, Nina, do you — did your sister tell you —

NINA. I know. You and my sister were — together.

WALLACE. And it doesn't bother you?

NINA. A little. Not much. I mean, you were drunk —

WALLACE. What?

NINA. And all you did was kiss, right?

WALLACE. Umm — umm, yeah. Just a few drunken kisses, that's all it was.

NINA. A few? She said one.

WALLACE. Well, I mean, there were a few within the one. But we never pulled our lips apart, so technically, I guess, yeah, just one.

NINA. Okay. (Pause.) Well?

WALLACE. Well what?

NINA. Kiss me.

WALLACE. Nina, I think I love you. I know it sounds stupid, but — is that okay? → She accepts him

NINA. Sure.

WALLACE. Okay. I'm going to kiss you now, okay?

NINA. Okay. → nervous but excited

WALLACE. Okay. (They kiss.)

#### SCENE SEVENTEEN

Wallace's dormitory room. Wallace and Wendy are sitting on the bed, kissing.

WENDY. Are you sure we should be doing this?

WALLACE. Why not? → pray off

WENDY. Well, what about your girlfriend?

→ dude?

Both need to get an out

WALLACE. What about her? → A little defensive

WENDY. Well —

WALLACE. I'm drunk, you're drunk, we don't know what we're doing. Right?

WENDY. Umm, right.

WALLACE. Right. Give me a kiss. (They kiss.) → Trying to lighten the mood by being playful

#### SCENE EIGHTEEN

Wallace in a spotlight.

WALLACE. I fucked up. Mommy. I fell in love — really — for the first time. I mean, it wasn't romance for the sake of romance. It was romance for the sake of — somebody. Nina. Nina listened. And I got scared. I ran away. To somebody else. What do I do? Mommy. It hurts. (Pause.) I want my — I need my mother. (Pause.) I'm not asking for much. I just — all I want is to take the knife away from her. To go back and take the knife away from her. All I want to do is change history.

(The lights come up on the kitchen. Mother is fixing a peanut butter and banana sandwich. She is peeling the banana. Wallace looks at her. He looks at the audience, then looks back at her. He walks past the table picking up the large knife as he goes by. He walks out. Mother finishes peeling the banana and fixes the sandwich, breaking the banana up with her hands and spreading the peanut butter with a spoon. She puts the sandwich into a lunchbox on the table. Wallace runs in.) I'm going to miss the bus. Is my lunch ready?

MOTHER. All set. (Wallace grabs the lunchbox and kisses Mother on the cheek.)

WALLACE. Bye, Mommy.

MOTHER. Bye, Wallace.

WALLACE. (To the audience.) I love the second grade!

MOTHER. Don't shout, Wallace. (Wallace runs out. Mother watches after him. She writes a note on a slip of paper. While she is writing the note, Wallace walks in and quietly watches her from the side. She puts the note on the table. She takes off her turtle-neck shirt, so she is in her brassiere. She wraps the turtle-neck around her neck and pulls it taut, attempting to strangle herself. The lights on the kitchen slowly fade, and Wallace is in the spotlight again.)

WALLACE. (To the audience. Pause.) In countless science

→ A calmness

→ desperate

→ ASK & acceptance

→ Matter of fact

→ Release

→ Accept

→ 3

→ A calmness

A mix of  
sinking  
&  
rising

fiction stories about time travel, the moral is quite clear. When you go back in time, if you so much as step on an ant, the course of history will change drastically. Don't try to change history. It's dangerous. (Pause.) In my experience, trying to change history isn't really dangerous. It's just a waste of time—a futile, frustrating exercise where you exert yourself and use up boundless energies and—and everything stays exactly the same. With small technical differences, perhaps. One more dead ant. If you take a razor away from a man who wants to kill himself, he'll still kill himself—he just won't be clean shaven. The will is all that matters. If the will is there—(Pause.) I should dwell on the future. Dwelling on the past is hopeless.

period

SCENE NINETEEN

Wallace's dormitory room. Wallace is standing. There is a knock on the door.

WALLACE. Yeah. (Nina walks in.)

NINA. Hey, there.

WALLACE. Sit down.

NINA. What's wrong?

WALLACE. Sit down.

NINA. Okay. (Nina sits on the bed.) What's the matter?

WALLACE. You deserve better. —Sharp

NINA. Huh?

WALLACE. I'm not good enough for you.

NINA. What are you talking about? You're the best.

WALLACE. I'm the worst. You should hate me.

NINA. Why?

WALLACE. You don't want to know.

NINA. What don't I want to know?

WALLACE. I've been with somebody else.

NINA. (Pause.) What?

WALLACE. I was with somebody else.

NINA. (Pause.) Who?

WALLACE. Wendy.

NINA. Wendy. (Pause.) I think I'm going to be sick. (Nina runs out.)

WALLACE. Nina. (Pause.) Women desert (Wallace picks up a

②<sub>36</sub>

↳ History repeated

W nervous pacing

↳ come on W

Are you kidding

quick but painful

↳ SINK

you came back

glass He holds it in his hand, looking at it. He starts to throw it so it will break against the wall. Nina walks in.)

NINA. Don't you dare break that glass or I'll turn right around and I won't come back. (Wallace stops. He puts the glass on the bed and looks at Nina.)

WALLACE. You came back. (Pause.) You should hate me.

NINA. I do. But I also happen to love you, and I'm not going to lose you without a fight.

WALLACE. You came back.

NINA. Do you want to work through this? I'll tell you right now, it's not going to be easy.

WALLACE. I know.

NINA. You betrayed me.

WALLACE. I know.

NINA. I know you may have been scared or whatever, but I swear to God, if you ever do this again, both you and her— whoever she is— will be lying on the street, okay?

WALLACE. Okay. (Pause.) You came back.

NINA. You want to work through this?

WALLACE. Yes.

NINA. Okay. Then we will.

WALLACE. You came back. (Wallace goes to hug Nina. They hug. After a few moments, she breaks from the hug and slaps him, hard, across the face.)

NINA. Don't you ever do that to me again, understand?

WALLACE. You came back.

SCENE TWENTY

Grandmother's kitchen. Wallace and Grandmother are sitting at the table.

GRANDMOTHER. And you really love her?

WALLACE. I swear. At least, I think I do. I mean, I know I do. And I was running away from her. You know, I was so terrified that she'd leave me, I wanted to leave first so I wouldn't have to deal with the pain. You know, I wanted to get caught with this other girl, Grandma, I had to tell her about it right away. It all made sense when I told her. Too much sense. She said she was going to be sick and walked out of my room. And something in me clicked. Something in me

37

↳ how could I be so stupid

N → Anger  
sink to love  
W → stunned & wildly in love

own up  
offense vs defense

drop

Resolve

①

Consumed w/ self reflection

Oh kids



old  
logic

had been expecting it. Had been expecting her to leave me. And it made sense. And it was complete. (Pause.) And then she came back. That's what threw me for a loop. And right then I said, there is no way I am going to lose her. I am going to do everything in my power to keep her. Because she came back. And it scares the hell out of me that I almost lost her because Mommy killed herself. I mean, my mother deserts me for whatever reasons, but she almost made me lose the one girl I've ever really loved.

hard  
resolve

GRANDMOTHER. (Pause.) You can't blame her until you die, you know.

WALLACE. What?

② Tough love

GRANDMOTHER. Your mother. I mean, sure, you can invoke her name once in a while to clear up a messy situation, but you've got to be responsible for something eventually. A dead mother does not give you *carte blanche* for a lifetime of screwing up. You can do it—you can screw up, go right ahead, but don't keep blaming her, or you'll just go through life fooling yourself and you'll die a blind man. (Pause.) Understand?

WALLACE. I think so. I'm not sure.

GRANDMOTHER. It's okay. You're still young. (Pause.) Are they feeding you enough up at school? You look thin.

WALLACE. They're feeding me fine, Grandma. (Pause.) Wallace points to a photograph in a frame on the table. Who's this?

GRANDMOTHER. Oh, that's Gertrude Mawsbaum, we grew up together. She just passed on. This picture was taken three weeks before she died.

#### EPILOGUE

Wallace is standing to the left with a tomato in his hand and a crate of tomatoes at his feet. Nina is standing to the right, wearing a white dress. Pause.

NINA. Well?

WALLACE. (Pause.) I don't want to ruin your dress. (Pause.) I don't want to ruin your beautiful dress. (Pause. The lights slowly fade.)

↓  
She puts  
the stars  
in the  
slit

38

②

#I'm okay

#### PROPERTY PLOT

- Prologue: Tomato (for Wallace to throw)  
Crate of tomatoes
- Scene 2: Kitchen table  
Large kitchen knife  
Peanut butter  
Banana  
Wonder bread  
Lunchbox
- Scene 3: Wallace's bed  
Gift-wrapped box of peanut brittle  
Photograph of Mommy
- Scene 4: School-yard bench  
Peanut butter/banana sandwich
- Scene 6: 2 chairs  
Psychiatrist couch  
Notebook & pen
- Scene 7: Park bench  
Mallow cups  
Jujufruits  
Bottle of pink drink
- Scene 8: Kitchen table & chairs  
Glass of milk  
Plate of Toll House cookies  
Framed photo of cousin Jerry
- Scene 10: Wallace's bed  
Bedside table  
Paper of Wallace's writing  
Framed photo of Mommy  
Telephone  
Candle  
Old Zippo lighter  
Telephone  
Glass of wine (set off-stage)
- Scene 11: (Same as Scene 10)

39

Come  
on  
Wallace

normalcy

on  
no

①

→ cycle