

**HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL**  
**(BUT TROY BOLTON IS A LESBIAN)**

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EXT. SKI LODGE - NIGHT

We fade in on the exterior of a glitzy ski lodge in Colorado, in the evening of New Year's Eve. Skiers are going up the lift and down the mountain; lights are strung up.

**TITLE CARD:** HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

INT. SKI LODGE - FREESTYLE CLUB YOUNG ADULTS PARTY

Inside the lodge, a happy, loud group of teenagers is gathered under a disco ball, dancing around in goofy costumes.

INT. SKI LODGE - FRONT LOBBY

GABRIELLA MONTEZ, 16, is curled up on the couch in front of the fireplace, clad in pajamas and nestled into a book. She's a pretty girl, but a clear introvert- everyone around her is engrossed in conversation as she remains buried in her novel.

Her well-dressed, long-suffering single mother, MS. MONTEZ, approaches her from behind. Her tone is one of gentle admonishment.

**MS. MONTEZ**

Gabby, it's New Year's Eve. Enough reading.

**GABRIELLA**

Oh but, Mom, I'm almost done.

MS. MONTEZ pulls her book from her hands.

**MS. MONTEZ**

The teen party? I've laid out your best clothes. Come get ready.

**GABRIELLA**

Can I have my book back?

Amused, Miss Montez hands the book back to GABRIELLA.

**GABRIELLA**

Thank you.

**MS. MONTEZ**

Come on.

Gabriella, extremely reluctant, follows her mom out.

INT. SKI LODGE - INNER GYM

MRS. BOLTON, an upper-class suburbanite mother, enters the gym to find her daughter TROY and husband COACH BOLTON busy shooting hoops.

TROY BOLTON, 16, is a very attractive butch young woman, short-haired, tall, and comfortable in her jersey, facing off against the rigor of her father. She's equal parts focused and playful, jibing against him as she makes basket after basket.

**COACH BOLTON**

Keep working left, Troy. You've got guard in the championship game we're expecting. You'll torch 'em!

**TROY**

By going left?

**COACH BOLTON**

Yeah. He looks middle, you take it downtown.

**TROY**

Okay, like this?

She goes left and nails the shot.

**COACH BOLTON**

Whoo! That's it. Sweet. I wanna see that in the game.

**TROY**

Oh you'll see that in the game, don't worry about me.

**MRS. BOLTON**

(teasingly)

Boys?

TROY tenses up. Neither of her parents notice.

**MRS. BOLTON**

Did we really fly all this way to play more basketball?

TROY and COACH BOLTON look at each other for a moment.

**TROY & COACH BOLTON**

(in unison)

Yeah.

**MRS. BOLTON**

It's the last night of vacation. The party, remember?

**COACH BOLTON**

Right, the party. The party. New Years Eve.

**MRS. BOLTON**

Troy, they have a kids party downstairs in the Freestyle club.

TROY wipes her forehead of sweat with her forearm, looking unconvincing.

**TROY**

Kid's party, Mom?

**MRS. BOLTON**

Young adults. Now go, shower up.

TROY takes the ball from her father and bounces it once.

**TROY**

Come on, one more.

MRS. BOLTON sighs.

**TROY**

Last one. I promise.

**COACH BOLTON**

Real quick.

MRS. BOLTON relents. As before, TROY fakes out and effortlessly nails the shot.

**TROY**

There we go. That's the way to end it.

**COACH BOLTON**

Relying on those fakeouts is gonna bite you in the butt soon, pal.

**TROY**

Hey! You still fall for them.

Laughing, they exit the gym together, COACH BOLTON doffing her affectionately over the head as they leave.

INT. SKI LODGE - FREESTYLE CLUB YOUNG ADULTS PARTY

The party is in full swing as TROY enters, in a button-up shirt and a slightly oversized blazer, and casually makes her way through the crowd. Across the room, GABRIELLA, in a comfortable shirt and jeans combo, also shyly moves amongst the crowd as a partygoer tips his ridiculously large cowboy hat at her.

**PARTYGOER**

Howdy, ma'am.

GABRIELLA smiles timidly as she finds a unoccupied cushion and goes back to her book.

**HOST**

All right! How about that for a couple of snowboarders?

The audience cheers loudly.

**HOST**

Yeah! Who's gonna rock the house next? Huh?

The host steps off the stage as two spotlights move around the crowd and eventually stop on TROY and GABRIELLA. TROY is immediately frozen in place; GABRIELLA doesn't even notice the light.

**HOST**

Ha-ha!

TROY politely attempts to decline, but the kids around her push her closer to the stage.

**TROY**

I can't sing. No, you go. I really don't-

The host walks to where GABRIELLA is sitting and takes her hand. She jumps at the contact and jerks away, but similarly to TROY, the crowd surges her forwards.

**HOST**

And you! Yeah, come on.

GABRIELLA looks terrified as she is led to the stage as TROY tries in vain to escape.

**TROY**

Look, I don't sing. I can't sing! I'm anti-hazing! No, guys...

**Partygoer**

Get up there!

TROY and GABRIELLA are both forced onto the stage.

**HOST**

Hey you know what? Someday you guys might thank me for this.

He gives the mic to GABRIELLA, and a sleazy grin to TROY, who just glares at him.

**HOST**

Or not.

Music ("START OF SOMETHING NEW") begins to play from the karaoke machine. TROY steadfastly refuses to look at GABRIELLA. GABRIELLA, in turn, looks at TROY out of the corner of her eye, sees a terrifyingly tall and beautiful girl, and immediately glances away and hugs herself tight.

**TROY**

*Living in my own world  
Didn't understand  
That anything can happen  
When you take a chance*

Her voice is a lovely, controlled alto. GABRIELLA chances another glance at her, surprised. TROY remains uncomfortable, leaning awkwardly into the microphone until the verse is over and then immediately moving for the corner of the stage.

GABRIELLA gathers herself, spurred on by TROY going first, and forces herself to look out into the distance.

**GABRIELLA**

*I never believed in  
What I couldn't see*

She has a *beautiful* voice- an almost fairytale quality to it. TROY turns back and looks at her, stunned, and really sees her for the first time. Almost involuntarily, she starts moving back towards her own microphone.

**GABRIELLA**

*I never opened my heart*

**TROY**

(remembering)  
*Ohh*

**GABRIELLA**

*To all the possibilities*



**BOTH**

*I know*

**GABRIELLA**

*That something has changed*

Both are trading shy glances. GABRIELLA is still hugging herself, but TROY has gone less stiff, trying to read the lyrics on screen and meet GABRIELLA's eyes at the same time.

**BOTH**

*Never felt this way*

**GABRIELLA**

*And right here, tonight*

**BOTH**

*This could be the start of something new  
It feels so right to be here with you, oh  
And now, looking in your eyes  
I feel in my heart the start of something new*

Now both girls are smiling, slightly more at ease. TROY, amused by GABRIELLA's rigid stance, starts to take off her blazer. A small crowd has grown around them, listening to them sing, and she tosses the jacket to a girl in the front row, who shrieks in delight. GABRIELLA's eyes bug.

**TROY**

*Now who'd have ever thought that*

**BOTH**

*We'd both be here tonight?*

**GABRIELLA**

*Yeah, and the world looks so much brighter*

**BOTH**

*With you by my side*

TROY's started to cheese it up, vocalizing and striking some modest diva poses for GABRIELLA's benefit. GABRIELLA's charmed despite herself and, having forgotten about the crowd, starts to sway a little in place.

**BOTH**

*I know that something has changed  
Never felt this way  
I know it for real  
This could be the start of something new  
It feels so right to be here with you  
And now, looking in your eyes  
I feel in my heart the start of something new*

Goofily, TROY dips low with the microphone, and GABRIELLA laughs, gathers the courage to take her own microphone off the stand, and dances more comfortably on the stage. TROY watches her, enthralled.

**TROY**

*I never knew that it could happen, 'til it happened to me*

**BOTH**

*I didn't know it before, but now it's easy to see*

They've come very close together. In a moment of spontaneity, TROY touches GABRIELLA's hand, maybe to pull her in closer, and GABRIELLA steps back in surprise and nearly falls off the stage. She gets shoved back on by the crowd, and moves closer to TROY, shy and out of place. TROY just grins and continues to sing to her.

**BOTH**

*It's the start of something new  
It feels so right to be here with you  
And now, looking in your eyes  
I feel in my heart  
That it's the start of something new  
It feels so right to be here with you  
And now, looking in your eyes  
I feel in my heart*

*The start of something new  
The start of something new*

The song finishes; both girls are gazing deeply into each other's eyes. There is absolutely no denying the spark they're both feeling. In tiny movements, TROY moves a little closer; this time GABRIELLA doesn't move away.

The crowd suddenly bursts into cheers and applauses, bringing them both painfully back to reality. They jump apart, look at each other again, and giggle in mutual awkwardness. TROY, the more social of the two, reaches a hand up to shake.

**TROY**

Troy.

**GABRIELLA**

*Troy?*

**TROY**

It's a nickname!

**GABRIELLA**

Oh! Gabriella.

They shake hands.

EXT. SKI LODGE - FREESTYLE CLUB BALCONY

TROY and GABRIELLA push their way onto the freestyle club balcony, hot chocolate in hand, already deep in conversation.

**GABRIELLA**

*A classics major?*

**TROY**

Yeah, my mom was a big Euripides fan. And my dad was studying econ at the same school, that's how they met.

**GABRIELLA**

(amused)

So, Troy.

**TROY**

Yeah. Well, Helen, actually. My dad started calling me Hell when I picked up basketball, but my mom said it would teach me bad manners. So Troy instead.

**GABRIELLA**

That's so sweet. Gabriella is just my grandmother's name. She lives in Italy.

**TROY**

Is she like, a famous Italian pop sensation?

**GABRIELLA**

What?

**TROY**

Seriously, you have an amazing voice. Is it genetic?

**GABRIELLA**

(pleased)

Stop.

**TROY**

You've got to be a singer, right?

**GABRIELLA**

Just church choir is all. And only sometimes. I tried to do a solo and nearly fainted.

**TROY**

Really? Why?

**GABRIELLA**

I took one look at all the people staring at me and next thing I knew I was staring at the ceiling. End of solo career.

**TROY**

Well with the way you sang tonight, that's pretty hard to believe.

**GABRIELLA**

Well that was the first time I did that. (suddenly overcome with excitement) I mean, it was so cool!

**TROY**

(genuine)

I know! Completely!

They both look at each other, and laugh self-consciously at their own enthusiasm. GABRIELLA's not someone who's able to laugh at herself often- she gazes at TROY's easy chuckle, transfixed.

**GABRIELLA**

Well you sounded like you've sang a lot, too.

**TROY**

(lighthearted)

Yeah, sure. My showerhead is very impressed with me.

GABRIELLA giggles, the sort of overdone but endearingly earnest laugh of a girl with a crush. TROY grins back at her, and they both suddenly notice the New Year's countdown around them.

**CROWD**

9, 8, 7...6, 5, 4...3, 2, 1!

The crowd goes wild as an impressive fireworks display begins. Snow begins to fall. TROY and GABRIELLA look up at the noise, then turn to each other in the same moment. The thought of a New Year's kiss is all over both of their faces. TROY fidgets, maybe shifts a little to lean down without thinking.

GABRIELLA gives TROY a long, long look, and decides that she's being silly- a girl, a girl like *this*, wouldn't just kiss *her*. She's the one to break the silence, startling TROY.

**GABRIELLA**

I guess... I guess I better go find my mom and wish her a happy new year.

TROY'S offput- not disappointed, but confused. She's sensed a rejection, but she's not sure of what.

**TROY**

Yeah, me too. I mean, not your mom. My mom... and dad. Uh... Oh!  
Can I- (suddenly bashful) Can I have your number?

**GABRIELLA**

Oh!

She's taken aback, then beams and takes out her phone. TROY hurriedly takes out her own.

**TROY**

Here, put your number in.

They swap. TROY plugs in her number, then, after a second of debating, lifts up the cell to take a cheesy photo of herself for the contact.

**TROY**

You too.

Obligingly, Gabriella takes a simple smiling photo of herself, then hands the phone back. TROY does the same.

**TROY**

There you go.

She looks at the contact photo GABRIELLA's taken, and smiles down at it. GABRIELLA hesitates, looking up at TROY, then walks off the balcony and away while TROY's distracted.

**TROY**

(oblivious)

Just so you know, singing with you is the most fun I've had on this entire vacation. So, um... where do you live?

She looks down, over her shoulder, and realizes that GABRIELLA has left. For a moment, she's confused, then accepts it and

looks at the picture of her in the cell phone, trying to identify the warmth of what she's feeling.

**TROY**

... Gabriella.

EXT. EAST HIGH SCHOOL - FRONT LAWN - DAY

**TITLE CARD:** One Week Later - Albuquerque, New Mexico

The sun is bright and high in the sky, the romance of the snow and ski lodge entirely in the past. The front of the school is full of activity- students mingling and discussing their vacations, cheerleaders practicing their new routines, jocks hooting and hollering as they reunite.

CHAD DANFORTH, 17, an attractive male basketball player and TROY's best friend, and a cheerleader are having a friendly game of 1-on-1. A school bus stops and TROY is the first to get out of the school bus. She is immediately swarmed by her fellow teammates and other students calling her name, asking her questions. This is, without a doubt, the most popular girl in school.

CHAD slings an arm over her shoulders, guiding her through the crowd.

**CHAD**

Troy! How ya doing, champ?

**TROY**

Hey, Chad, what's up? Hey, guys, happy new year.

**CHAD**

Yeah. It's a happy Wildcat new year!

The crowd cheers. TROY pumps a fist in the air in agreement. CHAD keeps pushing her through the crowd, past several vocal admirers. TROY, politely, tries to respond to all of them.

**GIRL**

How was your trip, Troy?

**TROY**

It was really nice, thank you-

**BOY**

Didn't meet any new boy toys while you were up there, did you Bolton?

**TROY**

(grunts)

No, none- no boy toys.

**CHAD**

Come on, fellas, we all know I'm the only man in Miss Bolton's life.

**TEAMMATE**

You're the man, Troy!

Beat. Everyone, including TROY and CHAD, turn back and give the teammate an odd look. He waves at TROY, meekly, and TROY gives an awkward wave in return. Then CHAD keeps shuffling forward, the crowd of admirers continuing to follow.

**CHAD**

In two weeks we're going to the championships with you leading us to infinity and beyond. What team?

**ALL**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

What team?

**ALL**

Wildcats!

INT. EAST HIGH - FRONT LOBBY



We see SHARPAY EVANS, 16, an ultrafeminine high maintenance machine, strut past the school bulletin board and confidently lift her hands up, forcing TROY's crowd to part for her as they enter the building.

**All**

(mocking)

Ooh!

TROY looks after her with mild interest. The rest of the team gathers in tight around her to gossip about SHARPAY.

**ZEKE**

The ice princess returned from the North Pole.

**CHAD**

You know, she probably spent the holidays the way she always does.

**TROY**

(distracted)

How's that?

**CHAD**

Shopping for mirrors.

**All**

Ooh!

The Wildcats and the cheerleaders laugh at CHAD's joke, except TROY, who just shoves CHAD's head in amusement. They pass the scholastic decathlon team and their ringleader, TAYLOR MCKESSIE, 16, a dedicated and intense academic and feminist.

**TAYLOR**

Ugh, behold the zoo animals heralding the new year. How tribal.

INT. EAST HIGH - HALLWAY

GABRIELLA too is in the halls of East High, accompanied by her mother and PRINCIPAL MATSUI. She's so nervous she looks ill,

wringing her hands together and glancing at each wall, each detail, as her mother and the principal discuss the details of the school. She grabs her mother's arm.

**GABRIELLA**

Mom, my stomach...

**MS. MONTEZ**

-is always nervous on first day at a new school. You'll do great. You always do, and I made my company promise that I can't be transferred again until you graduate.

This doesn't comfort GABRIELLA.

**PRINCIPAL MATSUI**

I reviewed your impressive transcripts, Miss Montez. I expect your light will shine very brightly here at East High.

This doesn't help either. She grabs at her mother a second time.

**GABRIELLA**

I don't wanna be the school's freaky genius girl again.

**MS. MONTEZ**

Just be Gabriella.

She kisses her daughter on the forehead.

**PRINCIPAL MATSUI**

This way.

MS. MONTEZ waves goodbye as GABRIELLA makes her way up a flight of stairs with Principal Matsui. GABRIELLA looks back at her, clearly miserable.

INT. EAST HIGH - HOMEROOM

The classroom buzzes with activity while MS. DARBUS, 46, an eccentric theatrical personality confined to all too small a school system, sits at the front of the room, absently reading a script for a play possibly. Girls and guys are crowded around

TROY's desk in the front row, completely blocking her field of view. She's smiling, affable, but clearly a little overwhelmed.

**Classmates**

(varied)

Troy! Troy! Hey! How's it going? How are you?

GABRIELLA, outside, steels herself and enters the classroom. She sees the crowd around a front desk, but not TROY herself, and grimaces at the idea of being the subject of such attention. TROY is equally unaware of GABRIELLA's entrance as GABRIELLA slips past her to hand some papers to MS. DARBUS.

**GABRIELLA**

Ms. Darbus?

**JASON**

(to TROY)

So, do you remember the night before?

**TROY**

No, not at all. All I remember is like, pink jelly. I...

TROY stops short as she catches a fleeting glimpse of GABRIELLA, passing alongside TROY's desk as she heads towards the back of the classroom.

**GABRIELLA**

Excuse me.

TROY is about to get up and follow her when, all of a sudden, SHARPAY is in front of TROY.

**SHARPAY**

(slightly flirtatious, very aggressive)

Hi, Troy.

**TROY**

(distracted)

Hi.

**SHARPAY**

I thought about you a lot over winter break. I wanted to ask, what's your skincare routine? Do you want to come over sometime, have a chat about... (meaningfully) girl stuff..

**TROY**

(still distant)

I drink a lot of water.

The bell rings. SHARPAY pouts and returns to her seat.

**MS. DARBUS**

I trust you all had splendid holidays. Check the sign-up sheets in the lobby for new activities. Miss Bolton!

TROY, who's been craning her neck to look at GABRIELLA, falls down in her seat with a jolt.

**MS. DARBUS**

Especially our winter musicale. We will have singles auditions..

**CHAD**

(to TROY)

You okay?

**TROY**

Yeah.

**MS. DARBUS**

...for our supporting roles and pairs auditions for our two leads.

**CHAD**

Pfft.

CHAD blows a raspberry. MS. DARBUS is not amused, and TROY ducks her head.

**MS. DARBUS**

Mr. Danforth, this is a place of learning, not a hockey arena.

CHAD puts his basketball on his lap as TROY mouths 'hockey?'

**MS. DARBUS**

There is also a final sign-up sheet for next week's scholastic decathlon competition. Chem Club president Taylor McKessie can answer all of your questions about that.

TAYLOR gives a proud nod as TROY, still ducking, dials GABRIELLA's number on her phone. GABRIELLA's phone rings with "Start Of Something New" as the ringtone, and TROY's head jerks.

**MS. DARBUS**

Ah, the cell phone menace has returned to our crucible of learning.

GABRIELLA looks in her bag for her phone, already humiliated enough to ship back home. SHARPAY and RYAN EVANS, 16, SHARPAY's impeccably dressed if a little dense twin brother, self-importantly check their phones.

**SHARPAY**

(to RYAN)  
Is it us?

Unforgiving, MS. DARBUS pulls out a can from behind her desk, and starts to circle the classroom like a vulture.

**MS. DARBUS**

Sharpay and Ryan, cell phones.

With a look of injustice, RYAN and SHARPAY both relinquish their phones.

**MS. DARBUS**

I will see you in detention.

Sharpay gasps. MS. DARBUS moves to GABRIELLA.

**MS. DARBUS**

We have zero tolerance for cell phones in class, so we will get to know each other in detention. Cell phone.

GABRIELLA, flushed, puts her phone in the can.

**MS. DARBUS**

And welcome to East High, Miss Montez.

MS. DARBUS now moves on to TROY, who's looking starry-eyed at GABRIELLA.

**MS. DARBUS**

Miss Bolton, I see your phone is involved. So we will see you in detention as well.

TROY shrugs and acquiesces, but CHAD steps in.

**CHAD**

That's not even a possibility, Ms. Darbus. Your Honor, see 'cause we have basketball practice, and Troy..

**MS. DARBUS**

Ah, that will be 15 minutes for you too, Mr. Danforth. Count 'em.

**TAYLOR**

That could be tough for Chad, since he probably can't count that high.

**TROY**

(defensive)

Hey-

**MS. DARBUS**

Taylor McKessie, 15 minutes.

TAYLOR gasps.

**MS. DARBUS**

Shall the carnage continue? Holidays are over, people Way over!  
Now any more comments, questions?

Jason timidly raises his hand.

**MS. DARBUS**

Jason.

**JASON**

So how were your holidays, Ms. Darbus?

The entire class groans. CHAD plants his head in his desk.

**JASON**

What?

The bell rings.

INT. EAST HIGH - HALLWAY

TROY is waiting, puppyish, outside the classroom for Gabriella. She keeps having to field off admirers and sympathizers, becoming increasingly impatient with all of them.

**CHAD**

Sorry, dude. See you in detention.

**TROY**

Oh, see you later. It's all good.

**JASON**

Ugh, she's crazy.

**TROY**

Yeah, haha. Women! Am I right?

She gets an unironic laugh from JASON, and is so busy scowling at him that she almost misses GABRIELLA, finally emerging the classroom. TROY jumps, and runs to catch up with her and grabs at her arm.

**TROY**

Hey!

GABRIELLA freezes in place, and TROY immediately releases her, nervous. Then GABRIELLA's face splits into a huge grin, and TROY sags in relief.

**GABRIELLA**

I don't...

**TROY**

Believe it.

**GABRIELLA**

Well, me...

**TROY**

Either. But how?

**GABRIELLA**

My mom's company transferred her here to Albuquerque. I can't believe you live here! I looked for you at the lodge on New Year's Day.

They begin to walk through the hall together. TROY stays slightly hunched, hands in her pockets.

**TROY**

(whispering)

I know, but we had to leave first thing.

**GABRIELLA**

Why are you whispering?

**TROY**

What? Oh, uh... (straightening up sheepishly) well, my friends know about the snowboarding. Um, I haven't quite told them about the, the...

**GABRIELLA**

The singing thing?

TROY's confused for a moment, then grasps this excuse with relief.



**TROY**

Yeah! Yeah, the... singing.

**Student**

(to TROY)

Hey, what's up?

**TROY**

Hey.

Several students are taking notice of TROY's new companion. TROY doesn't notice; GABRIELLA does.

**GABRIELLA**

Too much for them to handle?

**TROY**

No, it was cool. But, you know, my friends, it's uh... it's not what I... do. That was, like, a different person.

GABRIELLA suddenly turns and goes down a hallway as TROY finishes her sentence. TROY skids, and hops a few times to keep following.

**TROY**

So, uh... anyway, welcome to East High. Oh, now that you've met Ms. Darbus, I bet you just can't wait to sign up.

TROY points at the winter musical sign-up sheet tacked on the bulletin board. GABRIELLA scoffs.

**GABRIELLA**

I won't be signing up for anything for a while. I just wanna get to know the school. But (a little flirty) if you sign up, I'd consider coming to the show.

**TROY**

Yeah, yeah. That's completely impossible.

Out of nowhere, SHARPAY appears, one hand curling possessively around the bulletin board.

**SHARPAY**

What's impossible, Troy? I wouldn't think impossible is even in your vocabulary.

TROY and GABRIELLA both jump back, startled. SHARPAY immediately zones in on GABRIELLA- unknown threat detected.

**SHARPAY**

Oh, so nice of you to show our new classmate around.

In a clear show of dominance, SHARPAY takes out a red pen and signs her name in big letters on the sign-up sheet, then turns back.

**SHARPAY**

Oh, were you gonna sign up too? My brother and I have starred in all the school's productions and we really welcome newcomers. There are a lot of supporting roles in the show. I'm sure we could find something for you.

GABRIELLA looks to TROY, who gives SHARPAY a huge, slightly panicked headshake, and takes her cue from that.

**GABRIELLA**

No, no, no. I was just looking at all the bulletin boards. Lots going on at this school. Wow.

She goes to exit, then sees SHARPAY's signature again and just can't help herself.

**GABRIELLA**

Nice penmanship.

GABRIELLA walks to her next class while SHARPAY glares after her. While she's distracted, TROY attempts to leave as well, but gets caught at the last second.

**SHARPAY**

So, Troy. I was trying to tell you earlier, I missed you during vacation. What'd you do?

**TROY**

You know, um... played basketball, snowboarding, more basketball.

**SHARPAY**

When's the big game?

**TROY**

Uh, two weeks.

**SHARPAY**

(overenthusiastic)

You are so dedicated. Just like me! I hope you come watch me in the musical. Promise?

TROY nods in agreement and turns to leave, nonplussed by the attention. SHARPAY, still eager, calls after her.

**SHARPAY**

Toodles!

TROY turns back, gives a surreptitious look around, and gives SHARPAY a tiny wave.

**TROY**

(whispering)

Toodles.

She leaves. SHARPAY's smile turns to a scowl as she looks in the direction where GABRIELLA walked off.

INT. EAST HIGH GYM - BASKETBALL PRACTICE

The Wildcats are spread throughout the gym, all in jerseys, stretching and practicing free throws. A wide shot shows, definitively, that TROY is the only girl on the whole team. She stands next to where CHAD is stretching, looking conflicted and tossing a ball between her hands anxiously.

**TROY**

Chad, you know that school musical thing? Is it true you get extra credit just for auditioning?

**CHAD**

(oblivious)  
Who cares?

**TROY**

You know it's always good to get extra credit... for college...

**CHAD**

(straightening up)

You ever think that LeBron James or Shaquille O'Neal auditioned for their school musical?

**TROY**

Maybe. Maybe, uh, Sue Bird or Candace Parker- because, you know, there were less scholarships for-

**CHAD**

Are you back on this? I thought you dropped the whole woe is me, I'm the basketball girl shtick in freshman year. You're one of the guys, right?

TROY glances around at all her teammates uneasily.

**TROY**

Right.

**CHAD**

Troy, look, the music in those shows isn't hip hop, okay, or rock, or anything essential to culture. It's like show music. It's all costumes and makeup... Oh, dude, it's frightening.

**TROY**

Yeah, I know. I just thought it might be a good laugh, you know. Um, and Sharpay's kinda c- I mean, you think Sharpay's kinda cute, right?

**CHAD:**

(unconvinced)

I guess. But so is a mountain lion. You don't pet it.

He wanders off. TROY sighs, knocks herself on the head, and starts dribbling the ball.

**TROY**

All right Wildcats! Pair up! Let's go! Come on!

("GET'CHA HEAD IN THE GAME")

**TROY**

*Coach said to fake right and break left  
Watch out for the pick and keep an eye on defence  
Gotta run the give and go, take the ball to the hole  
But don't be afraid to shoot the outside J*

She circles the team, looking them each in the eye, policing and correcting their movements.

**TROY**

*Just keep ya head in the game  
Uh, just keep ya head in the game  
And don't be afraid to shoot the outside J  
Uh, just keep ya head in the game*

**TROY & WILDCATS**

*You gotta get'cha, get'cha head in the game  
(We gotta get-a, get-a, get-a, get ahead in the game)  
You gotta get'cha, get'cha head in the game  
(We gotta get-a, get-a, get-a, get ahead in the game)  
Come on! Get'cha, get'cha head in the game  
(We gotta get-a, get-a, get-a, get ahead in the game)  
You gotta get'cha (get-a), get'cha (get-a) head in the game  
(We gotta get-a, get-a, get-a, get ahead in the game)*

**TROY**

*Let's make sure that we get the rebound  
Cause when we get it the crowd will go wild  
A second chance, gotta grab it and go*

*Maybe this time we'll hit the right notes*

All movements stops. TROY is frozen in the center, all eyes on her. She looks around, nervous, then quickly waves for them to keep practicing.

**TROY**

*Wait a minute— not the time and place  
Wait a minute— get my head in the game  
Wait a minute— get my head in the game  
Wait a minute (get'cha head in the game)  
Wait a minute*

Slowly, the Wildcats come to surround TROY in a circle, growing closer. She continues to move around them, drilling.

**TROY & Wildcats**

*I gotta get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)  
I gotta get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)  
Come on! Get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)  
I gotta get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)*

Spotlight on TROY. The team kneels down around her.

**TROY**

*Why am I feeling so wrong?  
My head's in the game  
But my heart's in the song  
She makes this feel so right  
(spoken, earnest)  
Should I go for it?*

She looks around her at her team, who are all still frozen, for a response. There's none.

**TROY**

(spoken)

Better shake this. Yikes!

The Wildcats jump up around her, and begin to aggressively dribble in a closed circuit. She attempts to escape the circle, but there's no way out- CHAD tosses her a ball, and she throws a perfect basket. Only once it's through the net do the boys let her rejoin their rhythm.

**TROY & Wildcats**

*I gotta get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)  
I gotta get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)  
Come on! Get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)  
I gotta get my, get my head in the game  
(You gotta get'cha, get'cha, get'cha, get'cha head in the game)*

They all toss their balls into the air, and run for the boys' locker room, leaving TROY amongst the rain of basketballs. We can hear the "WHAT TEAM?" refrain as TROY shoots one more basket, then departs for the girls' locker room on the opposite side of the gym alone.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASS

GABRIELLA is working studiously at a lab table, following along as their teacher writes a complicated equation on the board. We see SHARPAY staring at her, calculating, before leaning down the desk to divide to talk, overly friendly.

**SHARPAY**

So, it seemed like you knew Troy Bolton.

**GABRIELLA**

(distracted)

Not really. She was just showing me around.

**SHARPAY**

Well, Troy doesn't usually interact with new students.

**GABRIELLA**

(distracted)  
Uh, why not?

**SHARPAY**

Well, it's pretty much basketball 24/7 with her.

**GABRIELLA**

Yeah, she said that she liked it.

**SHARPAY**

Liked it? She's always so humble. She's the varsity captain. *And* the only girl on the team.

**GABRIELLA**

That should be 16 over pi... (suddenly, to Sharpay) What?

**Teacher**

Yes, Miss Montez?

**GABRIELLA**

Oh, I'm sorry, I just (looking at SHARPAY again) ... Uh...  
Shouldn't the second equation read 16 over pi?

SHARPAY watches this exchange with narrowed eyes. Strategizing.

**Teacher**

16 over pi? That's quite impossible. (checks her calculator) But  
oh... I stand corrected.

The teacher corrects the equation on the chalkboard, and smiles at GABRIELLA, who smiles quickly at her before turning back to SHARPAY.

**GABRIELLA**

Troy's the only girl on the basketball team?

SHARPAY has figured out a plan.

**SHARPAY**



Oh, but of course. It was a really big deal when we were freshmen, everyone thought she only got on because her dad's the coach. So she's always in the gym. Can't afford to let her boys think she gets special treatment. Gotta stay in the game or whatever it is! 16 over pi, you said?

She leans back out of view. GABRIELLA absorbs this, looking troubled, but then gets back to her work.

INT. EAST HIGH - LOBBY HALLWAY

TROY stops at the sign-up sheet and eyes it for a few seconds before moving on, RYAN observing from a safe distance. As TROY leaves, SHARPAY comes along and RYAN pulls her aside.

**RYAN**

Troy Bolton was looking at our audition list.

**SHARPAY**

Again? You know, she was hanging around with that new girl and they were both looking at the list. There's something freaky about Miss Gabriella Montez. Where did she say she was from?

RYAN is still staring at the list. SHARPAY scoffs and struts off, RYAN quick to follow.

INT. EAST HIGH - LIBRARY

Students are bustling around in the background as SHARPAY does a search for GABRIELLA MONTEZ on the internet, RYAN leaning over her shoulder. An article comes up with a picture of GABRIELLA attached- WHIZ KID LEADS SCHOOL TO SCHOLASTIC CHAMPIONSHIP.

**RYAN**

Wow! An Einsteinette. So why do you think she's interested in our musical?

**SHARPAY**

I'm not sure that she is. And we needn't concern ourselves with amateurs. But... there is no harm in making certain that

Gabriella's welcomed to school activities that are... well, appropriate for her. After all, she loves pi.

Satisfied, SHARPAY prints GABRIELLA's article and takes it with her out of the library.

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

**TITLE CARD:** Detention - Darbus Style

All across the stage, students are being made to paint the set for the upcoming musical. MS. DARBUS makes her way through the interspersed students, making random demands.

**MS. DARBUS**

Gold! More gold! Paint, paint! Let's go!

As MS. DARBUS passes, TAYLOR hurries excitedly over to GABRIELLA, holding the printed article. GABRIELLA is focused on TROY and CHAD, who are goofing off together across the stage, rubbing paint into each other's faces and laughing. GABRIELLA looks troubled, maybe a little wistful.

**TAYLOR**

The answer is yes!

**GABRIELLA**

Huh?

**TAYLOR**

Our scholastic decathlon team has its first competition next week, and there is certainly a spot for you.

**GABRIELLA**

(noticing the printouts in TAYLOR's hand)  
Where did those come from?

**TAYLOR**

Didn't you put them in my locker?

**GABRIELLA**

(panicking)  
Of course not! What do they say?

**TAYLOR**

Uh, that you're an unparalleled genius? We'd love to have you on our team. We meet almost everyday after school. Please?

**GABRIELLA**

I need to catch up on the curriculum here before I think about joining any clubs.

SHARPAY, who has been carefully monitoring this situation, chooses now to step in.

**SHARPAY**

Well, what a perfect way to get caught up. Meeting with the smartest kids in school. What a generous offer, Taylor.

MS. DARBUS comes up behind them, and they all jump.

**MS. DARBUS**

So many new faces in detention today. I hope you don't make a habit of it, but the drama club could always use an extra hand. And while we are working, let us probe the mounting evils of cell phones.

All groan.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The Wildcats, minus TROY and CHAD, are all stretching and practicing free throws. COACH BOLTON enters.

**COACH BOLTON**

Come on guys, huddle up! We got two weeks to the big game...  
(looks around, stops) Where's Troy and Chad?

Silence from the team. COACH BOLTON is not pleased.

**COACH BOLTON**

Don't make me ask again.

Silence again. COACH BOLTON has had it.

**COACH BOLTON**

WHERE'S TROY AND CHAD?!

**All**

Detention.

COACH BOLTON allows himself one moment of shock before he storms off to the auditorium. The team watches him go, then they shrug collectively and keep warming up.

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

CHAD has fallen asleep inside the fake tree, and TROY sits at the top of it, tickling his nose with a paper leaf. GABRIELLA continues to watch them from a distance.

**MS. DARBUS**

(on her soapbox)

Perhaps the most heinous example of cell phone abuse is ringing in the theater. What temerity! The theater is a temple of art. A precious cornucopia of creative energy.

COACH BOLTON arrives, storming down the aisle.

**COACH BOLTON**

Where's my team, Darbus? (noticing TROY and CHAD) What the heck are those two doing in a tree?

**MS. DARBUS**

(self important)

It's called crime and punishment, Bolton. Besides, proximity to the arts is cleansing for the soul.

**COACH BOLTON**

Can we have a talk, please? (to TROY and CHAD) And you two, in the gym, now!

TROY and CHAD hurry out of the tree and leave the auditorium. TROY waves to GABRIELLA as she runs out, and she shyly waves back. CHAD, frustrated, grabs TROY's hand to pull her along, and SHARPAY scowls in the background.

INT. EAST HIGH - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

COACH BOLTON and MS. DARBUS stand shouting over PRINCIPAL MATSUI's desk.

**COACH BOLTON**

If they have to paint sets for detention, they could do it tonight, not during my practice.

**MS. DARBUS**

If these were theater performers instead of athletes, would you seek special treatment?

**COACH BOLTON**

Darbus, we are days away from our biggest game of the year.

**MS. DARBUS**

And we, Bolton, are in the midst of our auditions for our winter musicale as well! This school is about more than just young men in baggy shorts flinging balls for touchdowns!

**COACH BOLTON**

Baskets! They shoot baskets! (registering) Young men? Are you forgetting *Troy*-?!

**MS. DARBUS**

(nastily)

Oh, is today the day Helen Bolton finally becomes a woman?

**PRINCIPAL MATSUI**

Stop! Guys, listen, you've been having this argument since the day you both started teaching here. We are one school, one student body, ONE FACULTY! Can we not agree on that?

COACH BOLTON and MS. DARBUS shoot each other a glare, then nod grudgingly.

**PRINCIPAL MATSUI**

So, Coach, how's the team lookin'? (amused) Your girl got 'em whipped into shape?

**MS. DARBUS**

Oh!

MS. DARBUS storms off as PRINCIPAL MATSUI shoots a little ball into a miniature basket.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The Wildcats, now including TROY, CHAD, and COACH BOLTON, are huddled up.

**COACH BOLTON**

West High Knights have knocked us out of the playoffs three years running, and now we are one game away from taking that championship right back from 'em! It's time to make our stand. The team is you. You are the team. And this team does not exist unless each and every one of you is fully focused on our goal.

Am I clear?

**CHAD**

Hey, what team?!

**All**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

What team?

**All**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

What team?

**All**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

Wildcats!

**All**

GET YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME!

They break, and make for the crate of basketballs.

EXT. EAST HIGH - FRONT LAWN

GABRIELLA and TAYLOR are walking towards the buses. GABRIELLA is lost in thought; TAYLOR, talking enthusiastically, is unaware of her audience's distraction.

**TAYLOR**

We've never made it past the first round of the scholastic decathlon. You could be our answered prayer.

**GABRIELLA**

I'm gonna focus on my studies this semester and help my mom get the new house organized. Maybe next year.

**TAYLOR**

But...

**GABRIELLA**

(suddenly)

What do you know about Troy Bolton?

**TAYLOR**

(condescendingly)

Helen? Hmm...

**GABRIELLA**

Are she and Chad, like...

**TAYLOR**

What? Oh, absolutely not. The romantic affections of Chad Danforth isn't a fate I would wish upon even my worst enemy.

Besides, I don't think Helen has ever had a thought that didn't start with 'basketball' in her whole life.

**GABRIELLA**

How come you call her Helen?

**TAYLOR**

(high and mighty)

Because I don't subscribe the masculinization of a gender nonconforming woman so that her accomplishments, however one-note they may be, can be attributed to male socialization.

**GABRIELLA**

(lost)

I guess, but...

**TAYLOR**

Anyway, Helen's on the team for the game, not the men. If the very idea weren't repellant to me, I'd be impressed by how well she's become one of the boys. But I wouldn't rely on her for a solid friendship foundation unless you speaks sports. Or cheerleader, as in (to a group of cheerleaders passing) Oh, my gosh! Couldn't you just die for Helen's hair routine?

**Cheerleaders**

Oh, god, yes.

**Cheerleader #1**

Such great skin.

**Cheerleader #2**

I wish my arms looked like that.

**Cheerleader #3**

She's so hot.

Awkward beat. Gabriella smiles benignly at the commenter. The other girls return slowly back into their conversation, and TAYLOR jerks GABRIELLA away.

**TAYLOR**



See what I mean?

**GABRIELLA**

I guess I wasn't... meant to speak cheerleader.

**TAYLOR**

Which is why we exist in an alternate universe to Helen Bolton,  
extraterrestrial basketball goddess.

**GABRIELLA**

Well, have you tried to get to know her?

**TAYLOR**

Watch how it works in the cafeteria tomorrow when you have lunch  
with us. Unless you'd rather sit with the cheerleaders and  
discuss the importance of firm nail beds.

**GABRIELLA**

(holds up hands)

My nail beds are history.

**TAYLOR**

(puts up her hands)

Sister!

They giggle together, and board the bus.

EXT. BOLTON HOUSE - OUTDOOR COURT - NIGHT

TROY and COACH BOLTON are getting in some after-school practice.  
TROY's a little off; she seems pressured.

**COACH BOLTON**

I still don't understand this whole detention thing.

**TROY**

It was my fault. I'm sorry, Dad.

**COACH BOLTON**

(shortly)

Cross court. You know Darbus will take any opportunity to bust my chops. That includes yours too. And you're an easy target. First girl on varsity, first girl *captain*, coach's daughter, it all lines up like dominoes-

**TROY**

Hey, Dad? Did you ever think about trying something new, but were afraid of what your friends might think?

**COACH BOLTON**

You mean like, going left? You're doing fine. Come on.

**TROY**

Well... (extremely deliberated pause) no. I mean what if you wanna try something really new and it's a total disaster and all your friends laugh at you.

**COACH BOLTON**

Well then, maybe they're not really your friends. And that was my whole point about team today. You guys gotta look out for each other, and you're the leader.

**TROY**

Dad, I'm not talking..

**COACH BOLTON**

There's gonna be college scouts at our game next week, Troy. Know what a scholarship is worth these days?

**TROY**

(nods her head in defeat)  
A lot.

**COACH BOLTON**

Yeah. Focus, Troy, come on.

TROY nods, goes left, and once again nails the shot.

**COACH BOLTON**

Whoo! That's what I'm talking about.

She taps TROY on the back, and TROY takes a breather, hands on her knees.

INT. EAST HIGH - HOMEROOM

It's the next day, at the start of homeroom. As students mill inside, SHARPAY hands MS. DARBUS a small box.

**SHARPAY**

Just something for you.

SHARPAY returns to her seat as the rest of the class files in. TROY and GABRIELLA are exchanging shy glances.

**MS. DARBUS**

Well, I expect we all learned our homeroom manners yesterday, people, correct? If not, we have some dressing rooms that need painting.

TROY and GABRIELLA giggle. CHAD looks between them suspiciously.

**MS. DARBUS**

Now, a few announcements. This morning during free period will be your chance for the musicale auditions, both singles and pairs.

SHARPAY claps with childlike excitement as she beams at MS. DARBUS. Everyone else, excluding TROY, GABRIELLA, and RYAN groans.

**MS. DARBUS**

I will be in the theater until noon for those of you bold enough to extend the wingspan of your creative spirit.

**CHAD**

(desperate for TROY's attention)

What time is she due back on the mothership?

TROY and CHAD snicker at the joke as MS. DARBUS continues.

**MS. DARBUS**

Now today, we are going to discuss the importance of  
Shakespeare...

INT. EAST HIGH - HALLWAY

CHAD walks up to TROY, who has just closed her locker, and poses awkwardly against it.

**CHAD**

Your man, Lady Bolton.

**TROY**

Oh- oh, hey, Chad. What's up?

**CHAD**

You were kinda weird in class earlier. Everything okay? That new girl isn't getting on your case, is she? (affecting a high pitched voice) "Oh, help me, Helen Bolton! Get me safely through these hallways, Amazon princess!"

**TROY**

(laughs uncomfortably)

No, no. I've... I've barely talked to her. She's nice, though. Her name's Gabriella, I guess she's h-

**CHAD**

Well, if you're worried about the game, the whole team's hitting the gym during free period. What do you want to have us run?

CHAD's moment of interruption is the final straw that snaps TROY's indecision. We see her make up her mind.

**TROY**

Uh, dude, you know what, I can't make it. I gotta catch up on some homework.

**CHAD**

What? Hello, it's only the second day back. I'm not even behind on homework yet. And you know, I've been behind on homework since preschool.

TROY forces a chuckle.

**TROY**

That's hilarious. I'll catch you later.

And she skirts away. CHAD is absolutely unconvinced.

**CHAD**

Homework? There's no way.

CHAD follows TROY to a classroom, and TROY, aware of her shadow, immediately engages with the nearest student.

**Boy**

Hey, how's it going?

**TROY**

Just hanging.

**Boy**

Hey, Troy, I've actually been meaning to talk to you for a while. I really feel like there's a spark between us-

**TROY**

Oh! Interesting.

**CHAD**

(hearing this whole exchange)

What's she *doing*?

A student comes up and greets CHAD with a handshake, giving TROY the window she needs to escape the classroom.

**TROY**

(to the boy)

Thanks for the offer! Bye!

CHAD looks back into the classroom to see TROY has disappeared. As he searches the room for her, we see TROY run past right behind him. We follow the confused chase through the halls to a stairwell, where CHAD finally loses TROY completely. Relieved, TROY makes her way across the outdoor area, sees COACH BOLTON,

and hides behind a wall. COACH BOLTON, thinking he sees her daughter, approaches the corner, but TROY has disappeared yet again. TROY, now hurrying through a car repair area within the school, is seen by a mechanic.

**TROY**

Short-cut. I'm late for class.

The mechanic shrugs as TROY bolts into the hallway.

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

TROY walks into the auditorium through the backstage entrance wheeling a janitor's cart with a mop sticking up to hide her face. There's an excited murmur within from the students there to audition.

**KELSI**

(unseen)

Remember, we need at least six actors for-

TROY hides behind the mop as the hopefuls for the musical file in. MS. DARBUS and KELSI NIELSEN, 16, the short and mousy composer, walk onto stage as MS. DARBUS addresses the small audience.

**MS. DARBUS**

This is where the true expression of the artist is realized. Where inner truth is revealed through the actor's journey...

(bell rings) Was that a cell phone?

The members of the audience check themselves to see if their phone went off.

**Audience Member**

Is it mine?

**KELSI**

(politely)

No, ma'am. That was the warning bell.

**MS. DARBUS**

Ah! Those wishing to audition must understand that time is of the essence. We have many roles to cast and final callbacks will be next week.

TROY has made her way to the back of the auditorium and is observing the proceedings from behind the janitor's cart as MS. DARBUS continues.

**MS. DARBUS**

First, you will sing a few bars and I will give you a sense of whether or not the theater is your calling. Better to hear it from me now than from your friends later. Our composer, Kelsi Nielson, will accompany you and be available for rehearsals prior to callbacks. Shall we?

CUT to the first singer, a jazzy redheaded girl.

**First singer:**

(off-key)

*It's hard to believe that I couldn't see  
That you were always right beside me  
This feeling's like no other  
I want you to know...*

She forgets the rest of the song, and freezes.

**MS. DARBUS**

Uh-huh. Yes, thank you. Next.

CUT to the second singer, ALAN, a formally dressed geekish type.

**ALAN**

(badly off-key)

*It's hard to believe  
That I couldn't sneeze... see*

SHARPAY and RYAN, observing smugly from the audience, are shocked by the error.

**ALAN**

(trying valiantly)  
*That you were always right there next to beside me*

**MS. DARBUS**

(interrupting)

Alan, I admire your pluck. As to your singing... That's a wonderful tie you're wearing. Next!

CUT to the third singer, a flirty blonde hippie chick.

**Third singer**

(off-key)

*It's hard to believe that I couldn't see  
That you were (winks at MS. DARBUS) always right beside me  
This feeling's like no other  
I want you to (winks at MS. DARBUS again) know*

**MS. DARBUS**

Uh... stop.

CUT to the fourth singer, CINDRA, an immaculate operata in the wrong place.

**Cindra**

(high pitched)

*...so lonely before I finally found  
What I've been looking... for (holding note)*

SHARPAY and RYAN are aghast. TROY, still hiding in the back, looks utterly terrified.

**MS. DARBUS**

Ah... Cindra. What courage to pursue a note that has not been accessed in the natural world. Bravo! Brava! Perhaps the spring musicale.

Cindra's smile vanishes as she looks over to KELSI who flashes her a "better luck next time" smile. Cindra squawks indignantly and walks off. The next student to audition does a ballet routine, which MS. DARBUS seems to enjoy. His audition ends when he runs and crashes off-stage.



CUT to the fifth singers, a duo of goth and monotone teenagers, a girl speaking the lyrics with a boy flatly echoing.

**Disturbed Girl & Disturbed Boy**

It's hard to believe that I could not see (Couldn't see)  
That you were always right beside me (Beside me)  
Thought I was alone (Alone)

SHARPAY looks at RYAN, who appears to be deeply entranced by the strange display.

**Disturbed Girl & Disturbed Boy**

With no one to hold (To hold)  
But you were right beside me (Beside me)

By this point, the disturbed couple are on their knees rolling around on the floor.

**MS. DARBUS**

Well, that was just... very disturbing. Go see a counselor. Uhh.  
Next!

Out of nowhere, GABRIELLA comes up behind TROY. For a moment, we see her consider putting her hands on TROY's waist, arms, hand, and then she decides against it and just taps her shoulder. Regardless, she startles her.

**TROY**

Gabriella!

**GABRIELLA**

Hey! So you decided to sign up for something?

**TROY**

Uh... no. You?

**GABRIELLA**

No. Um... why are you hiding behind a mop?

TROY struggles for an answer. GABRIELLA nods in understanding, a little disappointed.

**GABRIELLA**

Your friends don't know you're here, right?

**TROY**

Right.

Onstage, KELSI plays the intro to the song, but the sixth singer, a shy short girl, is overcome with stagefright and freezes in place.

**MS. DARBUS**

Thank you. Next.

The sixth singer runs off the stage in shame. TROY and GABRIELLA slide into the back row of seats, leaning into one another.

**TROY**

Um... Ms. Darbus is a little... harsh.

**GABRIELLA**

(amused)

The Wildcat superstar's afraid?

**TROY**

No! No, I'm not afraid, I... I'm just... (genuine) scared.

**GABRIELLA**

Me too. Usually.

**TROY**

Why?

**GABRIELLA**

There are a lot of reasons. They'd probably sound silly to you.

**TROY**

(genuine)

Try me.

**MS. DARBUS**

(up front)

And for the lead roles of Arnold and Minnie we only have one couple signed up. (TROY and GABRIELLA duck down behind the seats) Sharpay and Ryan! I think it might be useful for you to give us a sense of why we gather in this hallowed hall.

As they get up to go on stage, SHARPAY stops RYAN so she can go first. RYAN rolls his eyes. TROY and GABRIELLA slowly raise their heads again.

**KELSI**

(to RYAN)

What key?

**RYAN**

Oh, we had our rehearsal pianist do an arrangement.

**KELSI**

(in defeat)

Oh.

SHARPAY snaps her fingers and the curtain closes. They both whinny like horses, warming up.

**SHARPAY**

Go!

"WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR" begins- an aggressively jazzy tune. We see KELSI startle at the arrangement. RYAN and SHARPAY break into a to-the-letter dance routine.

**RYAN**

*It's hard to believe that I couldn't see*

**BOTH**

*You were always there beside me*

**SHARPAY**

*Thought I was alone, with no one to hold*

**BOTH**

*But you were always right beside me*

**SHARPAY**

*This feeling's like no other*

**BOTH**

*I want you to know*

**BOTH**

*I've never had someone that knows me like you do*

*The way you do*

*And I've never had someone as good for me as you*

*No one like you*

*So lonely before I finally found what I've been looking for*

RYAN breaks into a strong but out of place jazz square. In the audience, TROY and GABRIELLA wince; onstage SHARPAY looks furious. She hits his shoulder, and they keep performing.

**SHARPAY**

*So good to be seen, so good to be heard*

**BOTH**

*Don't have to say a word*

**RYAN**

*For so long I was lost, so good to be found*

**BOTH**

*I'm loving having you around*

**RYAN**

*This feeling's like no other*

*I want you to know*

**BOTH**

*I've never had someone that knows me like you do*

*The way you do*

*I've never had someone as good for me as you*

*No one like you  
So lonely before I finally found what I've been looking for*

The song ends with them in a perfect end pose, RYAN slightly beneath SHARPAY, both of them out of breath and sweating. MS. DARBUS breaks into ecstatic applause, the rest of the auditorium following in slower pursuit.

**SHARPAY**

(in a hiss to RYAN)

I told you not to do the jazz squares.

**RYAN**

It's a crowd favorite. Everybody loves a good jazz square.

SHARPAY shoots a look at KELSI, who immediately puts on a fake smile and starts clapping. The rest of the small audience applauds.

**MS. DARBUS**

Well... (TROY and GABRIELLA duck down again) Are there any last minute sign-ups?

No one comes forward. Students begin to file out of the auditorium.

**RYAN**

(to the frightened singer from before)

Don't be discouraged. The theater club needs more than just singers. It needs fans too. Buy tickets!

KELSI visibly steels herself, then approaches SHARPAY.

**KELSI**

Oh, actually, if you do the part with that particular song, I imagined it much slower...

**SHARPAY**

*If we do the part? Kelsi, my sawed-off Sondheim, I've been in 17 school productions. And how many times have your compositions been selected?*

**KELSI**

This would be the first.

**SHARPAY**

Which tells us what?

**KELSI**

(unsure)

That... I need to write you more solos?

**SHARPAY**

No!

She begins to stalk towards KELSI, and KELSI, terrified, paces backwards.

**SHARPAY**

It tells us that you do not offer direction, suggestion, or commentary. And you should be thankful that me and Ryan are here to lift your music out of its current obscurity. Are we clear?

KELSI falls down a step, and gulps.

**KELSI**

Yes ma'am. I mean, Sharpay.

**SHARPAY**

(puts on a sickly sweet grin)

Nice talking to you.

**MS. DARBUS**

(onstage)

Any last-minute sign-ups?

TROY and GABRIELLA slowly rise out of the back.

**TROY**

(quietly)

We should go.

**MS. DARBUS**

No? Good. Done.

GABRIELLA looks up at TROY for a long moment- she is weighing how much this is worth to her. Then she reaches down, squeezes TROY's hand, and runs forward into view.

**GABRIELLA**

I'd like to audition, Ms. Darbus!

TROY stands openmouthed at GABRIELLA, spins in place in frustration, and then looks down at the hand GABRIELLA held. MS. DARBUS looks over, and TROY quickly hides again.

**MS. DARBUS**

Timeliness means something in the world of theater, Miss Montez. The individual auditions are long, long over and there are simply no other pairs.

**TROY**

(unseen)

I'll sing with her.

An overjoyed GABRIELLA looks over to see TROY, resigned, emerging from her hiding spot, one hand in the air with which to volunteer.

**MS. DARBUS**

(aghast)

Helen Bolton? Where is your sports posse or whatever it's called?

**TROY**

Team, ma'am.

**MS. DARBUS**

Ah.

**TROY**

Um, but I'm here alone. Actually, I came to sing with her.

**MS. DARBUS**

Yes, well, we take these shows very seriously here at East High. I called for the pairs audition, and you didn't respond. Not to mention, this is a part for a *man* and a *woman*.

From the stage, we see KELSI perk up and look over.

**KELSI**

I can transpose-

**MS. DARBUS**

(icily)

Free period is now over.

**TROY**

(as MS. DARBUS stalks past)

Ms. Darbus, she has an amazing voice.

**MS. DARBUS**

Perhaps the next musicale.

As TROY and GABRIELLA turn to look at MS. DARBUS leaving, KELSI gets up from the piano and trips, her papers flying. TROY and GABRIELLA see this, and run up to the stage to help. As TROY approaches her and kneels down to pick up the papers, giving KELSI a friendly smile, KELSI freezes like a rabbit in headlights.

**TROY**

So... Kelsi, right? (handing her the papers) You're a composer?

KELSI just stares at TROY, transfixed.

**TROY**

(encouraging)

You wrote the song Ryan and Sharpay just sang? And the entire show?

KELSI manages a weak nod.

**TROY**



Well, that's really cool. I, uh, can't wait to hear the rest of the show.

TROY offers her hand to KELSI. She takes it, and TROY helps her up. KELSI looks like she's still waiting for the trap to spring.

**TROY**

Sorry if this is rude, but... why are you so afraid of Ryan and Sharpay? I mean, it is your show.

**KELSI**

(like the idea never occurred to her)  
It is?

**TROY**

Isn't the composer of a show kinda like the playmaker in basketball?

**KELSI**

Playmaker?

**TROY**

You know, the one who makes everyone else look good. I mean, without you there is no show. You're the playmaker here, Kelsi.

**KELSI**

(beaming at TROY)  
I am?

TROY nods in confirmation, completely earnest. GABRIELLA, who's been watching this exchange, has a look on her face that can only be described as lovestruck.

**KELSI**

(shy but eager)  
Do you wanna hear how the duet's supposed to sound?

KELSI walks over to the piano and TROY and GABRIELLA, surprised, follow.

**TROY**

Isn't it for, uh. A man and a-

Kelsi gives her a look. *Oh, please.* Troy obligingly shuts up, and Kelsi begins "WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORE (Reprise)"- slower, softer, more vulnerable, and pitched up for TROY's alto. KELSI nods gently at TROY, who clears her throat and begins.

**TROY**

*It's hard to believe that I couldn't see  
You were always there beside me*

**GABRIELLA**

*Thought I was alone, with no one to hold*

**BOTH**

*But you were always right beside me  
This feeling's like no other  
I want you to know  
I've never had someone that knows me like you do  
The way you do  
And I've never had someone as good for me as you  
No one like you  
So lonely before I finally found what I've been looking for*

Once again, TROY and GABRIELLA are absolutely enthralled by the sound of each other's voice. They stare at each other until KELSI, amused, clears her throat, and they jump apart.

**TROY**

Wow. Kelsi, that's beautiful.

**MS. DARBUS**

(suddenly reappearing in the aisle)

Bolton, Montez - you have a callback. Kelsi, give them the duet from the second act. Work on it with them.

TROY and GABRIELLA startle and turn to MS. DARBUS, who gives them an unreadable look and disappears again. KELSI looks over, elated, and immediately gathers up sheet music to shove into TROY and GABRIELLA's arms.

**KELSI**

All right! If you guys wanna rehearse, I'm usually here during free period and after school, and even sometimes during biology class. You can come and rehearse anytime. Or you can come to my house for breakfast. I have a piano, we can rehearse there. After school, before school - whatever works. After basketball class..

KELSI says more to GABRIELLA, who is happy to listen, while TROY is holding the sheet music, still comprehending.

**TROY**

What?

INT. EAST HIGH - FRONT LOBBY - MORNING

It's the next day- we start with a tight zoom on SHARPAY's horrified face.

**SHARPAY**

Callback?! Aah!

She starts fanning herself. RYAN, behind her, reads off the bulletin board they're standing in front of.

**RYAN**

"Callback for roles Arnold and Minnie next Thursday, 3:30pm. Ryan and Sharpay Evans, Gabriella Montez and Helen Bolton."

**SHARPAY**

Is this some kind of joke? They didn't even audition!  
(increasing hysteria) It's a COUPLES AUDITION!

**RYAN**

Maybe we're being punked?

**SHARPAY**

What?

**RYAN**

Maybe we're being filmed right now. (excited, shakes her) Maybe we'll get to meet Ashton!

**SHARPAY**

Oh, shut up, Ryan!

The Wildcat team, minus TROY, arrives through the front doors, laughing and gossiping. They approach SHARPAY, amused by her weeping.

**CHAD**

(laughing)

What's wrong?

He glances at RYAN, who points at the callback sheet. CHAD reads it quickly, and immediately all the humor drains from his face.

**CHAD**

*What?*

**SHARPAY**

Ugh!

She stalks off. The rest of the Wildcats gather around the bulletin board.

**Wildcat #1**

"Helen Bolton"? Are they talking about *Troy*?

**Wildcat #2**

There's no way.

**Wildcat #3**

Maybe she's more girl than we thought?

**CHAD**

Not a chance. She'd tell me.

The Wildcats all snicker.

**Wildcat #2**

Hey, Chad, maybe you should check in with your girlfriend, see if she can still score a basket with tights on.

**CHAD**

(angry)  
Shut up!

He shoves his ball at the Wildcat next to him, and stomps off.

INT. EAST HIGH - CAFETERIA

Lunch is in session in the crowded cafeteria. On a balcony overhanging the rest of the other students, SHARPAY is angrily pacing back and forth.

**SHARPAY**

How dare that two-bit, Shirley Temple... *new girl* sign up! I've already picked out the colors for my dressing room!

**RYAN**

And she hasn't even asked our permission to join the drama club.

**SHARPAY**

Someone's gotta tell her the rules.

**RYAN**

Exactly. (pauses) And what are the rules?

**SHARPAY**

(frustratedly)  
Ohh!

("STICK TO THE STATUS QUO")

ZEKE, with the other Wildcats, is looking around nervously, before seemingly making a decision.

**ZEKE**

*You can bet there's nothing but net  
When I am in the zone and on a roll  
But I've got a confession, my own secret obsession*

*And it's making me lose control*

**Wildcats**

*Everybody gather 'round*

All the Wildcats gather obligingly around ZEKE.

**ZEKE**

If Troy can do singing then I can tell you guys... I bake.

**WILDCAT**

What?

**ZEKE**

I love to bake! Strudels, scones, even apple pan dowdy!

**Wildcats**

*Not another sound!*

**ZEKE**

*(enthusiastic)*

Someday I hope to make the perfect crème brûlée!

**Wildcats**

*No, no, no, no*

*(No no no)*

*Stick to the stuff you know*

*If you want to be cool, follow one simple rule*

*Don't mess with the flow, no no*

*Stick to the status quo*

ZEKE is shoved back into his seat by CHAD and another Wildcat, looking dejected. CUT to a different corner of the cafeteria - the geeks. MARTHA, a bookish and quiet student, who suddenly rises.

**MARTHA**

*Look at me and what do you see*

*Intelligence beyond compare*

*But inside I am stirring, something strange is occurring*

*It's a secret I need to share*

**Geeks**

*Open up, dig way down deep*

**MARTHA**

Hip hop is my passion! I love to pop and lock and jam and break!

She begins to dance. The other geeks have no idea what to make of it.

**Geek #1**

Is that even legal?

**Geeks**

*Not another peep!*

**MARTHA**

It's just dancing! Sometimes I think it's cooler than homework

**Geeks**

*No, no, no, no*

*(No no no)*

*Stick to the stuff you know*

*It is better by far to leave things as they are*

*Don't mess with the flow, no no*

*Stick to the status quo*

MARTHA, like ZEKE, is forced back into her seat. We go now to the SKATERS, a greasy band of punks and miscreants. One, a floppy-haired boy, stands up.

**SKATER DUDE**

*Listen well, I'm ready to tell*

*About a need that I cannot deny*

*Dude, there's no explanation for this awesome sensation*

*But I'm ready to let it fly*

**SKATERS**

*Speak your mind and you'll be heard*

**SKATER DUDE**

All right, if Troy wants to be a singer *and* a basketball player  
*and* a chick all at once, then I'm coming clean! I play the  
cello!

**Dude #1**

Awesome!

**Dude #2**

What is it?

SKATER DUDE imitates playing a cello in midair.

**Dude #1**

A saw?

**SKATER DUDE**

No, dude, it's like a giant violin!

**SKATERS**

*Not another word!*

**Dude #2**

Do you have to wear a costume?

**SKATER DUDE**

Coat and tie!

**SKATERS**

*No, no, no, no*

*(No no no)*

*Stick to the stuff you know*

*If you want to be cool, follow one simple rule*

*Don't mess with the flow, no no*

*Stick to the status quo*

SKATER DUDE is forced down like MARTHA and ZEKE, scowling. The Wildcats, Geeks, and Skaters begin to circle the entire cafeteria, making sure every social group is staying in line.

**All**

*No, no, no, no*



(No no no)  
Stick to the stuff you know  
It is better by far to leave things as they are  
Don't mess with the flow, no no  
Stick to the status quo

From above, SHARPAY is watching this chaos with the cold expression of a disobeyed matriarch.

**SHARPAY**

*This is not what I want  
This is not what I planned  
And I just gotta say  
I do not understand  
Something is really*

**RYAN**

*Something's not right*

**SHARPAY**

*...really wrong*

**SHARPAY & RYAN**

*And we gotta get things  
Back where they belong  
We can do it*

**SKATER DUDE**

*Gotta play!*

**Skaters**

*Stick with what you know*

**SHARPAY & RYAN**

*We can do it*

**MARTHA**

*Hip hop hooray!*

**Brainiacs**

*She has got to go*

**SHARPAY & RYAN**

*We can do it*

**ZEKE**

*Crème Brûlée?*

**Wildcats**

*Keep your voice down low*

**ALL**

*Not another peep  
No, not another word  
No, not another sound  
No*

**SHARPAY**

Everybody quiet!

She begins to descend the stairs into the cafeteria below. GABRIELLA ducks into the cafeteria, holding a tray of food and followed by TAYLOR, and the whole room goes dead silent and stares at her.

**GABRIELLA**

(to TAYLOR)

Why is everybody staring at you?

**TAYLOR**

(clearly a little put out)

Not me, girl. You.

**GABRIELLA**

Because of the callbacks? I can't have people staring at me, I really can't!

The song resumes in an explosion of sound and dance, and GABRIELLA jumps back in fright before ducking down low and attempting to weave through the chaos.

**All**

*No, no, no, no  
(No no no)  
Stick to the stuff you know  
If you wanna be cool follow one single rule  
Don't mess with the flow, no no  
Stick to the status quo  
No, no, no, no  
(No no no)  
Stick to the stuff you know  
It is better by far to leave things as they are  
Don't mess with the flow, no no  
Stick to the status quo*

Just as SHARPAY reaches the bottom step, GABRIELLA slips on some spilt milk and tosses her lunch tray into the air. The lunch consisting of chili fries lands right on SHARPAY's blouse.

**SHARPAY**

Aah!

**GABRIELLA**

I am so sorry!!

GABRIELLA runs forward and tries in vain to remove the fries from a hyperventilating SHARPAY. SHARPAY screams, and TAYLOR quickly pulls GABRIELLA away. Across the cafeteria, TROY arrives, sees GABRIELLA, and tries to make her way over before being grabbed around the waist by CHAD.

**CHAD**

(to TROY)

You do not want to get into that, sis. Too much drama.

**TROY**

But-

**CHAD**

I'd stay out of it. Another girl in the mix is going to bring it to a fever pitch.

**TROY**

(indignantly)

Hey-

**MS. DARBUS**

(entering)

What is going on here?

SHARPAY, near tears, immediately runs to her.

**SHARPAY**

Look at this! That Gabriella girl just dumped her lunch on me. On purpose! It's all part of their plan to ruin our musical. And Troy and her basketball robots are obviously behind it. Why do you think she auditioned? (melodrama) After all the hard work you've put into this show. It just doesn't seem right.

MS. DARBUS looks disapprovingly to where GABRIELLA's been whisked away by TAYLOR. Across the room, CHAD has forcefully dragged TROY to the Wildcats side of the cafeteria. TROY slaps CHAD's hands off her shoulders.

**TROY**

(to CHAD)

What's *up* with you?

**CHAD**

What's up with *me*? Oh, let's see... Umm, you missed free-period workout yesterday to audition for some heinous musical. And now suddenly people are... confessing.

**TROY**

(nervous)

Confessing?

Zeke walks by. CHAD grabs him, as an example.

**CHAD**

Yeah, take Zeke. Zeke is baking... creme brulee.

**TROY**

(interested)

Ah, what's that?

**Zeke**

(excitedly)

Oh, it's a creamy custard-like filling with a caramelized surface. It's really satisfying.

TROY, delighted, reaches for some. CHAD slaps her hand away.

**CHAD**

Shut up, Zeke!

Zeke turns away dejectedly and joins some skater dudes sitting in the background.

**CHAD**

Look... do you see what's happening here, Troy? Our team is coming apart because of your singing thing. Even the drama geeks and the brainiacs suddenly think that they can... talk to us.

CHAD points to the skater dudes who are chatting with Zeke.

**CHAD**

Look, even the skater dudes are mingling.

**Skaters**

Yo!

TROY waves at them. CHAD forces her hand down.

**CHAD**

Suddenly people think that they can do other stuff. Stuff that is not their stuff. This was a risk we ran when you got on the team, but you handled it then, and *now-*

**TROY**

What does *that* have to do with anything?

**CHAD**

You think voting the only girl on the team to be our captain didn't have social consequences?

**TROY**

Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't realize that it was such a *sacrifice* for you guys to vote me captain-

**CHAD**

Well, I didn't realize basketball wasn't your number one priority, otherwise we might not've-

**TROY**

And I didn't realize I owed you explanations for where I am every hour of every day! You're not my dad, and you're *not* my boyfriend, Chad!

CHAD steps back like he's been slapped. Then he comes back in to face down TROY, eyes thin and mean.

**CHAD**

We've got a playoff game next week. If you're off in the clouds thinking of showtunes, you're gonna have more than me to answer to, Bolton.

CHAD leaves. TROY looks after her, half mad and half regretful, then looks to GABRIELLA, who has her head ducked so low she doesn't even notice TROY.

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INT. EAST HIGH - BOYS' LOCKER ROOM

COACH BOLTON sits in his office reading a paper while eating a sandwich. MS. DARBUS enters the boys' locker room, is visibly disgusted by the Wildcats, and makes her way down the aisles of lockers and showers.

**Boy**

Head's up!

One of the boys throws a towel, nearly hitting MS. DARBUS, who shrieks. Nevertheless, she continues forward, finally arriving at COACH BOLTON's office and slamming both hands onto his desk.

**MS. DARBUS**

All right, Bolton. Cards on the table right now.

**COACH BOLTON**

Huh?

**MS. DARBUS**

You're tweaked because I put your stars in detention and now you're getting even.

**COACH BOLTON**

(amused)

What are you talking about, Darbus?

**MS. DARBUS**

Your gender-confused all star daughter turned up at my audition. Now, I give every student an even chance, which is a long and honorable tradition in the theater. Something you wouldn't understand. But, if she and her band of hooligans are planning sort of a practical joke in my chapel of the arts...

**COACH BOLTON**

(returning to his sandwich)

Troy doesn't sing.

**MS. DARBUS**

Oh, well, you're wrong about that. But I will not allow my Twinkle Town musicale to be made into farce.

**COACH BOLTON**

(mockingly)

Twinkle Town?

**MS. DARBUS**

See? I knew it.

**COACH BOLTON**

(half-apologetically)

Hey...

**MS. DARBUS**  
(unforgiving)  
I knew it!

She storms out. COACH BOLTON takes another bite of his sandwich, untroubled.

**COACH BOLTON**  
Sounds like a winner. Good luck on Broadway!

MS. DARBUS promptly leaves the locker room in a huff, ignoring the Wildcats' catcalls.

EXT. EAST HIGH - OUTDOOR EATING AREA

GABRIELLA and TAYLOR are eating together on the lawn, with GABRIELLA ducking down every time someone passes.

**TAYLOR**  
Quit it. Sharpay never comes out here anyway.

**GABRIELLA**  
Is she really, really mad at me? I said I was sorry.

**TAYLOR**  
Look, sweetheart, it's not about the fries. No one has beaten out Sharpay for a musical since kindergarten.

**GABRIELLA**  
I wasn't trying to beat anyone out. We didn't even audition, we were just singing.

**TAYLOR**  
You won't convince Sharpay of that. I'm telling you, if that girl could figure out a way to play both Romeo and Juliet her own brother would be aced out of a job.

**GABRIELLA**  
Her brother and... Romeo and Juliet..

**TAYLOR**



Oh, don't worry about that. Ryan's more inclined towards *Rent* than *My Fair Lady*. But what were you doing at auditions anyway? And with Helen Bolton, no less.

**GABRIELLA**

I told you it just happened, but... (shyly) I liked it. A lot.

TAYLOR shrugs, and continues to eat her gluten-free yogurt. GABRIELLA gives her a long, careful look.

**GABRIELLA**

Taylor. Did you ever feel like there's this whole other person inside of you just looking for a way to... to come out?

She swallows her yogurt, and thinks it over. GABRIELLA waits with bated breath.

**TAYLOR**

Not really, no.

TAYLOR looks at GABRIELLA and giggles. GABRIELLA forces a laugh, but looks distant. The bell rings announcing that lunch is over.

**TAYLOR**

Let's go.

They stand up, and head back inside together.

INT. EAST HIGH - SHARPAY'S LOCKER

SHARPAY opens her locker to examine the damage to her clothes as KELSI nervously approaches.

**KELSI**

Hey, Sharpay, I wanted-

**SHARPAY**

(holding her finger up)

Do not even SPEAK to me right now, you backstabbing little gremlin.

**KELSI**

I was just going to offer that, if you and Ryan want to rehearse ahead of time, I have availability on-

**SHARPAY**

I'd rather stick pins in my eyes. You really think I'd let you sabotage me again the way you did yesterday? LOOK at me, Nielsen! I've been bludgeoned by lunchmeats!

**KELSI**

You still look very nice, but that's not why I-

**SHARPAY**

(with venom)

Evaporate, small person!

SHARPAY storms off. KELSI looks after her, then calls out.

**KELSI**

Okay! But I'm not gonna offer again!

We travel down the hall, to where GABRIELLA is opening her locker. A small note falls out onto the floor. She picks it up and reads it. A smile appears on her face as the scene changes to...

EXT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLUB ROOF

TROY is waiting on the school roof, surrounded by beautiful greenery and flowers. She's pouring the remains of a water bottle into one of the pots when who GABRIELLA arrives, who looks around the garden in wonder.

**GABRIELLA**

Wow! It's like a jungle up here.

TROY smiles brightly to see her.

**TROY**

Yeah, just like that cafeteria.

GABRIELLA groans, and her pace slows to ambling as she approaches TROY.

**GABRIELLA**

Where I just humiliated myself into the next century.

**TROY**

No, come on. It's not that big of a deal. Sharpay just has a high pitched voice.

**GABRIELLA**

So... this is your private hideout?

**TROY**

Yeah. It's part of the science club. Which means that my buddies don't even know it exists. I help out with the flowers sometimes when I don't have practice.

GABRIELLA moves around to admire them, fingertips running lightly over the petals. TROY watches her, entranced.

**GABRIELLA**

You pretty much have the school wired, don't you, Troy? Seems to me like everyone on campus wants to be your friend. (testing the waters) Or your boyfriend.

**TROY**

(uncomfortably)

Yeah, well. Yeah, unless we lose.

**GABRIELLA**

(turning back)

I'm sure it's tricky being the coach's daughter.

**TROY**

Makes me practice a little harder, I guess. He was glad I grew up tall. (suddenly defensive) I *like* basketball.

**GABRIELLA**

(encouraging)

You're really good at it, right?

**TROY**

Everyone thinks my dad forced me into it because he didn't have a son. But I just like it. I've been playing with him since I was a kid. I worked hard to get on the team here. He didn't just let me on. I practice twice as much as any of the boys on the team, and I'm the *captain*, and I still-

Long beat. GABRIELLA waits patiently.

**TROY**

...I don't know what he's gonna say when he finds out about the singing.

**GABRIELLA**

(gently)  
You worried?

**TROY**

It's just... my parents' friends are always saying, "Your daughter's the basketball whiz. One of the guys! You must be so... proud." Sometimes I don't wanna be the "basketball whiz." Or one of the guys. I just want to be... a regular girl. You know?

**GABRIELLA**

I saw the way you treated Kelsi at the audition yesterday. Do your friends know that girl?

**TROY**

They don't know I'm a girl at all. I'm (adopts a low, mocking tone) the playmaker, dude. (back to normal) And sometimes it's better that way. I don't want to be, like, the chick of the team, you know? Or, like... the team girlfriend. I don't want them to treat me like I'm there for any other reason than to play basketball. But it sucks that I'm never allowed to be a girl because I have to be...

**GABRIELLA**

One of the guys. Yeah.

TROY nods. GABRIELLA nods with her, in understanding.

**GABRIELLA**

... it was hard for me at my old school, too. The same as here. People expect you to be one way, and when you're not what they expect...

**TROY**

(laughs)

Well, you do keep surprising me.

GABRIELLA smiles at the compliment, but still she looks distant.

**GABRIELLA**

It's like, you can never be enough for everyone until you're too much. I was the freaky genius girl in Boston, the Stanford obsessed chick in Chicago...

There's a beat. She looks at TROY for a searching moment. TROY just blinks back, uncomprehending.

**GABRIELLA**

... the lesbian weirdo in San Diego.

**TROY**

Oh! Oh.

We can *feel* GABRIELLA holding her breath. TROY's stunned, unable in the moment to sift through everything she's feeling, but then she sees GABRIELLA's trepidation and immediately softens. She gently bumps GABRIELLA's shoulder with hers.

**TROY**

But never the singing girl anywhere, huh?

GABRIELLA exhales, relieved despite herself. She shakes her head.

**GABRIELLA**

It was already hard enough sticking to what I knew in other schools. I was too scared to try something else. But it's been

different here. When I was singing with you, I just felt like... a girl. A normal one.

**TROY**

You even looked like one, too.

GABRIELLA giggles softly, and goes to sit down on the bench.

**GABRIELLA**

So did you. For a moment there.

Troy laughs, sit down on the bench beside her.

**TROY**

It happens occasionally.

**GABRIELLA**

... Troy.

**TROY**

Hm?

**GABRIELLA**

... do you remember in kindergarten how you'd meet a kid and know nothing about them, then ten seconds later you're playing like your best friends? Because you didn't have to be anything but yourself.

**TROY**

Yeah.

**GABRIELLA**

Singing with you feels like that.

It's half a love confession. Her gaze is steady on TROY, who swallows and doesn't break their gaze.

**TROY**

Well, um... I never thought about... singing. That's for sure. Till I met you.

It's enough for now. GABRIELLA smiles.

**GABRIELLA**

So you really wanna do the callbacks?

**TROY**

Hey, just call me me freaky callback girl.

**GABRIELLA**

(giggling)

You're really great, Troy. But not for the reasons your friends think. And thanks for showing me your top-secret hiding place. Like kindergarten.

She leans in, a tiny bit, and TROY'S eyes widen but she doesn't pull away. Then the bell rings.

TROY and GABRIELLA both sigh and rise. Almost absentmindedly, TROY takes GABRIELLA's hand as they head back inside.

INT. EAST HIGH - MUSIC ROOM

We see KELSI in the music classroom sitting at the piano, writing, "Breaking Free".

FADE IN to the same room, KELSI at the same piano, TROY practicing the song with her, lovely and confident. RYAN, passing by outside, hears the sound of TROY's voice and presses his ear to the door. He tries to enter, but the door is locked.

INT. EAST HIGH - BATHROOM

GABRIELLA is in the girl's bathroom, quietly singing the same song to herself when SHARPAY suddenly enters, looking around suspiciously. GABRIELLA hides as SHARPAY inspects each stall, and only narrowly avoids her.

INT. EAST HIGH - MUSIC ROOM

Together this time, TROY and GABRIELLA sing in unison with KELSI at the piano, who's beaming. They all harmonize as one, their unison joyful.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

Simultaneous to this music rehearsal, the Wildcats are running a practice. Only TROY is absent. CHAD in particular is playing particularly aggressively, his anger and jealousy palpable.

**COACH BOLTON**

(blows his whistle)

Let's go, guys! Make it sharp! To the chest,  
come on! Come on, guys. Step with it! Let's go! Come on guys,  
focus! Focus! Get  
your head in the game! Move it! (to Jason) You seen Troy?

**JASON**

(nervously)

No, Coach.

COACH BOLTON looks around, irritated, then blows his whistle again.

**COACH BOLTON**

Again, let's go!

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

Oblivious to the missed practice, TROY is painting a set piece while GABRIELLA is helping to sew a costume. They both look at each other and begin moving to the beat of the song in their minds. MS. DARBUS walks by and gives them both a stern look, and they stop obligingly. As soon as she passes, they both giggle at one another and continue to dance.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The whistle blows a final time. Practice is over.

**COACH BOLTON**



That's it, guys. Let's hit the showers. (to Wildcat #1) Good hustle. Let's see that in the game.

As the rest of the team is leaving, TROY runs in, wearing her jersey. CHAD shoves the ball into her stomach as he passes her. There is an uncomfortable silence between COACH BOLTON and TROY, neither willing to look the other in the eye.

**TROY**

I, uh... think I'm gonna stay a while. Work on some free throws.

**COACH BOLTON**

Well, since you missed practice, I think your team deserves a little effort from you today.

COACH BOLTON leaves the gym, and TROY, guilty, tosses for a basket and misses. GABRIELLA appears on the other side of the gym, and watches her play for a moment before speaking up.

**GABRIELLA**

Wow. So this is your real stage.

TROY jumps at the sound of her voice, then chuckles at the wording.

**TROY**

Yeah, I guess you could call it that. Or just a smelly gym.

GABRIELLA approaches and gestures for the ball. Intrigued, TROY hands it to her, and GABRIELLA shoots an impressive basket.

**TROY**

Oh! Don't tell me you're good at hoops, too.

**GABRIELLA**

You know, I once scored 41 points on a league championship game.

**TROY**

(shocked)

No way.

**GABRIELLA**

(picking up the ball)

Mm-hm. Yeah, and in the same day, I invented the space shuttle and microwave popcorn.

**TROY**

(jokingly indignant)

Oh! Microwave popcorn. Ha-ha. Funny.

TROY takes the ball back from her, shoots, and makes another great basket.

**GABRIELLA**

I've been rehearsing with Kelsi.

**TROY**

Me, too. And, um, by the way, I missed practice. So if I get kicked off the team it should be on your conscience.

GABRIELLA's horrified.

**GABRIELLA**

Hey, I wasn't the one who told you to...

**TROY**

(becoming playful)

Gabriella, chill.

GABRIELLA gasps, then snatches the ball away from TROY, flirtatious.

**TROY**

Hey, that's traveling. (giggling) Oh, that's really bad traveling.

**GABRIELLA**

What? What?

GABRIELLA ducks and dodges with the ball, and TROY runs up behind GABRIELLA, picks her up, and spins her around. She shrieks with laughter.

**COACH BOLTON**

(suddenly appearing)

Miss! I'm sorry, this is a closed practice.

TROY nearly drops GABRIELLA, but catches her at the last second. All the laughter fades out of both of their faces. TROY stares at her father, dubious.

**TROY**

Dad, come on, practice is over.

**COACH BOLTON**

Not till the last player leaves the gym. Team rule.

**GABRIELLA**

Oh, I'm sorry, sir.

**TROY**

(appeasing, a little shy)

Um, Dad, this is Gabriella Montez.

**COACH BOLTON**

(rudely)

Ah, your detention buddy.

GABRIELLA's warm smile fades into forbearance as she hands the ball back to TROY.

**GABRIELLA**

I'll see you later, Troy. Nice meeting you, Coach Bolton.

GABRIELLA hurries out of the gym. TROY watches her go, upset, even as COACH BOLTON's expression reads 'good riddance'.

**COACH BOLTON**

You as well, Miss Montez.

TROY waits until GABRIELLA is out of earshot, then rounds on her father.

**TROY**

Dad, detention was my fault, not hers. Don't talk to her like that.

**COACH BOLTON**

You haven't missed practice in three years. That girl shows up..

**TROY**

*That girl* has a name, Dad. It's Gabriella. And she's very nice.

**COACH BOLTON**

Well, helping you miss practice doesn't make her very nice. Not in my book. Or your team's.

**TROY**

(raising her voice)

Dad, she's not a problem! She's just a girl.

**COACH BOLTON**

(shouting)

But *you're* not just a girl, Troy!

TROY takes a step back, eyes wide. COACH BOLTON checks himself, takes a deep breath.

**COACH BOLTON**

(softly)

You're the team leader. What you do affects not only this team, but the entire school. And without you completely focused, we're not gonna win next week. The championship games - they don't come along all the time. They're something special.

**TROY**

Yeah, well, a lot of things are special, Dad.

**COACH BOLTON**

But you're a playmaker... not a singer, right? You're one of the guys, honey. They need you.

He's said exactly the wrong thing. TROY swells up, furious.

**TROY**

Do you ever think maybe I don't want to be the playmaker all the time, Dad? I've been the playmaker since I was ten years old! Can I be your *daughter* for- for a day? For a minute? (mocking)  
One of the guys? I'm NOT one of the guys!

COACH BOLTON falls back, speechless. TROY drops the ball and bolts for the girls' locker room. As COACH BOLTON leaves the gym, we see that the rest of the team has been outside the whole time, eavesdropping. CHAD falls away from the door, face twisted in thought.

**JASON**

What?

**CHAD**

Let's go.

The team, as a unit, saunters away.

INT. EAST HIGH - LIBRARY

It's the next day. TROY is in the library stacks, searching for textbooks and looking slightly worse for wear, gaunt and ruffled. CHAD is aggressively trailing behind her, still holding his omnipresent ball.

**CHAD**

What spell has this elevated-IQ temptress girl cast that suddenly makes you wanna be in a musical?

**TROY**

Don't call her that. Look, I just did it. Who cares?

**CHAD**

Who cares? How about your most loyal best friend? Your valet?  
Your knight in shining-?

**MS. FALSTAFF**

Quiet in here, Mr. Danforth.

**CHAD**

(feigning innocence)

It's her, Ms. Falstaff, not me.

Miss Falstaff moves on. TROY rolls her eyes and keeps searching.  
CHAD runs after her.

**CHAD**

(determined)

Look, you're a hoops chick, not a musical singer... person.

CHAD hands the ball to TROY, who sighs, and tosses it right back to CHAD.

**CHAD**

Have you ever seen Kristin Chenoweth on a cereal box?

**TROY**

Who's Kristin Chenoweth?

**CHAD**

Exactly my point. She was Glinda the Good Witch in Wicked on Broadway. Now, my mom has seen that musical 27 times, and put Kristin Chenoweth's picture in our refrigerator. Yeah, not on it, in it. So my point is, if you play basketball, you're gonna end up on a cereal box. If you sing in musicals, you'll end up in my mom's refrigerator.

**TROY**

Why... does your mom have Kristin Chenoweth's picture in her refrigerator?

**CHAD**

You tell me! Look, I don't attempt to understand the female mind, Troy!

**TROY**

Yeah, no kidding.

Miss Falstaff appears again.

**CHAD**

It's frightening territory, you have to agree with me there.

**TROY**

You know, if you lead like this with other girls you're gonna be single for life, dude.

**CHAD**

Well, it's been working on you, hasn't it?

**TROY**

(dryly)  
Has it?

CHAD licks his lips, offended.

**CHAD**

How can you expect the rest of us to be focused on a game if you're off somewhere in leotards singing "Twinkle Town"? I won't be able to peel them off you anymore.

**TROY**

No one said *anything* about leotards.

**CHAD**

Not yet, my friend, but just you wait. Look, regardless of what they might think, the team doesn't need you as a showgirl, we need you as a Captain. Big time.

**MS. FALSTAFF**

Mr. Danforth!

**CHAD**

I tried to tell her, Miss Falstaff. (to TROY) I really tried.

He leaves, still spinning the ball. TROY glares after him at first, then looks wistful.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

CHAD, ZEKE, and JASON march into the science classroom and walk up to TAYLOR, as SHARPAY and RYAN sneak up and observe from outside.

**SHARPAY**

Something isn't right.

They move closer so as to get a better view, but they can't hear any of the conversation.

**CHAD**

(to TAYLOR)

Hey, look. We need to talk.

**TAYLOR**

Then talk.

SHARPAY and RYAN continue to watch CHAD and TAYLOR talk.

**RYAN**

They must be trying to figure out a way to make sure Troy and Gabriella actually beat us out. Now, the jocks rule most of the school, but if they get dreamgirl into the musical, then they've conquered the entire student body.

**SHARPAY**

And if those science geeks get Gabriella hooked onto Troy Bolton, the scholastic club goes from twee to trendy. (shudders)  
Ryan, we need to save our show from people who don't know the difference between a Tony Award and (loathingly) Tony Hawk.

They both walk away. TAYLOR and CHAD seem to have come to an agreement.

**TAYLOR**

Do you really think that's gonna work?

**CHAD**

It's the only way to save Troy and Gabriella from themselves. So we on?



**TAYLOR**

Yeah.

**CHAD**

Good. So we start tomorrow then.

**TAYLOR**

Okay. First thing.

**CHAD**

Nice. (to Zeke and Jason) Let's go.

They leave. TAYLOR looks conspiratorially at the other decathlon members.

EXT. EAST HIGH - FRONT LAWN

It's the next day. CHAD comes out from behind a statue as TAYLOR arrives to make her delivery- a laptop with a webcam attached.

**CHAD**

So, my watch is 7:45 Mountain Standard time. We synced?

**TAYLOR**

(disgusted)

Whatever.

**CHAD**

All right, then we're on a-go mode for lunch period, exactly 12:05.

**TAYLOR**

(mockingly)

Yes, Chad, we're a-go. But we're not Charlie's Angels, okay?

TAYLOR hands CHAD the equipment. He winks at her.

**CHAD**

I can dream, can't I?

She scoffs and stalks away. CHAD grins after her, then starts examining the laptop.

INT. EAST HIGH - GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM

TROY is in the girl's locker room in her jersey and sweats, alone, sweaty and rubbing a towel through her hair. She walks down the dingy hallway and finds her whole team against the lockers, all gathered around a table filled with pictures and trophies. She jumps back in fright.

**TROY**

What are you guys *doing* in here!

**CHAD**

(unfazed, holding up a photo)

"Spider" Bill Netrine, class of '72. He was the MVP in the league championship game.

**ZEKE**

Sam Nedler, class of '02. Also known as "Sammy Slamma Jamma." Captain, MVP of the league championship team.

**JASON**

The "Thunder Clap" (everybody claps) Hap Hadden, '95. Led the Wildcats to back-to-back city championships. A legend.

**CHAD**

Yes, legends, one and all. But do you think that any of these Wildcat legends became legends by getting involved in musical auditions just days before the league championships?

**Wildcats**

Get your head in the game!

TROY is still staring at them, aghast and confused, holding her towel defensively in both hands.

**CHAD**

No. These Wildcat legends became legends because they never took their eye off the prize.

**Wildcats**

Get your head in the game!

**CHAD:**

Now, who was the first sophomore ever- the first *girl* ever- to make starting varsity?

**Wildcats**

Troy!

**CHAD**

So, who voted her our team captain this year?

**Wildcats**

Us!

**CHAD**

And who is gonna get their sorry butts kicked in Friday's championship game if she's worried about an audition?

**Wildcats**

(not so enthusiastically)

We are.

They look expectantly at TROY, who swallows, and is nearly shaking with anger and distress.

**TROY**

You guys ganged up in the girls' locker room to give me this pep talk? This is a suspension-level offense, and you guys are worried about my *singing* blowing our chances at the championship?!

**Wildcats**

(resolutely)

Get your head in the game!

TROY gapes, shakes her head, and decides to change tactics.

**TROY**

Guys- come on. I mean, there's 12 people on this team, not just me.

**CHAD**

Just 12? Oh, no. I think you're forgetting about one very important 13th member of our squad.

CHAD receives a picture from a Wildcat behind him and hands it to TROY. It's a young COACH BOLTON. TROY visibly deflates.

**TROY**

My... dad.

**CHAD**

Yes, Troy. Wildcat basketball champion, class of 1981. Champion, father, and now coach. It's a winning tradition truly like no other.

TROY looks down at the picture, deeply conflicted.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

TAYLOR begins on GABRIELLA, who's sitting obediently in a chair as TAYLOR whacks an ornately organized presentation of famous feminists with a meter stick.

**TAYLOR**

From Betty Friedan to Susan B. Anthony to Simone de Beauvoir to Susan Sontag. All their efforts leading up to... woman indoctrinated into male aggression.

TAYLOR reveals an enormous poster of a male basketball player with TROY's head, enlarged and superimposed on top of it. GABRIELLA smiles at the poster.

**TAYLOR**

Yes, the leaders of the feminist movement paved the way for woman to break the glass ceiling and carry all her sisters up with her, and yet there are some- some- who would rather use that upward mobility to integrate into the masculine society of

violence and competition rather than continue to rise to the pursuit of academia. That is the sorry world of Helen Bolton.

An unconvinced GABRIELLA raises her eyebrows, but TAYLOR's on a roll now.

**TAYLOR**

But the path of the mind, the path we're on, ours is the path that has brought us these people-

She presses a button and historical articles and pictures appear on her laptop.

**TAYLOR**

Eleanor Roosevelt, Frida Kahlo, Sandra Day O'Connor, Madame Curie, Jane Goodall, Oprah Winfrey and so many others who the world reveres.

**GABRIELLA**

Uh, sorry, but what is... the point of this? You know, I've got Kelsi waiting for me to rehearse.

GABRIELLA rises to leave, and TAYLOR yelps.

**TAYLOR**

Gabriella!

GABRIELLA sits back down, a little frightened.

**TAYLOR**

Helen Bolton represents the side of womanhood that has conformed to masculinity and ignorance in the eyes of our founding mothers, spitting on everything feminism has worked for since the first wave. And our side, the side of education and accomplishment is the future of civilization!

As TAYLOR says this she slaps various things with her pointing stick.

**TAYLOR**

This is the side where you belong.

GABRIELLA looks nonplussed.

INT. EAST HIGH - GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM

TROY stares down at the photo of her dad, still at war with herself.

**TROY**

Guys, if you don't know that I'll put 110% of my guts into that game, then you don't know me.

**CHAD**

But we just thought...

TROY puts down the photo.

**TROY**

I'll tell you what I *thought*. I thought that you're my friends. Win together, lose together, teammates.

CHAD and another Wildcat set up the laptop and the camera, out of TROY's field of vision.

**CHAD**

But suddenly the girl... and the singing. And you all "I'm not one of the guys, ra-ra." You've been putting out mixed signals, lady.

**TROY**

Mixed signals? What, am I your date for the prom now? I'm your captain, dude.

Some Wildcats laugh uneasily. TROY, aware now of what they want to hear, pushes this angle.

**TROY**

Guys, I'm for the team! I've always been for the team. Gabriella, she's- she's just someone I met.

Unaware to TROY she is now being viewed by everyone in the science classroom, including GABRIELLA.

**TROY**

(from the laptop screen)

All right? The singing thing is nothing. It's a girl thing, I guess. Probably just a way to keep my nerves down. I don't know. It doesn't mean anything, it doesn't mean I'm suddenly going to be like- a chick, in skirts and leotards or whatever. You're my guys, and this is our team. What's going on with me and Gabriella, you don't have to worry about it. I'll forget the audition and we'll go out and get that championship. Everyone happy now?

The transmission ends. TAYLOR starts speaking again, promptly. This is all going as rehearsed.

**TAYLOR**

Behold the dangers of male socialization.

Smug in her victory, TAYLOR fails to notice the tear that falls down GABRIELLA's cheek.

**TAYLOR**

So, Gabriella, we'd love to have you for the scholastic decathlon. Did you wanna grab some lunch?

GABRIELLA, still staring at the laptop screen, manages a weak smile as she shakes her head at the offer.

**TAYLOR**

(shrugging)

Well, we'll be there if you wanna come.

GABRIELLA is utterly heartbroken. The rest of the science club leaves her for lunch, all disregarding the devastated look on her face.

INT. EAST HIGH - GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM

**CHAD**

(overjoyed)  
Wildcats!

**Wildcats**

Get your head in the game! Whoo! Let's go!

They lift an unsettled and clearly still upset TROY onto their shoulders and carry her out.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

GABRIELLA is still in the classroom as she hears some commotion from the window. She crosses to it to see a huge crowd surrounding the Wildcats, with TROY at the elevated center.

**Crowd**

Troy, Troy, Troy, Troy!

("WHEN THERE WAS ME AND YOU")

**GABRIELLA**

*It's funny when you find yourself  
Looking from the outside  
I'm standing here but all I want  
Is to be over there  
Why did I let myself believe  
Miracles could happen?  
'Cause now I have to pretend  
That I don't really care*

She leaves the classroom and begins to wander through the empty halls.

**GABRIELLA**

*I thought you were my fairy tale  
A dream when I'm not sleeping  
A wish upon a star  
That's coming true  
But everybody else could tell  
That I confused my feelings with the truth  
When there was me and you*



*I swore I knew the melody  
That I heard you singing  
And when you smiled you made me feel  
Like I could sing along  
But then you went and changed the words  
Now my heart is empty  
I'm only left with used-to-be's  
And once upon a song  
Now I know you're not a fairy tale  
And dreams were meant for sleeping  
And wishes on a star  
Just don't come true  
'Cause now even I can tell  
That I confused my feelings with the truth  
Because I liked the view  
When there was me and you*

She's come to an enormous poster of TROY and the other Wildcats adorning a hallway wall. She leans against TROY's shy smile, despondent.

**GABRIELLA**

*I can't believe that I could be so blind  
It's like you were floating while I was falling  
And I didn't mind  
'Cause I liked the view  
I thought you felt it too  
When there was me and you*

GABRIELLA walks over to her locker as TROY, entering the hallway with the rest of the Wildcats and unaware of the damage that has been wrought, makes her way over.

**TROY**

(flirty)

Hey, how you doin'?

GABRIELLA doesn't respond. TROY, unsure, continues.

**TROY**

Listen, there's something I wanna talk to you about-

**GABRIELLA**

(turning to face TROY)

And here it is. I know what it's like to pretend to be someone you're not for the sake of other people. I get it. You've got your *boys*, Troy. It's okay. We're good.

**TROY**

(nonplussed)

Good about what? I was gonna talk to you about the final callbacks.

**GABRIELLA**

I don't wanna do the callbacks either. Who are we trying to kid? You've got your team and now I've got mine. I'll do the scholastic decathlon and you'll win the championships. It's where we belong.

She reaches into her locker and shoves her copy of *Breaking Free* into TROY's hands.

**GABRIELLA**

(flatly)

Go, Wildcats.

**TROY**

(confused)

But I...

**GABRIELLA**

Me neither.

GABRIELLA walks away and quickly disappears into the crowd. TROY takes a second to process, then looks after her, completely flummoxed.

**TROY**

Gabriella?

The Wildcat parade arrives at the lockers.

**Cheerleader**  
Go Wildcats!

TROY once again gets swept away into the crowd, looking over her shoulder for GABRIELLA.

EXT. EAST HIGH - OUTER COURT

The Wildcats are practicing outside in sweats. TROY is running laps, staying out of the court. CHAD calls out to TROY as she passes him.

**CHAD**  
Hey, Captain!

CHAD tries to give TROY the basketball he's carrying, but TROY refuses and keeps running.

**ZEKE**  
(to CHAD)  
What's with her?

**CHAD**  
Don't worry about it.

EXT. BOLTON HOME - BACKYARD

Lured out by the sound of dribbling and quiet grunting, COACH BOLTON walks out onto the porch to watch TROY, who is shooting some hoops. She misses again and again. In her anger, she catches a missed shot and hurls the ball against the side gate. COACH BOLTON walks back inside the house, helpless.

INT. MONTEZ HOME - GABRIELLA'S BALCONY

GABRIELLA is standing on her deck in deep thought. Her mother watches her in the background of her room, concerned.

INT. EAST HIGH - CAFETERIA

TROY and GABRIELLA cross paths on their way to their seats. Neither says anything. TROY looks straight at GABRIELLA, yearning; GABRIELLA won't meet her eyes. TAYLOR notices GABRIELLA and makes a motion for GABRIELLA to come and sit. TROY tries to say something, but GABRIELLA walks off and sits at a different table before TROY can get anything out. TAYLOR notices. CHAD sees TROY and calls to her.

**CHAD**

Troy! Hey.

**Wildcat**

Hey, Troy!

TROY sees CHAD but doesn't come. Instead she leaves the cafeteria. GABRIELLA steals a glance at TROY as she leaves. CHAD and TAYLOR, in unison, rise, look at each other, and walk out.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLUB ROOF

TROY is watering the flowers, looking unshowered and miserable, as CHAD, ZEKE, and JASON arrive. They watch her for a moment guiltily before speaking up.

**CHAD**

Hey, um... We just had another team meeting.

**TROY**

(refusing to look at him)  
In the girls' room again?

**CHAD**

Yeah, uh. Coach Bolton said if we tried that again we'd be off the team.

**TROY**

Uh huh.

**CHAD**

It was just in the gym.

**TROY**

Oh. Great.

**CHAD**

We had a team meeting about how we haven't been acting like a team. (TROY looks sharply at him) I mean us, not you. Look, about the singing thing..

**TROY**

Look, dude, I don't even wanna talk about it.

**CHAD**

We just want you to know that we're gonna be there. Okay, cheering for you.

Beat.

**TROY**

What?

**ZEKE**

Yeah, if singing is something you wanna do, we should be boosting you up, not tearing you down.

**CHAD**

Yeah. Win or lose, we're teammates. That's what we're about. Even if you turn out to be the worst singer in the world.

**JASON**

(friendly)

Which we don't know because we haven't actually heard you sing.

TROY's not encouraged.

**TROY**

And you're not gonna hear me sing, guys. Because Gabriella won't even talk to me... and I don't know why.

**CHAD**

We do.

ZEKE reaches into his lunch bag and takes out two items which resemble sugar cookies.

**ZEKE**

I baked these fresh today. You'll probably want to try one before we tell you the rest.

TROY takes one, looking wary.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Meanwhile, TAYLOR is having a similar confrontation with GABRIELLA.

**TAYLOR**

Gabriella, we were jerks. No, we were worse than jerks because we were mean jerks. We thought Helen... (with difficulty) Troy and the whole singing thing was killing our chances of having you on the scholastic decathlon team.

**GABRIELLA**

I heard what she had to say. I'm on your team now. Done.

**TAYLOR**

No, *not* done. We knew that Chad could get Helen to say things to make you want to forget about the callbacks. She has weak spots a mile wide, and we piledrived them on purpose to hurt both of you. We planned it, and we're embarrassed and sorry.

**GABRIELLA**

No one forced Troy to say anything. And you know what? It's OK. We should be preparing for the decathlon now, so it's time to move on.

**TAYLOR**

(now frustrated)

No, it's not OK. The decathlon is whatever, but how you feel about us, and even more, how you feel about Troy - that's what really matters.

GABRIELLA simply turns away from them and continues what she was writing on the chalkboard. TAYLOR turns around to face the rest of the science club.

**TAYLOR**

We tried.

EXT. MONTEZ HOUSE - STREET OUTSIDE - EVENING

It's late, the same night. We see TROY walking along the sidewalk in front of GABRIELLA's house, muttering to herself. A dog can be heard barking in the distance. TROY walks up to the front door, steels herself, and knocks. Miss Montez answers.

**TROY**

Hi, Miss Montez, I'm Troy Bolton.

**MS. MONTEZ**

(knowingly)

Oh, Troy!

Hearing TROY's name, GABRIELLA runs down the stairs, silently, till she's within eyesight of her mother. Vehemently, she mouths "No."

**MS. MONTEZ**

(obligingly)

Um... Gabriella is kinda busy with... homework and such, so now's not really a good time.

**TROY**

I made a mistake, Ms. Montez, and I would really like to let Gabriella know that. Could you tell her that I came by to see her?

**MS. MONTEZ**

(smiling)

I will... Troy. Good night.

**TROY**

Good night. Thank you.

TROY is about to go home, dejected, when suddenly she gets an idea. She silently goes around to the back of GABRIELLA's house and dials her number on her cell phone.

GABRIELLA, inside, is sitting on her bed when her phone starts ringing. She picks up, sees TROY's picture, and hesitates before answering.

**GABRIELLA**

(on the phone)

Hello?

**TROY**

(on the phone)

What you heard the other day, *none* of that is true. I was sick of my friends riding me about singing with you, and they said stuff about my dad, and me being the only girl, and how I'm not... not the basketball whiz they wanted, right? So I said things I knew would shut them up. I didn't mean any of it.

GABRIELLA turns on her nightstand lamp. TROY sees a window above the balcony light up, and recognizes it as GABRIELLA's room.

**GABRIELLA**

(on the phone)

You sounded pretty convincing to me.

TROY looks at the tall tree next to her that leads up to GABRIELLA's window, and starts formulating a plan.

**TROY**

(on the phone)

Listen, the girl you met on vacation is way more me than the girl who said those stupid things.

**GABRIELLA**

(on the phone)



Troy, the whole singing thing is making the school whack. You said so yourself. Everyone's treating you differently because of it.

**TROY**

(on the phone, beginning to climb the tree)  
Maybe I want to be treated differently. Maybe it's time for me to stop being the Wildcat captain, or the coach's daughter, and just be... me, you know.

**GABRIELLA**

(on the phone)  
What about your dad?

**TROY**

(on the phone)  
And it's not about my dad. I told him in the gym, I want something to be about me. This is about how I feel. This is about how I feel about... singing, and about the team, and about who I wanna be.

**GABRIELLA**

(on the phone)  
I don't know, Troy.

**TROY**

(on the phone)  
Well, I hope you'll say yes. Because I brought you something.

**GABRIELLA**

(on the phone)  
What do you mean?

**TROY**

(on the phone)  
Turn around.

GABRIELLA turns around and sure enough, TROY is standing on her balcony. They hang up their phones as GABRIELLA goes to the door and opens it.

**TROY**

(singing in a capella, incredibly nervous)  
*This could be the start of something new  
It feels so right to be here with you  
And now looking in your eyes  
I feel in my heart  
The start of something...*(spoken) new.

Anxiously, she holds up GABRIELLA's copy of Breaking Free.

**TROY**

It's a couples audition.

GABRIELLA has been won over. She walks over to TROY with a smile and takes the music sheets. They get close to each other as...

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The next day. TROY is ripping it up on the basketball field, moving around the court and passing the ball till it gets back to her and she makes a perfect basket. COACH BOLTON cheers her on, delighted, and she shrieks in victory.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

GABRIELLA zips through a complicated equation with ease, watched by admiring peers.

**GABRIELLA**

Zn4, and by doing that, you end up with two... and two. Got it?

**Science Girl**

Yes!

TAYLOR high fives the girl, thrilled.

INT. EAST HIGH - GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM

TROY has now finished basketball practice and is getting ready to leave the locker room. She stops in front of a mirror and checks her hair, then races out.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

GABRIELLA is now showing another student how to conduct a chemistry experiment.

**GABRIELLA**

Guys, come here. Go ahead and put five grams of this in, and that causes it to change from an acidic state... causing the color to change from pink to blue. Just like those pH test strips.

(checks the clock) Oh, gotta go. See you guys later!

GABRIELLA takes off her goggles and apron and hangs them up as she leaves.

INT. EAST HIGH - HALLWAY

TROY runs down the hallway and skids to a stop. She checks an invisible watch on her wrist just as GABRIELLA runs up behind her and grabs her hand, giggling.

**TROY**

Whoa! You're late!

Together, they take off in the direction of the music room, and disappear down the hallway.

INT. EAST HIGH - MUSIC ROOM

TROY and GABRIELLA, now joined by KELSI, are rehearsing Breaking Free.

**BOTH**

*...strength to believe*

**GABRIELLA**

*We're soarin'*

**TROY**

*Flyin'*

**Both**

*There's not a star in heaven that we can't reach*

As they rehearse, SHARPAY and RYAN strut by the classroom.

**SHARPAY**

(singing to herself)

*Bop bop bop....*

**TROY**

(muffled)

*If we're tryin'*

**BOTH**

*Yeah, we're breakin' free*

SHARPAY gasps, and they both freeze in place. TROY and GABRIELLA, muffled, continue to sing.

**RYAN**

Wow. They sound good.

SHARPAY scoffs. She goes to the window in the classroom door and watches.

**TROY**

(muffled)

*Like a wave the ocean just...*

**SHARPAY**

(turning back to face RYAN)

We have to do something. (thinking rapidly) Okay, our callbacks on Thursday and the basketball game and the scholastic decathlon are on Friday. (it clicks) Too bad all these events weren't happening on the same day... at the same time.

**RYAN**

Well, that wouldn't work out because then Troy and Gabriella wouldn't be able to make the..

SHARPAY shoots RYAN a "Keep going" look.

**RYAN**

(realizing)

I'm proud to call you my sister.

**SHARPAY**

I know.

Smugly, the two exit to find MS. DARBUS.

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

KELSI is working on some music as MS. DARBUS, SHARPAY, and RYAN enter. Quickly, KELSI hides to eavesdrop.

**MS. DARBUS**

I don't want to hear anything about Helen Bolton and that Montez girl. So, if you're telling me as co-presidents of the drama club that changing the callbacks would be what's best for our theater program, then I might actually agree with you.

Without breaking stride, she walks off.

**RYAN**

(to SHARPAY)

Is that a yes?

SHARPAY winks in confirmation and begins to saunter away.

**SHARPAY**

*Bop bop bop, up to the top  
And wipe away your inhibitions  
Stomp, stomp, stomp  
Do the romp and strut your stuff  
Bop bop bop, straight to the top...*

KELSI, below, hugs her sheet music to her chest. Her expression curls into something between disdain and despair.

INT. EAST HIGH - FRONT LOBBY

The next day. A sign has been posted on the bulletin board's callback sheet reading "CALLBACK AUDITIONS RESCHEDULED TO FRIDAY BEGINNING AT 3:30 PM". KELSI is staring at the sign as TROY, GABRIELLA, CHAD, TAYLOR, and the rest of the Wildcats arrive through the front door.

**CHAD**

(to Wildcat #1)

No problem at all. It was crazy.

TROY notices the look on KELSI's face, puts a hand on her shoulder, and looks at the callback sheet. Her jaw drops.

**TROY**

Callbacks the same time as the game?

**GABRIELLA**

And the scholastic decathlon?

**TAYLOR**

Why would they do that?

**CHAD**

I smell a rat named Darbus.

**KELSI**

(quietly furious)

It's two rats, neither of them named Darbus.

**CHAD**

Do you know something about this, small person?

**TROY**

Hey. Be nice to her.

**KELSI**

(ignoring CHAD, directly to TROY)

Ms. Darbus might think that she's protecting the show, but Ryan and Sharpay are pretty much only concerned with protecting themselves.

**CHAD**

(angrily)

Do you know what I'm gonna do to those two over-moosed show dogs?

**TROY**

(putting her hand on his arm, placating)

Nothing. We're not gonna do anything to them. Except to sing, maybe. (thinking quickly) All right, I have an idea. But this is only gonna happen if we all work together. Now who's in?

She holds out her hand. GABRIELLA is the first to put her hand on TROY's, with KELSI in hot pursuit. CHAD and TAYLOR put their hands in the air. Every other student places their hand over TROY's. KELSI puts her second hand on as well, grinning brightly to be a part of a team.

INT. EAST HIGH - HOMEROOM

**TITLE CARD:** Game Day - Scholastic Decathlon Day - Callback Day - HELP!

CHAD, TROY, JASON, and ZEKE, all in jerseys and team jackets, enter homeroom. TROY and CHAD quickly run to the back, behind GABRIELLA and TAYLOR, and cover their eyes, while ZEKE proudly carries over a decorated cake.

**ZEKE**

A pi pie.

TROY and CHAD remove their hands, and GABRIELLA and TAYLOR both gasp.

**TAYLOR**

Oh my goodness!

**GABRIELLA**

Oh my gosh!

**TAYLOR**

Thank you! Oh, we have something for you, too.

**GABRIELLA**

Come here, look.

They walk over to a marker board that is filled with a large, complicated equation and a little diagram of a basketball player about to shoot the ball.

**Both**

Ta-da!

**CHAD**

Oh... it's an equation.

**TROY**

(genuine)

Thank you guys!

TAYLOR and GABRIELLA giggle as they turn the board over to reveal a poster of a large "Wildcat" making a basket with the words "GO! Wildcat Hoopsters" next to it.

**TROY, CHAD, ZEKE, JASON**

Oh! (laughing) That's awful.

As they stand appraising the image, GABRIELLA and TAYLOR begin bombarding the Wildcats with mini basketballs. The Wildcats defend themselves, laughing, before they hurry over to the front and bring RYAN and SHARPAY over to the door. MS. DARBUS arrives in time to see the presentation}

**CHAD**

(to SHARPAY)

Stay right there. Watch.

**TROY**

From our team, to yours.

The entire Wildcat team is in a formation in the hallway. Under their windbreakers they each have a letter printed on their shirt.



**Wildcats**

G - O - D - R - A - M - A - C - L - U - B

TROY spins around to reveal an exclamation point on the back of her jacket.

**TROY**

Exclamation point!

**MS. DARBUS**

(amused despite herself)

Well, seems we Wildcats are in for an interesting afternoon.

SHARPAY seems very pleased with the Wildcats' offering. RYAN, next to her, struggles to read the slogan.

**RYAN**

G-O-D... dra.. Go dra... Go dray...

**SHARPAY**

Ugh!

**RYAN**

Drame?

INT. EAST HIGH - HALLWAY

Students from every classroom along the hall fill the empty corridor, all heading to the Wildcats game.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The gym is filled to the brim with spectators as the cheerleaders do a routine. The game is about to commence. COACH BOLTON looks around, doesn't see TROY, and heads into the girls' locker room.

INT. EAST HIGH - GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM

TROY, alone once again, is slicking back her hair in front of the mirror in her locker. There's a picture of her and her dad beneath it- she's young, longhaired, sitting on her dad's shoulders and holding a basketball above the net. Her dad is laughing. COACH BOLTON knocks on the wall behind her, and she jumps.

**COACH BOLTON**

You decent?

**TROY**

Oh! You scared me.

He comes around the corner and sits down next to her, looking up at the photo under the mirror.

**COACH BOLTON**

Figure you probably get pretty lonely in here, huh?

**TROY**

You'd be surprised.

**COACH BOLTON**

... how you feeling?

**TROY**

Nervous.

**COACH BOLTON**

Yeah, me too. Wish I could suit up and play alongside you.

**TROY**

Hey, you had your turn.

She says it lightly, but it affects COACH BOLTON. He licks his lips.

**COACH BOLTON**

Yeah... yeah I did. Troy, um. I've been thinking a lot lately, since this whole drama club thing.. came out-

TROY winces at the wording. Her dad doesn't notice.

**COACH BOLTON**

And I know that... I know that I might've- pushed this on you. Basketball, and- I want you to know it's not because I'm trying to relive the glory days, or because I wanted a son, or because of whatever stupid reasons dads always have. I don't want you ever to feel like I forced this on you, because it was never about the game. It was about me wanting you to be happy. And if-

**TROY**

Dad? Dad!

COACH BOLTON stops.

**TROY**

Dad. I love basketball. I really do. I love basketball, and I love the team, and I love fixing cars, and I love watching the ESPN highlight reel with you. I love all that stuff! It's just.. there are other things.

**COACH BOLTON**

The singing.

TROY nods. She avoids eye contact.

**COACH BOLTON**

... and Gabriella.

Startled, TROY looks up. Then her head drops back down, and she nods again, shamefully.

**COACH BOLTON**

...Helen.

TROY jumps. This is the first time he's called her Helen in what's probably years.

**COACH BOLTON**

All I want for you- and this is true- all I want is for you to have and do what makes you happy. Whatever that is. Right now, and in the future too.

Finally, finally, it's the right thing to say. TROY chances a smile at her dad, eyes moist.

**COACH BOLTON**

You know what I want from you today?

**TROY**

(duh)

The championship.

**COACH BOLTON**

Well, that'll come or it won't. What I want is for you to have fun. I know all about the pressure, and probably too much of it has come from me, but. What I really want is to see my daughter, having the time of her life, playing the game she loves. You give me that, and I will sleep with a smile on my face no matter how the score comes out.

**TROY**

(happy)

Thanks, Coach. Uh... Dad.

COACH BOLTON stands up, and prepares to leave. Before he does, TROY grabs him in a hug.

**TROY**

(muffled)

Thanks.

They stay there, embracing, for a long, calm moment.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

The spectators for the scholastic decathlon take their seats. GABRIELLA, TAYLOR, and the rest of the team sit up front in white lab coats.

**Announcer**

Welcome to the tenth annual Scholastic Decathlon. The East High Wildcats versus the West High Knights.

The crowd applauds as the team members go and shake hands.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

Callback auditions are beginning. Five or six students are milling about; MS. DARBUS, with an assistant, eagerly greets some mothers who wander in.

**MS. DARBUS**

Hello! Right here, right here.

KELSI, dressed in a dapper jacket and hat, opens the piano and practices her song. SHARPAY and RYAN are in their dressing room, performing their pre-show ritual.

**SHARPAY**

Mah, mah, mah!

**RYAN**

Mah, mah, mah!

**SHARPAY**

Eeh! Eeh!

**RYAN**

Ow! Ow!

**SHARPAY**

Stop!

She positions herself, and falls in front of RYAN, who catches her easily. She gets up and puts her hands on his shoulders.

**SHARPAY**

(formally)  
I trust you.

**RYAN**

(equally formally)

Energy.

They continue vocalizing. MS. DARBUS checks the watch of her assistant.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The Wildcats run out of the boys' locker room, greeting TROY who enters alone from the other side. Cheering erupts from all sides.

**Announcer**

And now introducing your East High Wildcats!

**COACH BOLTON**

Let's go! Go!

**Announcer**

...for this championship game between East High and West High!

The Wildcats throw some baskets for the spectators.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Meanwhile the scholastic decathlon starts. A timer begins ticking, managed by a referee, with GABRIELLA and her West High opponent rapidly beginning write an equation on their markerboards.

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

MS. DARBUS rises from her grading table at the front of the auditorium to speak to the small assembled crowd.

**MS. DARBUS**

Casting the leads of a show is both a challenge and a responsibility. A joy and a burden. I commend you and all other young artists to hold out for the moon, the sun, and the stars.

KELSI and the assistant, alone, applaud.

**MS. DARBUS**

(undaunted)

Shall we soar together?

MS. DARBUS holds out her hand, which KELSI takes as the assistant takes a picture of MS. DARBUS.

**MS. DARBUS**

First - Sharpay and Ryan!

"Bop to the Top" begins. RYAN and SHARPAY enter from opposite sides of the stage in extremely extravagant outfits.

**RYAN**

*Mucho gusto*

**SHARPAY**

*Aye que fabulosa*

*Rae aye aye aye*

**RYAN**

*Arriba*

**SHARPAY**

*¿Quieres bailar?*

**RYAN**

*Mirame*

**SHARPAY**

*I believe in dreaming  
And shooting for the stars*

**RYAN**

*Baby to be number one  
You got to raise the bar*

**SHARPAY**

*Kicking and a scratching*

*Grinding out my best*

**RYAN**

*Anything it takes to climb  
The ladder of success*

**BOTH**

*Work our tails off every day  
Gotta bump the competition  
Blow them all away*

MS. DARBUS is enthralled by the excessively elaborate song and dance routine. KELSI, looking bored, checks the assistant's watch.

**RYAN**

*Caliente*

**SHARPAY**

*Suave*

**BOTH**

*Yeah we're gonna  
Bop bop bop, bop to the top  
Slip and slide and ride that rhythm  
Jump and hop  
Hop until we drop  
And start again  
Zip zap zop hop, flop like a mop  
Scoot around the corner  
Move it to the groove  
Until the music stops  
Do the bop bop bop  
To the top  
Don't ever stop  
Bop to the top  
Gimme gimme  
Shimmy shimmy*

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM



The Wildcats and COACH BOLTON have just finished team huddle.

**Wildcats & COACH BOLTON**

WILDCATS!

They break, and take their places on the court, shaking hands with their opponents. The game begins with a whistle, and quickly TROY obtains the ball.

**Announcer**

East High wins the opening tip, pushing the ball up the court.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Meanwhile, GABRIELLA's markerboard is filled with the equation, and she hurries forward to ding the buzzer. The judge walks over to check the work, pauses, and points to East High.

**Decathlon Announcer**

East High.

MS. MONTEZ and the rest of the audience jumps up, applauding. The decathlon team envelops GABRIELLA in a group hug.

**TAYLOR**

We did it!

GABRIELLA hurries over her opponent to shake his hand.

**GABRIELLA**

Great job!

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

SHARPAY and RYAN's callback continues in the same lavish, confident fashion as an annoyed KELSI looks on.

**BOTH**

*Shake some booty and turn around  
Flash a smile in their direction*

**SHARPAY**

*Show some muscle*

**RYAN**

*Do the hustle*

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

The clock ticks on as GABRIELLA and TAYLOR look conspiratorially at one another before opening a laptop.

**TAYLOR**

All right, Wildcats, time for an orderly exit from the gym.

TAYLOR, from her laptop, transmits some sort of code that knocks out the power in the gym.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

The game is still well underway, TROY and CHAD seen to be weaving deftly across the court.

**Announcer**

And West High pushes the ball around the perimeter on the offensive end. Nice ball movement by West High. Driving the lane... shot is up and..

{The scoreboard and the lights start shorting out. All the players stop moving, confused. The game buzzer sounds.

**Announcer**

We seem to be experiencing some technical difficulties, uh.

The referee blows his whistle, signaling a timeout. TROY, looking around at the confusion of her teammates, laughs in astonishment.

**Announcer**

We've got a timeout on the court here.

**Referee**

We have a problem. Stop the game. Stop the game.

**Announcer**

Referee has signaled timeout.

CHAD runs up to TROY and motions for her to get going. TROY nods, gives CHAD a quick tap on the shoulder, and runs out. COACH BOLTON sees this, and starts pacing.

**Announcer**

Everyone please remain calm.

INT. EAST HIGH - SCIENCE CLASSROOM

TAYLOR slowly closes her laptop as she and GABRIELLA eye a nearby bubbling beaker in trepidation. It begins boiling, and almost immediately everyone has a strong, visceral reaction to the smell. The decathlon team and their spectators quickly vacate their seats.

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

**PRINCIPAL MATSUI**

(into a microphone)

We'll get this figured out real soon. In the meantime, per safety regulations, we need to all make an orderly exit from the gym, please.

The Wildcats all nod at each other and head to the auditorium, with COACH BOLTON in curious pursuit.

INT. EAST HIGH - AUDITORIUM

**SHARPAY & RYAN**

*Yeah we're gonna  
Bop bop bop, bop to the top  
Wipe away your inhibitions  
Stump stump stump, do the rump  
And strut your stuff  
Bop bop bop, straight to the top  
We're going for the glory*

*We'll keep stepping up and we just won't stop  
Till we reach the top  
Bop to the top*

They end atop a glittering golden ladder, panting and self-confident. MS. DARBUS bursts into enthusiastic applause; the rest of the gathered students applaud politely. They take a bow

**SHARPAY**

(to a member of the audience)

Oh, hi! Call me.

RYAN takes off his fedora and throws it into the audience. MS. DARBUS walks onto the stage flanked by her assistant and KELSI.

**MS. DARBUS**

Do you see why we love the theater, people? Well done. Ah, next-Helen Bolton, Gabriella Montez.

There's silence.

**MS. DARBUS**

Helen? Gabriella?

**KELSI**

(frantically)

They'll be here.

**MS. DARBUS**

The theater, as I have often pointed out, waits for no one. I'm sorry.

KELSI's face crumples, and she runs off the stage.

**MS. DARBUS**

Well, we are done here. Congratulations to all. The cast list will be posted-

The doors bang open. TROY and GABRIELLA come barreling down each aisle.

**TROY**

Wait! Ms. Darbus, wait! We're ready, we can sing!

**MS. DARBUS**

I called your names, twice.

**GABRIELLA**

(still running)

Ms. Darbus, please! Please!

**MS. DARBUS**

Rules are rules!

As the small audience gets up to leave, the rest of the school- the Wildcats, the decathlon team, and both sets of respective audiences- pours into the auditorium. TROY and GABRIELLA barely notice, desperate to perform, staring at MS. DARBUS.

**SHARPAY**

(giddy at the thought of performing in front of so many)  
We'll be happy to do it again for our fellow students, Ms.  
Darbus.

**MS. DARBUS**

(searching for an excuse)

I don't know what's going on here, but in any event, it's far  
too late and we have not got a pianist.

**RYAN**

Well, that's show biz.

**TROY**

We'll sing without a piano!

KELSI runs up behind TROY and grabs her hand.

**KELSI**

Oh, no, you won't. Pianist here, Ms. Darbus.

**SHARPAY**

You *really* don't wanna do that.

**KELSI**

(unafraid)

Oh, yes, I really do. Ready on stage.

SHARPAY's jaw drops. MS. DARBUS, swayed by KELSI's moxie, looks to SHARPAY.

**MS. DARBUS**

Now *that's* show biz.

SHARPAY, appalled, runs off stage. TROY hands GABRIELLA a microphone. The crowd settles into their seats, TROY nods to KELSI, who begins playing the intro to "Breaking Free". GABRIELLA, unaware, is staring blank-eyed at the crowd in front of her.

Her mouth opens, but she does not sing. The crowd doesn't react. TROY motions for KELSI to stop, and goes up to GABRIELLA.

**GABRIELLA**

I can't do it, Troy. I can't. Not with all those people staring at me.

GABRIELLA tries to walk away but TROY grabs her hand.

**TROY**

(softly)

Hey, hey. Look at me. Look at me, right at me. Right at me. No one else. It'll be like the first time we sang together.

Remember? Like kindergarten.

TROY once again motions for KELSI to start playing without looking away from GABRIELLA's face. This time the backdrop comes down as the piano plays.

**TROY**

*We're soaring, flying*

*There's not a star in heaven that we can't reach*

**GABRIELLA**

(softly)  
*If we're trying  
So we're breaking free*

She takes GABRIELLA's hand, and slowly begins to walk forward, addressing the crowd. GABRIELLA does not look away from her face.

**TROY**  
*We know the world can see us  
In a way that's different than who we are*

**GABRIELLA**  
*Creating space between us  
Till we're separate hearts.*

Their hands separate, real distance coming between them.

**BOTH**  
*But in faith it gives me strength,  
Strength to believe..*

TROY breaks into a passionate belt.

**TROY**  
*We're breaking free!*

**GABRIELLA**  
(more confident)  
*We're soaring, flying  
There's not a star in heaven that we can't reach*

**TROY**  
*If we're trying  
Yeah we're breaking free  
Oh we're breaking free*

TROY, close to KELSI, begins to dance, at ease in GABRIELLA's comfort.

**TROY**

*Can you feel it building?  
Like a wave the ocean just can't control*

She points to GABRIELLA, who has shed her labcoat and is now dancing on her own on the other side of the stage.

**GABRIELLA**

*Collected by a feeling  
Ooh in our very soul*

**BOTH**

*Rising till it lifts us up  
So everyone can see  
We're breaking free  
We're soaring, flying  
There's not a star in heaven that we can't reach  
If we're trying  
Yeah we're breaking free  
Oh we're breaking free*

The crowd is grooving, all laughing and smiling. CHAD stands up and begins to clap, leading others to do the same. TROY spins GABRIELLA under her arm, and GABRIELLA twirls away, laughing.

**GABRIELLA**

*Running*

**TROY**

*Climbing*

**BOTH**

*To get to the place  
To be all that we can be  
Now's the time  
And we're breaking free*

They both approach the piano, and KELSI, overcome with joy, kicks away the bench, plays standing and mouths the words along with them.

**TROY**



*More than hope, more than faith,  
This is true, this is fate,  
And together we see it coming.*

COACH BOLTON enters the auditorium to see TROY singing passionately to GABRIELLA and an adoring crowd. Stunned, overcome, he falls back against the wall.

**GABRIELLA**

*More than you, more than me  
Not a want but a need*

MS. MONTEZ, standing amongst the audience, is in tears watching her own daughter sing.

**BOTH**

*Both of us breaking free*

**GABRIELLA**

*Soaring*

**TROY**

*Flying*

**BOTH**

*There's not a star in heaven that we can't reach*

The entire audience is on their feet and dancing. Even MS. DARBUS throws away her clipboard to join the celebration.

**BOTH**

*If we're trying  
Yeah we're breaking free  
We're running, climbing to get to that place  
To be all that we can be  
Now's the time  
So we're breaking free*

TROY and GABRIELLA come back to one another. Once again, they become lost in each other's eyes. The audience around them fades away.

**BOTH**

*We know the world can see us  
In a way that's different than who we are*

The piano fades out. TROY and GABRIELLA, enveloped in their own world, take a moment to realize how loud the audience's cheering is. TAYLOR and CHAD in particular are shouting praise. Shyly, self-aware, TROY and GABRIELLA smile at the crowd before looking once again at one another.

COACH BOLTON, who arrived towards the end of the song smiles. KELSI takes a bow. TROY leans in and kisses GABRIELLA on the mouth. GABRIELLA's eyes go very wide, before she smiles and leans back into the kiss.

The crowd is silent. TROY and GABRIELLA part, once again unaware of the people around them, still looking in each other's eyes. Then the entire auditorium goes nuts. Bashfully, both girls smile at each other.

The backdrop raises behind them, and becomes...

INT. EAST HIGH - GYMNASIUM

... the championship game resumed. TROY steals the ball and heads down the field.

**Announcer**

And West High pushin' the ball. Fast break. Looking for an open man. Oh, but it's stolen by number 14 heading back the other way! #14 East High has the ball! Time is running down on the clock! Looking for an open man. Fake. Swing to the outside. Ball on the perimeter. Look for a man on the inside. Nice screen. Shot's up! And it's good! A 12-foot jump shot as time expires for the victory! East High has won the championship! Your East High Wildcats are champions! Congratulations, East High!

The Wildcats lose their minds. The audience are all loud as thunder, applauding and shouting.

**Crowd**

Troy! Troy! Troy!

The Wildcats bundle TROY in a huge team hug. In the background, COACH BOLTON receives the championship trophy.

**League Man**

Congratulations.

**COACH BOLTON**

Thanks.

{COACH BOLTON brings the trophy over to the Wildcats and hands it to TROY. The rest of the Wildcats lift her on their shoulders, where she holds the trophy over her head proudly.

**CHAD**

What team?

**All**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

What team?

**All**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

What team?

**All**

Wildcats!

**CHAD**

Wildcats!

**All**

Get your head in the game!

TROY is lowered back down to the ground, and into the arms of her father. They squeeze each other tight.

**COACH BOLTON**

I'm proud of you, Hell!

**TROY**

Aw, thanks, Dad!

MS. DARBUS approaches them from behind.

**MS. DARBUS**

Bravo!

**COACH BOLTON**

(reconciliatory)

Brava!

**MS. DARBUS**

(delighted)

Ah!

**Wildcat**

Hey, hey! Troy, you're the man!

**CHAD**

The WOMAN!

**TROY**

(to the Wildcat)

Thank you!

GABRIELLA, now in a red dress, runs up to TROY and hugs her from behind.

**GABRIELLA**

Congratulations, Wildcat!

TROY grabs her hands and spins her around.

**TROY**

What about your team?

**GABRIELLA**

We won too!

TROY breathes a sigh of relief and moves in to kiss GABRIELLA again, but CHAD interrupts, shoving a basketball between them.

**CHAD**

Yo! Team voted you the game ball, Captain!

**TROY**

(slightly miffed about losing her chance to kiss GABRIELLA)  
Yeah, thank you. Thanks a lot.

TROY walks off. TAYLOR runs towards GABRIELLA, and CHAD grabs her arms.

**CHAD**

So... you're going with me to the after-party, right?

**TAYLOR**

(weirded out)  
Like on a date?

**CHAD**

I've been trying to prove to Troy I can talk to girls.

**TAYLOR**

Well, congrats on talking to one. I'm not interested in being your- what's the term you basketball boys use? Rebound?

**CHAD**

(laughing)  
No, no. As friends.

TAYLOR stares, then laughs in embarrassment and hugs him.

Across the gym, SHARPAY crosses with RYAN towards GABRIELLA, who's giggling at CHAD and TAYLOR's exchange.

**SHARPAY**

Well, congratulations. I guess I'm going to be the understudy in case you can't make one of the shows, so... break a leg.

GABRIELLA doesn't understand, and looks threatened. SHARPAY giggles.

**SHARPAY**

In theater that means good luck.

They too share a laugh, and TROY crosses them with the game ball in hand to tap a lost-looking KELSI on the shoulder.

**TROY**

Composer, here's your game ball. You deserve it, playmaker.

KELSI jumps into her arms and gives her a huge hug before receiving the ball. Once she has it, doesn't quite know what to do with it. GABRIELLA comes up behind her and removes her hat, letting her hair down. She guides her hands and together they shoot the ball. Score!

("All in This Together")

**All**

*Together, together, together everyone  
Together, together, come on let's have some fun  
Together, we're there for each other every time  
Together, together, come on let's do this right*

**TROY**

*Here and now it's time for celebration  
I finally figured it out  
That all our dreams have no limitations  
That's what it's all about*

**GABRIELLA**

*Everyone is special in their own way  
We make each other strong  
We're not the same  
We're different in a good way  
Together's where we belong*

**All**

*We're all in this together  
Once we know  
That we are  
We're all stars  
And we see that  
We're all in this together  
And it shows  
When we stand  
Hand in hand  
Make our dreams come true  
Together, together, together everyone  
Together, together, come on let's have some fun  
Together, we're there for each other every time  
Together, together, come on let's do this right*

**RYAN**

*We're all here  
And speaking out with one voice  
We're going to rock the house  
The party's on now everybody make some noise  
Come on scream and shout*

**SHARPAY**

*We've arrived because we stuck together  
Champions one and all*

**All**

*We're all in this together  
Once we know  
That we are  
We're all stars  
And we see that  
We're all in this together  
And it shows  
When we stand  
Hand in hand  
Make our dreams come  
We're all in this together  
When we reach  
We can fly  
Know inside  
We can make it  
We're all in this together  
Once we see  
There's a chance  
That we have  
And we take it  
Wild cats sing along  
Yeah, you really got it goin' on  
Wild cats in the house*



*Everybody say it now  
Wild cats everywhere  
Wave your hands up in the air  
That's the way we do it  
Let's get to it  
Come on everyone!*

FADE OUT:

TO BLACK.

**THE END**