

# THE BELIEVERS

A musical tale of disillusionment

By Jessica Fogle

**The Believers** was first presented in Racine, WI, following a week in workshop with the Racine Youth Players. **The Believers** was fully produced by the Racine Youth Players as the RKP benefit show in Racine WI, before it was produced as an honors thesis project musical in Lawrence University's Black Box Theatre by the Lawrence University Theatre Department.

**Production NOTES:** The show is intended to feel low-budget and self-aware (of its theatricality and use of empty space). Set pieces required are a park bench, a few tables/chairs, a bed and/or window, and a giant tree (preferably designed to look cartoonish and 2-dimensional).

**THE CHARACTERS:**

- Jenn ..... a hopeful girl of 17
- Mom (Jean) ..... Jenn's outwardly calm mother
- Dad (John) ..... Jenn's neurotic father
- Kailey ..... Jenn's wise and domineering friend
- Lisa ..... Jenn's disillusioned and concerned friend
- Jeremy Jordan, James, Jeff, Jimmy, Jonathan ..... Jenn's significant others
- The Insignificant Others\*

Abbie, etc. (also plays Lone Scone-eater)

Adam, etc. (also plays Josh and Jay)

Cari, etc. (also plays Lone Paper-reader)

Chris, etc (also plays Justin and Lone Coffee-drinker)

\*all four also play the roles of Jenn's non-descript Inner World figures

TIME: late adolescence

PLACE: Jenn's world

**SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:**

ACT I:

Before the fall

ACT II:

After the fall

MUSICAL NUMBERS

**ACT I**

**I Can't Sleep** (p.4) ..... Jenn

**The Most Important Thing** (p.5) ..... Jenn, Adam, Abbie, Cari, Chris

**That's the Way to Be** (p. 16) ..... Kailey, Jenn, Lisa

**Someone** (p. 19) ..... Jenn

**Rudderless** (p. 22) ..... Mom, Dad

**My Philosophy**

    part one (p. 29) ..... Jeremy Jordan

    part two (p. 31) ..... Jeremy Jordan

    Jenn's reprise (p. 33) ..... Jenn

**Someone (reprise)** (p. 36) ..... Jenn

**Maybe So** (p. 38) ..... Jenn, her inner world

**Believe in Me** (p. 43) ..... James, Jenn, Jeff, Jimmy, Josh, Justin

**ACT II**

**Oh Manipulation!** (p. 48) ..... Lone Paper-reader, Lone Scone-eater  
Lone Coffee-drinker, Jenn

**Listen to Herself** (p. 56) ..... Mom, Dad

**The Girl Inside** (p. 62) ..... Jonathan, Jenn

**That's the Way to Be (reprise)** (p. 68) ..... Jenn's inner world

**Hope** (p. 71) ..... Jonathan

**I Can't Sleep (reprise)** (p. 74) ..... Jenn

**Believe in Me (finale)** (p. 79) ..... whole cast

# ACT I

## Scene 1 – Jenn’s bedroom

*After pre-curtain music, the curtain rises to reveal a hazy stage, with glowing stars behind a girl (JENN) sitting on a bed, center. SHE is facing the audience, staring out an imaginary window. With her is a sketchbook and a flashlight.*

### Song: I CAN’T SLEEP

JENN

I DON’T KNOW WHAT IT IS BUT I CAN’T SLEEP  
SOMETHING IN THE STARS SO I CAN’T SLEEP  
HAVE TO DO HAVE TO THINK ‘CAUSE I CAN’T SLEEP  
THIS TALKING IN MY HEAD WON’T LET ME SLEEP  
I HAVE DREAMS WIDE AWAKE, HOW COULD I SLEEP?  
THE STARS ARE WATCHING, I’M A STAR, SO I CAN’T SLEEP.

*Spoken to underscoring*

Shh. Did you hear that? It’s a sign! If I’m going to be a professional artist in New York someday, the right branch of that tree was supposed to rustle. And did you see that? It was exactly when I looked at it again. I knew it. Ok...if a black car drives by, I’m going to find my soulmate soon. If a white car drives by, then it’ll be awhile yet.

*Expectant pause.*

Shoot. What’s red?

THE STARS KEEP ME DREAMING SO I CAN’T SLEEP  
THERE’S SO MUCH THERE TO DREAM THAT I CAN’T SLEEP  
I CAN’T WAIT TO LIVE SO I CAN’T SLEEP  
LIFE CAN’T WAIT FOR ME SO I CAN’T SLEEP.

**Scene 2 – Jenn’s school**

*Four INSIGNIFICANT OTHERS enter as stagehands and strike bed, set up three chairs in a widely-spaced row, facing SR, stars are replaced by an abrupt fluorescent white light, quick incidental music of “The Most Important Thing” begins. Four I.O.s take their places in “class” with audience (front left and front right – two boys, two girls). JENN sits at desk SL. SHE begins writing frantically to music, looking up, looking down, watching an imaginary teacher, raising hand and smiling/nodding. A bell rings, JENN gets up, collects her books, walks downstage to audience. During this, I.O.s cross each other and move to imagined lockers, pantomiming typical teen “passing time.” JENN is unaware of their presence.*

**Song: THE MOST IMPORTANT THING**

JENN

THE MOST IMPORTANT

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD BE

CHEMISTRY

I GOT AN “A”, HE HAD AN APPLICATION

HE SAID JENN, YOU SHOULD TAKE AN APPLICATION

BUT I’D NEVER THOUGHT MUCH OF CHEMISTRY BEFORE

WHAT A FOOL I’VE BEEN, TO HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED CHEMISTRY BEFORE.

THAT’S IT. I’VE GOT IT.

I’LL GO TO GRAD SCHOOL.

GENERAL SCIENCE UNDERGRAD AND GRAD SCHOOL FOR

CHEMISTRY.

OH CHEMISTRY, YOU TOUCH A PART OF ME

A MOLECULAR PART OF ME I NEVER KNEW.

OH CHEMISTRY, YOU AND ME WILL GO FAR, YOU'LL SEE.

YOU MAY WELL BE MY DREAM COME TRUE.

*A bell rings, JENN scurries to the CS desk, other students cross to opposite "classrooms". JENN mimes a flute, writes in score, "plays" along with quick trilly notes in underscoring. Another bell. JENN packs up flute. I.O's cross to lockers and mime talk. JENN walks downstage and sings.*

JENN

THE MOST IMPORTANT

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD BE

BAND!

THIRD PERIOD – BAND CLASS!

I MADE FIRST CHAIR

I DIDN'T HAVE TO CHALLENGE

HE JUST PUT ME THERE – HE SAID, JENN YOU'RE GETTING REALLY GOOD.

BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT I'D NEVER THOUGHT MUCH OF BAND BEFORE

WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN TO HAVE NEVER THOUGHT OF BAND BEFORE!

I'LL PLAY THE FLUTE IN EVERY SYMPHONY, A NEW YORK SYMPHONY

AND THEY WILL LOVE ME

I'LL BE ONE OF THE FEW WHO, WHEN SHE'S NEW, IS WELL-KNOWN AND RICH AND RESPECTED.  
I'LL WIN AN AWARD.

OH BAND, YOU TOUCH A PART OF ME

A MUSICAL PART OF ME I NEVER KNEW

OH BAND, YOU AND ME WILL GO FAR, YOU'LL SEE

YOU MAY WELL BE MY DREAM COME TRUE.

*A bell rings. JENN goes to third chair, DR, frantic writing again, hand raised, etc. I.O.s cross back to original seats in audience. Bored looks through class, watch checking. Bell rings. JENN stays after to talk with imaginary teacher. I.O's cross as usual, except with heightened glances as they pass each other.*

GIRL I.O.'s

THE MOST IMPORTANT

BOY I.O's

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

I.O's

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

I ALWAYS KNEW IT WAS

CARI

ADAM!

ADAM

ABBIE

CHRIS

CARI

ABBIE

CHRIS!

GIRL I.O's

OH LOOK, HE'S HERE

HOW'S MY MAKEUP, HOW'S MY HAIR?

BOY I.O's

SHE'S OVER THERE. SHOULD I GO AND SAY HELLO?

NO WAIT, SHE KNOWS. I THINK I SAW THEM LAUGHING.

GIRL I.O's

OH GOD, HE'S LOOKING. LET'S IGNORE THEM.

I.O's

THEY SAY IF YOU IGNORE THEM, THAT THEY'LL LIKE YOU MORE.

BUT I NEVER THOUGHT MUCH OF HER/HIM BEFORE.

HOW COULD I HAVE NEVER THOUGHT OF HER/HIM BEFORE.

OH \_\_\_\_\_ (say appropriate name), YOU TOUCH A PART OF ME

AN EMOTIONAL (girls) /PHYSICAL (guys) PART OF ME I NEVER KNEW

OH \_\_\_\_\_, YOU AND ME, WE'LL GO FAR YOU'LL SEE

YOU MAY WELL BE MY DREAM COME TRUE.

*Seductive I.O. music comes back, they finish flirting and exit right. JENN finally leaves class, with all her books in hand.*

JENN

THE MOST

THE MOST IMPORTANT

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

I ALWAYS KNEW IT WOULD BE

SPANISH!

MRS. V, SHE SAID THAT I SHOULD TUTOR

THAT I SHOULD REALLY TUTOR

THAT I AM REALLY GOOD!

BUT I'D NEVER THOUGHT MUCH OF SPANISH BEFORE

WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN, TO HAVE ONLY KNOWN ENGLISH TIL NOW

WHAT A WASTE OF ALL THESE YEARS – TO HAVE NEVER KNOWN SPANISH!

I'LL GO TO SPAIN, I'LL STUDY AT THE UNIVERSITY

I'LL LEARN THE LANGUAGE BETTER THAN MY OWN

I'LL TRANSLATE IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS ON THE PHONE

AND THEN I'LL TEACH, I'LL TEACH ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY  
AND MY STUDENTS WILL LOVE ME.

OH SPANISH – YOU TOUCH A PART OF ME.

A BILINGUAL PART OF ME I NEVER KNEW.

OH SPANISH – YOU AND ME WILL GO FAR, YOU'LL SEE.

YOU MAY WELL BE MY DREAM COME TRUE.

*JENN is approached by KAILEY and LISA, who enter stage left in jackets/backpacks – leaving for the day.*

KAILEY

So are you still coming this weekend?

JENN

Oh yes, of course!

KAILEY

Great! We're looking forward to it.

*KAILEY walks off, LISA lags behind.*

LISA

I'm really glad you're coming.

JENN

Thanks. Me too.

OH POPULARITY – YOU TOUCH A PART OF ME

A SELF-CONSCIOUS AND SOMEWHAT SUPERFICIAL PART OF ME I NEVER KNEW

OH POPULARITY – YOU AND ME MAY GO FAR, WE'LL SEE

YOU MAY WELL BE MY DREAM COME TRUE!

*Blackout, I.O.'s strike chairs and set kitchen in DSR corner.*

**Scene 3 – Jenn’s kitchen**

*Lights up full SR ...the kitchen is set. JENN is seated at table as MOM enters.*

MOM

Hi Jenn. How was school?

JENN

Mom. You won’t believe it.

MOM

What?

JENN

*JENN getting out sketchbook.*

It’s the best sketch I’ve ever done.

MOM

*MOM chuckles a little.*

Jenn. You said that last week.

JENN

No, but this one really is.

MOM

Jenn, you really liked that one you did of the sledding hill.

JENN

Oh, that one. That one was awful, Mom. I didn’t know anything about shading then.

MOM

Oh.

*JENN is feeling less excited, looks at it herself. DAD enters.*

DAD

Hey Jenn, how was school?

JENN

Fine.

*JENN puts sketchbook away.*

DAD

Anything interesting happen today?

JENN

Oh yeah, I forgot to tell you guys. I'm going to a party on Friday night.

DAD

What kind of party?

JENN

I don't know. Why?

DAD

Well, I just want to be sure that it's not going to be a bad environment...

JENN

I think it's just a sleepover, just girls. No big deal.

DAD

I don't know...

MOM

*Gives him a warning look.*

That sounds fun, Jenn. Do you need us to give you a ride?

JENN

Um, no. I'll be alright. Kailey said she'd come pick me up.

DAD

Who is this girl?

JENN

Dad, please. Her name is Kailey and she's 17 and I know her from gym class. And she doesn't do drugs. And it'll just be a couple people and there won't be any boys there. And if we go out, we won't be out past curfew. And she drives the speed limit and her parents will be home.

MOM

Now Jenn, don't pick on your father. He just loves you.

JENN

I know.

*Lights slowly fade. Kitchen disappears as JENN walks to midstage.*

#### **Scene 4 – Kailey’s room**

*Chair, bed, and beanbag (or comfy full-sized chair – for visibility) placed by I.O’s while Jenn is moving KAILEY and LISA enter from stage left in the haze (or the chaos of the scene change – it’s all the same effect). Lights up full. KAILEY preaching, LISA on beanbag with magazine.*

KAILEY

We’ve gotta find you a boyfriend. You can’t go running around all single. People will think you’re weird.

JENN

But I don’t really like any of the guys at Park.

KAILEY

That doesn’t matter. It’s not the guy, Jenn, it’s the experience. Trust me on this one.

*Upon hearing what they are talking about, LISA looks up from her magazine and discreetly rolls her eyes, choosing to keep herself out of the conversation.*

You just need to put yourself out there, so people don’t think you’re a prude. Once people see you’ll date just anyone, they’ll be more willing to try their luck with you.

JENN

Well to be honest, it’s not that I’m not looking. I swear. But I kind of have my heart set on someone.

KAILEY

Who?

JENN

Well, I don’t know, but I’ll know him if I see him.

KAILEY

Jenn, what are you doing?! People wait their whole lives for crap like that. Just cause you date a guy doesn’t mean you have to marry him, he doesn’t have to be “the one.” ...The more you date, the more you know what you’re looking for.

JENN

But I already know...

KAILEY

*Gives a condescending sigh...*

You don't even know that you don't know. See Jenn, that's just a dream. When you date someone, you learn about real things. Real faults and annoying crap. Haven't you ever dated anyone?

JENN

Well...not really. Unless you count sixth grade.

KAILEY

I wouldn't, but you can.

JENN

And I guess it was more like friends.

KAILEY

Well, run it by me, and I'll let you know.

JENN

It was my good friend Jonathan. We'd known each other all through elementary school. He was really nice, and still really popular. Not one of those guys that's so nice that none of the other guys like him. Well, we hung out a lot. Liked the same recess activities and things like that. Around fifth grade everyone started making fun of us for always being together; they said we were in love. So we finally decided we should "go together" since that's what everyone else seemed to think we should do. But of course that was weird. Talking was uncomfortable. Everyone was always watching us. And we had to pass notes and play truth or dare because that's what couples are supposed to do. And that was just awful. So eventually we just sort of back to the way we were. Everyone else said we broke up, so we sort of went with it, but it never really mattered to us either way.

*LISA had been completely engrossed for a change, takes on the role of passionately interested friend. Midway through, JENN has to redirect story to Lisa because of an uninterested KAILEY. JENN somewhat turning back to Kailey.*

So I guess that doesn't count, huh.

KAILEY

Jenn, what you need to do...

LISA

*Before KAILEY says all that (not interrupting, just having started talking at the same time)*

Where is he now?

JENN

He went to Prairie.

KAILEY

Ooh, that's rough. The girls there are really well-dressed. That'd be hard to compete with.

JENN

Ah, I ah, didn't say I still liked him, you just asked if I...

KAILEY

Oh good. 'Cause if you ask me, he sounds like the guy next door. No excitement there. And it sounds like you two didn't have any real chemistry, if you were better off as friends.

JENN

Well...

LISA

Was he cute?

JENN

Oh yes, very. Well, I always thought so. Well, I mean he's a little smurfy, but in a boyish-cute way. You know, soccer player good looks. Actually, I suppose according to typical standards, his face was a little funny. Kind of elf like, with a little nose and big eyes...but he had a big warm smile. That was the best thing about him. Anyway, that's old news. I don't really think about him anymore.

KAILEY

I'm sure he's with some flirty\* Prairie chick. They always go for the nice ones right away. So are you ready? It's time for you to *really* date someone. I have a list of possible candidates all made up for you. Oh shoot...hang on.

*KAILEY rummages for a list.*

Did you ever even kiss him?

JENN

Well, no...we were supposed to once but then...

KAILEY

Ok then. You never really dated. To have officially "dated" you had to have kissed. So you have to date someone now. No one hasn't dated anyone by 17.

*SHE finds the list.*

So here's the list. How about Mark?

JENN

I don't know. I don't think he's my type.

KAILEY

Why?

JENN

I don't know. He's just not.

KAILEY

Careful now, you don't want to be too picky right from the start. We'll come back to that one. How about Ryan?

JENN

Oh...he's way too tall.

KAILEY

How about Mike?

JENN

Which one?

KAILEY

The only date-able one.

JENN

Mike Fetler?

KAILEY

No. Don't you know Mike Mapleton?

JENN

Oh...yeah. I don't think I could bring myself to like him.

KAILEY

Jenn, you're missing the point. You don't have to *really* like these guys. You don't have to starry-eyes, head-over-heels, jumbled speech like them. You just have to...I mean, it's all a game. Take Lisa for instance. She used to think like you.

LISA

I had this idea of Mr. Right. Mr. Wonderful. But Kailey taught me that such dreams are stupid and futile.

KAILEY

Lisa I didn't say that, I just said you'd be waiting a long flippin time. And I *suggested* that you could date while you wait.

LISA

Well, I'm all good and disillusioned now. He's not out there. I'm sure of that.

KAILEY

Lisa please don't start. One bad experience and you're campaigning against men.

LISA

No Kailey, just against you.

KAILEY

Really? We're just having fun here. You don't have to get so...

LISA

Jenn, just make sure you don't do anything that YOU don't want to do.

JENN

*unsure*

Of course not.

KAILEY

See? We're all friends here. So like I was saying Jenn, it's just a game. You don't really want to fall head-over-heels in love anyway. Trust me, it's not fun. But dating, *that* has the potential to be really fun. You just have to follow a few rules, and your success is pretty much guaranteed.

*KAILEY gets out another list.*

JENN

What kinds of rules?

KAILEY

Well, you can't go around being honest all the time. For example, (*underscoring begins*) it's okay that *we* know that this guy isn't the man of your dreams, but you don't want to let *him* know that. These are documented and proven accurate. I'm just saving you a few years. Simple, painless one-step program.

**Song: THAT'S THE WAY TO BE**

KAILEY

IF I HOLD MY TONGUE, HE'LL HOLD THE DOOR FOR ME

IF I KEEP A SMILE, HE'LL KEEP ME COMPANY

IF I NEVER CRY, HE'LL NEVER LEAVE ME  
THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

IF I'M ALWAYS KIND, HE'LL ALWAYS TREAT ME RIGHT  
IF I TAKE HIS THOUGHTS FOR MINE, HE'LL TAKE ME OUT AT NIGHT  
IF I ASK NOTHING OF HIM, HE'LL ASK ME TO BE HIS WIFE  
SO THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

AND BENEATH THE SHOW, HE'S THE SAME OLD JOE AS THE JOE BEFORE  
BUT I WON'T LET ON IF HE'S A LITTLE LESS OR A LITTLE MORE.  
IT'S ALL THE SAME TO ME CAUSE...

IF HE'S NOT TOO BRIGHT, I'LL ACT LIKE I DON'T KNOW  
IF HE BORES ME TO TEARS I'LL NEVER LET IT SHOW  
IF HE'S ANY GUY AT ALL, I'LL TELL HIM I LOVE HIM SO  
CAUSE THAT'S THE WAY TO BE  
THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

*KAILEY gets JENN dancing, finally gets LISA away from her magazine. LISA sings along, but with a concerned expression. JENN gets into it.*

KAILEY, JENN, LISA

AND BENEATH THE SHOW, HE'S THE SAME OLD JOE AS THE JOE BEFORE  
BUT I WON'T LET ON IF HE'S A LITTLE LESS OR A LITTLE MORE.

KAILEY

IT'S ALL THE SAME TO ME

JENN

'CAUSE IF HE'S NOT TOO BRIGHT, I'LL ACT LIKE I DON'T KNOW

LISA

IF HE BORES ME TO TEARS I'LL NEVER LET IT SHOW

KAILEY

IF HE'S ANY GUY AT ALL, JUST TELL HIM YOU LOVE HIM SO  
SO...

KAILEY, JENN, LISA

THAT'S THE WAY TO BE

THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

<>

**Scene 5 – Jenn’s park**

JENN

Adam? I guess he’s nice enough. Maybe I am too picky. She’s probably right. I’ll never find “the one.” Unless I start *actively* looking. Trying people out. I think that’s gross, kissing someone I don’t really like, but she says it’s healthy. I’m sure she’s right. What do I know about that stuff? But I just can’t stand the thought of dating someone that I’m not completely and totally in love with. With deep blue eyes like the ocean, and a huge smile, one that makes me laugh every time I see him. What’s wrong with wanting that? Oh shoot.

*Looks at list again.*

Maybe Kris could be like that. I think he has blue eyes. No, it’s just not right. I’ve waited this long already.

**Song: SOMEONE**

JENN

I BELIEVE THAT THERE IS SOMEONE, SOMEONE LOOKING JUST FOR ME  
SOMEONE WHO, WHEN I CLOSE MY EYES, I ALWAYS SEE  
NOT A VISION OF PERFECTION, BUT FILLED WITH FAULTS LIKE ME  
SOMEONE TO BE MY BETTER HALF, AND HELP ME BETTER ME  
OH, HELP ME...

FOR I CAN ONLY BE THE ME THAT I WAS MEANT TO BE  
WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE JOY IT’D BRING TO NOT PRETEND TO BE  
ANY MORE OR ANY LESS THAN WHAT I FEEL INSIDE  
TO FEEL, WITH HIM, THAT I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE  
TO BE LOOKED AT THROUGH THE EYES OF SOMEONE SEEING ME  
AND WILL THAT SOMEONE WAIT FOR ME.

AND I DON’T KNOW WHERE HE IS, OR IF HE’LL EVER FIND ME  
BUT I’D LIKE TO THINK HE’S THERE JUST TO REMIND ME  
DON’T LOOK BEHIND ME...

FOR I CAN ONLY BE THE ME THAT I WAS MEANT TO BE  
WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE JOY IT’D BRING TO NOT PRETEND TO BE

ANY MORE OR ANY LESS THAN WHAT I FEEL INSIDE  
TO FEEL, WITH HIM, THAT I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE  
TO BE LOOKED AT THROUGH THE EYES OF SOMEONE SEEING ME  
AND WILL THAT SOMEONE WAIT FOR ME.

JENN

I can be strong. I don't need this list. I don't want to accidentally be involved in something wrong when Mr. Right rolls around. 'Cause then even if he's "the one," his only choice would be to consider me un-date-able and move on. We'd never even know that we had both just completely ruined our lives. So I have to wait. I can wait. Though I wouldn't mind if he showed up any day now.

*Enter JEREMY JORDAN, a backpacker type, stage right, examining the area, calculating in his head. He sees JENN at the tree and approaches her.*

JEREMY JORDAN

Excuse me, do you know where Lockwood Park is?

JENN

You're stepping on it.

JEREMY JORDAN

Oh! Well, I'll be danged! You'd think I could read a map by now. It's my pride. I always memorize them so I look like I know where I'm going. I travel a lot. In fact, I've been traveling my whole life. My dad's in the service. I've never lived anywhere longer than two years. Gives you a great sense of freedom. Some call it impermance, but I call it freedom. I mean, what's the point really anyway of establishing a "home sweet home?" It's just a convention. We think we need it because its always been that way. I've heard the nomads in Asia do just fine. They're probably much better people than Americans, far more hospitable. I'm heading there someday. Probably next year. I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name.

*During this speech, lights are changing to a focus on tree area (down everywhere else, brighter on Jeremy)*

JENN

It's Jenn.

JEREMY JORDAN

Well, nice to meet you Jenn. The name's Jeremy. Jeremy Jordan.

**Scene 6 – Jenn’s kitchen**

*Lights fade to haze, tree goes off, JEREMY stays, JENN gets up, looks at him and sighs, while kitchen is coming out. Spot down on JEREMY, up on kitchen. JENN crosses to kitchen, sits down (MOM and DAD are frozen when action begins)*

JENN

Why have we always lived here, Mom?

MOM

What do you mean Jenn?

JENN

Like, why haven’t we ever tried any place else? I mean, I’m nearly 18 years old, for God’s sake, and I’ve never been anywhere!

MOM

Well, Jenn, you’ve never asked before. Should we plan a vacation? Maybe Disney World?

JENN

No, not like that. I mean freedom. Like when you don’t know where you’ll be a year from now.

MOM

What ever put a crazy desire like that into your head. Jenn, that’s not freedom. That’s just being unstable.

JENN

What’s the big thing about stability anyway? I don’t see what all the fuss is about. If you ask me, it’s kind of boring.

DAD

*Who has been watching, trying patiently to contain himself*

What’s gotten into you Jenn! This is getting ridiculous. You’ve never been bored here before.

JENN

You don’t get it.

*JENN exits stage right.*

DAD

I don’t know what to do Jean.

MOM

Now settle down, John. It's not that bad.

DAD

Jean, it's been going on for three weeks. She's changed.

MOM

It's just a phase John. All teens go through this.

DAD

No that's not it, Jean. It's something else. Something about her.

MOM

And I'll bet you know exactly what it is?

**Song: RUDDERLESS**

DAD

WELL, DEAR, HAVE YOU NOTICED?

HAVE YOU NOTICED?

THAT THESE WORDS THAT SHE'S BEEN SAYING AREN'T HER OWN?

SHE'S FULL OF DREAMS NEGLECTED

SHE SEEMS TO HAVE REJECTED

WHAT SHE ONCE WOULD HAVE RESPECTED

AND INSTEAD, SHE'S BECOME SOME KIND OF CLONE!

MOM

OH DEAR, YOU KNOW HOW CHILDREN ARE.

SHE'S JUST TRYING TO FIND HER OWN DIRECTION.

SHE'S SEARCHING AND EXPLORING, TRYING NEW THOUGHTS ON FOR SIZE...

You don't really believe she was presenting thoughtful introspection?

DAD

BUT DON'T YOU SEE?

HOW CAN'T YOU SEE?

HOW IT'S SO MUCH MORE THAN THAT!

SHE'S A DREAMER, SHE BELIEVES IN EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE

And fate and good will, and peace to all, and justice, and honesty, ...

It's like she thinks it's her God-given right! Happiness to all? I mean, how can she not realize that that's not statistically possible?

MOM

Now dear, don't be a cynic.

DAD

(SEE movie...)

MOM

(ehem?)

DAD

So...

I'M AFRAID

YES I'M AFRAID

THAT THIS HUMBLE WORLD OF OURS COULD NEVER BE HER MELODRAMA

SHE'S LIVING IN A FANTASY THAT SOMEONE SOON WILL STEAL

AND I FEAR HER DISILLUSIONMENT WILL LEAD TO YEARS OF TRAUMA.

MOM

Years of it, really.

DAD

Think of it Jean...

SHE'S JUST A LITTLE GIRL THAT CHANGES THOUGHTS WITH EVERY NEW FRIEND

A LITTLE BOAT THAT CHANGES COURSE WITH EVERY NEW WIND

SO SIMPLY FRIGHTENING IT IS TO DISCOVER THIS

BUT I'M AFRAID SHE'S SIMPLY RUDDERLESS.

You're in denial.

I hope you know that.

Look Jean...

I'M CERTAINLY NOT SAYING THAT SHE'S NOT BRIGHT.

SHE'S JUST THE MOST TRUSTING GIRL I EVER SAW.

SO SHE BELIEVES THAT, LIKE HERSELF, THE WORLD IS HONEST TOO...

MOM

And I suppose you think that it's her "tragic flaw"?

DAD

Well, YES! Well...?

MOM

OK I SEE IT. I GUESS I SEE IT.

IT'S JUST IN A MOTHER'S NATURE TO WISH IT WASN'T SO.

DAD

CAN YOU SEE IT? THAT'S WHERE SHE GETS IT.

AND *SHE* IS SURELY OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW.

MOM

FOR SHE'S GOT SUCH AN OPTIMISTIC DISPOSITION

BUT THEN IT'S NEVER BEEN THREATENED WITH PAIN.

AND IF SHE'S TOO MUCH OF A DREAMER TO DEAL WITH THIS TRANSITION

DAD

SHE MAY JUST GO INSANE!!!

MOM

Don't mock me.

DAD

I'm not. (*beat, realizes*) I'm mocking myself.

MOM

Well, it's not funny!

DAD

I know. I know. You think I don't know that?

BOTH

SHE'S...JUST...A...

LITTLE GIRL THAT CHANGES THOUGHTS WITH EVERY NEW FRIEND

A LITTLE BOAT THAT CHANGES COURSE WITH EVERY NEW WIND

SO SIMPLY FRIGHTENING IT IS TO DISCOVER THIS

BUT I'M AFRAID SHE'S JUST A

LITTLE GIRL THAT CHANGES THOUGHTS WITH EVERY NEW FRIEND

A LITTLE BOAT THAT CHANGES COURSE WITH EVERY NEW WIND

SO SIMPLY FRIGHTENING IT IS TO DISCOVER THIS

BUT I'M AFRAID SHE'S JUST A

LITTLE BOAT THAT CHANGES THOUGHTS WITH EVERY NEW FRIEND

A LITTLE GIRL THAT CHANGES COURSE WITH EVERY NEW WIND

SO SIMPLY FRIGHTENING IT IS TO DISCOVER THIS

SO SIMPLY DREADFUL IT IS TO UNCOVER THIS

BUT THIS SHALL NOT BE A CAUSE TO LOVE HER LESS

THOUGH I'M AFRAID SHE'S SIMPLY

'FRAID SHE'S SIMPLY

'FRAID SHE'S SIMPLY

RUDDERLESS!

<>

**Scene 7 – Jenn’s School**

*Bell rings – lights face to haze in same way, spot moved to downstage center, KAILEY enters, JENN is pantomime fiddling with a locker.*

KAILEY

Jenn, I’ve been thinking, you’ve had that list for quite some time now...

JENN

I know but...

KAILEY

Don’t you think it’s about time you stopped stalling...

JENN

Kailey, I’m not, it’s just that...

KAILEY

Look, Jenn. I know you’re nervous. And I know you have this idea of some Mr. Right, but at this rate...

*LISA approaches*

LISA

Hey Jenn! Where’ve you been? I haven’t seen you all week!

JENN

Well, actually, I’m in a relationship.

KAILEY

Are you kidding me? Why didn’t you tell me, I wouldn’t have been...

LISA

With who? Do I know him?

JENN

Actually, no. He’s not from here. He’s in college.

KAILEY

No way. Where does he go?

JENN

Well, not to any one college in particular right now, he doesn't like to be tied down, if you know what I mean. And he travels so much that he just takes courses when he can.

LISA

Wow, Jenn. What's he like? Is he cute?

JENN

Oh, he's perfect. Perfect face, perfect eyes. And he knows everything. Sometimes I'm worried that he's way too smart for me. Like everything I've never thought about before, he understands. And it all just comes to him.

LISA

How did this happen?

JENN

Oh it was perfect. He was lost and I helped him. It was so wonderful. It was love at first sight.

KAILEY

Are you serious?

JENN

Yeah, I think he's the one.

KAILEY

Are you serious?

JENN

Yeah, we're really in love.

LISA

Aww, that's wonderful.

KAILEY

Have you kissed yet?

JENN

No.

KAILEY

Has he given you anything?

JENN

No.

KAILEY

Does he call you?

JENN

*Proud*

No, we meet at the park.

KAILEY

Did *he* say you two were in a relationship?

JENN

Well, no, but he comes every day, and ...

KAILEY

Jenn, I hate to be the one to break it to you but...

LISA

Kailey, lay off. Jenn, that's really great. I'm happy for you.

*Bell rings.*

**Scene 8 – park, kitchen, park, kitchen, etc.**

JEREMY

Hey kid. Did you just get out of school?

JENN

Yeah.

JEREMY

Don't you ever wonder about this whole educational system? I mean, I've been thinking about it a lot these days, and I just don't buy it. As a legitimate institution. We spend twelve years of our lives wasting possible time for individual thought and instead are taught to all think the same things. What do you think, I mean especially given the direction of capitalism? Just how many technical schools are they going to create? It's out of hand! We may as well go back to the caste system! ...I mean, not really of course, but you know what I mean.

JENN

Oh, yes. I agree!

JEREMY

And, you know, some people just really weren't cut out for school. Why do they waste tax dollars on these people when you can figure *that* out by about sixth grade. You know who they are. The unteachable. The ones who have no desire to learn. Not that there is anything wrong with that. In fact, we need people like that in the world. The problem isn't that these people exist, it's that we try to make them what they're not: students. These people shouldn't be pressured into considering their education. It's just perpetuating their own individual agony, if they're that aware of themselves, which they're probably not. So let them be done with school already. We need people to fill the mindless-activity oriented employment. I mean, besides the immigrants, but that's not really fair to them anyway, cause then you have smart people whose only incapacity may be that they don't know OUR language. How fair is that? So we give them mindless work, even if they were lawyers in Mexico. Even *I'd* be paid minimum wage in Mexico. See? It doesn't make sense! My point is, the smart ones would be better off thinking on their own, the dumb ones would be better off learning a skill like folding t-shirts. Who in the heck does the school system benefit? That's what I want to know.

**Song: MY PHILOSOPHY**

CALL ME YOUNG, CALL ME CRAZY

BUT I CAN'T CONTROL THESE THOUGHTS

THEY COME TO ME; I CAN'T CONCEAL MY INTELLECT.

I CAN'T REJECT IT, MUST PERFECT IT.

IT INFECTS ME...

AND THOUGH AT TIMES IT'S A BIT EXTREME...

IT'S MY PHILOSOPHY.

*JENN gets up, joins his arm, highly romanced by this point.*

I'M A FORWARD-THINKING REVOLUTIONARY

ONE OUNCE GENIUS

TWO PARTS VISIONARY

MY WORDS WILL PIQUE YOUR CURIOSITY.

I MAY BE NO SOPHOCLES

BUT IT'S MY PHILOSOPHY.

*JEREMY freezes. JENN crosses to kitchen, passing JEREMY and sighing. Sun is setting, and kitchen comes out and MOM and DAD enter. JENN is humming melody of his, to her accompaniment, whole stage taken on a haze as JENN crosses back and forth.*

*JENN sits at table dramatically, munching from a box of cereal.*

JENN

I don't think I'm going to go to school tomorrow.

DAD

Oh really.

JENN

I mean, what's the point anyway?

MOM

Jenn, you're not making sense.

JENN

I mean, couldn't I get more reading and thinking done at home on my own?

DAD

Since when are you into thinking as a separate entity?

MOM

What about your sketching dear?

JENN

Oh yeah, that too.

*MOM and DAD freeze. JENN crosses back to tree. JEREMY unfreezes.*

JEREMY

Hey kid. I was wondering, do you ever wonder about “God”? I mean, certainly you don’t still believe in God. Anyone who thinking about the world at all can’t exist comfortably in such an institution of self-deception. What religion were you though?

JENN

Well, I first...

JEREMY

Actually, that doesn’t even matter. It doesn’t matter what religion they shoved you into as a kid. All *that* does is slow the realization process. And that’s MUCH less painful to deal with when you’re young, or so I’m told. How long did it take you to finally learn to think for yourself? Because for me it took years of self-analysis and weekly therapy. Oh, don’t worry. I’m not ashamed of my therapy. I recommend it for anyone who wants to live a full life. Too many people waste too much time on B.S. nonsense without even thinking about why they do it. I mean if they can waste time on that and still be in the dark today, then I can certainly justify my hours of therapy since I’m way ahead of most in terms of consciousness. Am I rambling?

JENN

Oh, no.

JEREMY

Anyway, as far as church goes, I’m above such weak influences now. Do you know why they make you go every week? It’s just one big brainwashing operation. Like the army. Except the army’s daily. Smart move. Less chance for stray cats.

*HE laughs at his wit, both are truly engaged in JEREMY.*

I know what you’re thinking, “wow, he’s so different.” But don’t worry. I get that a lot. I’ve always been different. It’s part of the charm that is me, you know?

*JEREMY grows cockier with each line, and each moment of JENN’s growing adoration.*

**Song, part two: MY PHILOSOPHY**

I’M A FORWARD THINKING REVOLUTIONARY

ONE OUNCE GENIUS

TWO PARTS VISIONARY

MY WORDS WILL PIQUE YOUR CURIOSITY

INFECTING YOU WITH MY DISEASE

A NEW-AGE ARISTOPHANES

AN ENIGMATIC SOPHOCLES

I WILL BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES  
WITH MY PHILOSOPHY.

*JENN crosses to kitchen, enters humming JEREMY's tune.*

MOM

Hey there, Jenn.

*No response*

What's that song you're humming? New alternative hit?

JENN

What? Oh, hi Mom.

MOM

So how has everything been going?

JENN

Fine.

MOM

How's school?

JENN

Fine.

MOM

How's your sketching going? You haven't shown me a new one in awhile...

JENN

Why are you asking so many questions?

DAD

We never see you anymore Jenn. You're always busy.

JENN

Yeah, well... You know, I've been thinking a lot about God these days, and I don't remember having made the decision to like him.

MOM

Jenn!

JENN

No, I'm serious! You guys never asked me what *I* thought about it...

DAD

You were six years old.

JENN

...and I don't think that's fair! Have you two ever skipped church? You should try it; you'd learn to think for yourselves.

MOM

Jenn! I can't believe how terrible...really terrible you've been acting, I...I

*MOM fades out*

don't understand all this, you're just not being yourself, it really hurts me to watch you, etc.

DAD

Jenn...

*Uncomfortable, never had to reprimand before, MOM is sobbing quietly*

Go to your room.

JENN

No, I won't.

**Jenn's reprise: MY PHILOSOPHY**

CALL ME YOUNG, CALL ME CRAZY

BUT I CAN'T CONTROL THESE THOUGHTS

THEY COME TO ME, I CAN'T CONCEAL EACH VISION

I CANNOT HIDE THEM, MUST ABIDE THEM.

THEY'RE INSIDE ME.

AND THOUGH YOU GASP AND SAY "JENN, THAT'S A BIT EXTREME"

IT'S MY PHILOSOPHY.

*Underscoring continues...*

DAD

Jenn, I really don't understand where this is coming from. If we could just sit down and talk...

JENN

No, I don't want to sit down and talk about it. You guys don't get it. I don't want nice, I want truth. Nice is let's go to church, truth is there is no god. Nice is lets go to school, truth is school is a poorly designed institution that benefits no one. I'm sick of all this nice, I want to think for a change.

DAD

Jenn...

JENN

No don't "Jenn" me. You just want me to stay your sweet little girl. Why can't you respect that I'm not a little girl anymore? I don't have to listen to you guys. I'm my own person.

*JENN storms out, downstage to audience.*

LIKE A FORWARD THINKING REVOLUTIONARY

HE'S MY GENIUS

I'M HIS VISIONARY

I'LL WANT TO ROUSE YOUR CURIOSITY

I WANT TO BE LIKE SOPHOCLES

I WANT TO BRING YOU TO YOUR KNEES

THE NEXT BEST THING TO MAC AND CHEESE

TO DEVELOP THE CAPOSITY

TO SPEAK WITH SUCH VELOCITY

IS MY PHILOSOPHY.

Yeah.

*SHE walks stage left, goes to her tree alone, sitting, looking on edge, unhappy, expectant. A moment goes by...*

JENN

Where could he be? This is our time.

*Looks at watch looks at watch again stands up, paces a little, looks down the street...sits back down, confused, rejected. During these few moments, lights are fading from whole haze to concentrated spot on JENN and the tree.*

Something must have happened to him. I'll bet he's sick. He did sound like he was getting a cold.

*SHE sits a few seconds more, very on edge, lights to black. JENN enters kitchen from her last position, lights up on kitchen area.*

DAD

Good morning. I said good morning.

JENN

I heard you.

DAD

Look, you don't have to be short with me young lady. If we're going to live in this house together...

JENN

I'm just tired Dad.

DAD

What time did you go to bed last night?

JENN

Dad, please.

DAD

Well, if you wouldn't stay up so late...

JENN

Ahh, you don't get it. That's not it! That's not it at all.

*Kitchen off*

**Scene 9 – Jenn’s audience, then school.**

*JENN goes to audience with her backpack, full stage lights, sky is hazy, sunset.*

JENN

I got a postcard yesterday. Can you believe it? A postcard. He’s in California. He just left. Just like that. It doesn’t make any sense. Why would he leave? I thought he loved me. He didn’t even give me his address. And I have 8 letters sitting in my room for him, and now I’ll never get to tell him how much I love him. He just...left. People don’t do that. People at least say goodbye. Why did this happen to me?

*Bell rings, JENN moves downstage, school.*

LISA

Jenn, where are you going? Don’t you have band?

JENN

Yeah, but this is more important.

LISA

Jenn, you should really be careful how much you skip.

JENN

Please, I’ll handle it. I’ve just got a lot on my mind.

LISA

Jenn, he’s not worth all this.

JENN

I know.

*LISA exits, others cross and pass, bell rings.*

**Reprise: SOMEONE**

AS OTHERS SAW THIS CLEAR ILLUSION  
I CARRIED ON IN MY CONFUSION UNTIL I’D CHANGED  
ARRANGED MY FRAME OF MIND TO FIND I WAS  
TRYING HARDER THAN I WAS LIVING  
PRETENDING MORE THAN I WAS GIVING  
TIL IT WAS PLAIN TO SEE

NO ONE WAS FOOLING ME

EXCEPT ME

FOR I CAN ONLY BE THE ME THAT I WAS MEANT TO BE

WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE JOY IT'D BRING

*"Three Months Later" sign is carried across the stage by Cari.*

TO NOT PRETEND TO BE ANY MORE OR ANY LESS THAN WHAT I FEEL INSIDE

TO BE MYSELF, TO HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE...

*Spoken to underscoring...*

I'm glad I figured all of this out now. It's almost a good thing that all this happened with Jeremy. It must have all happened for a reason. At the very least, I learned a lot about life. And really, now that I think about it, he wasn't "the one" at all.

*Bell rings, ABBIE and CARI walk to downstage left. Miming opening lockers.*

ABBIE

Can you believe how dumb she was? I mean, how naïve can you get?

CARI

Yeah really. Just because a guy talks to you doesn't mean you're his girlfriend. Did you know he was actually seeing Reina?

ABBIE

No way!

CARI

Yeah, I almost feel bad for the kid. She just doesn't get it.

*ADAM and CHRIS enter, opposite side and cross.*

CHRIS

It's not that she's bad looking. She's cute in fact. But I could never ask her out. I mean, what the heck is she looking for anyway? I don't do afterschool treeside relationships.

ADAM

Yeah, that's what I'm sayin. I think she's actually pretty hot, but man, how totally clueless. It'd be like dating a ten year old.

ABBIE

I've heard she talks to herself. Some little alternate reality fantasy world. She's gotta wake up, you know.

ADAM

Yeah, she doesn't know jack about the real world.

CARI

*Turns to the guys, speaking through JENN*

What do you know about the real world?

ADAM

Shoot girl, you know I know what's up.

*GIRLS dis the guys, walk off. BOYS do macho act, cross the other way.*

JENN

.Why is everyone against me?! \*I'm fine! I'll find the one. Really

*I.O. crosses stage with sign that reads "THREE MORE MONTHS LATER."*

JENN

.Okay – Steve really DID seem like the one. How was I supposed to know he'd be so cruel after the puppy love phase ended?

**Song: MAYBE SO**

JENN

I FEEL LIKE A CHILD IN THIS WORLD

HOW MANY SOULS ARE STILL OPTIMISTIC AT MY AGE

I FEEL SO NAÏVE IN THIS CYNICAL WORLD

THOUGH I THINK I UNDERSTAND THINGS, I HEAR OTHERS SAY...

SO YOUNG

SO FOOLISH

SO UNSUSPECTING

SO CARELESS

SO CHILDISH  
SO NAÏVE  
SO WISTFUL  
POOR CHILD  
A CAREFREE DREAMER  
SO LOST IN HER FANTASY

MAYBE SO, MAYBE SO  
MAYBE I WAS ONCE AND SO  
NOW THAT I'M OLDER, NOW THAT I'M WISER  
I KNOW, I UNDERSTAND  
EVEN THOUGH I KNOW I'VE LEARNED  
AND STILL, IT MAY BE SO.

*I.Os enter as part of JENN's inner world...*

I.O.s

SO YOUNG  
SO FOOLISH  
SO UNSUSPECTING  
SO CARELESS  
SO CHILDISH  
SO NAÏVE  
SO WISTFUL  
POOR CHILD  
A CAREFREE DREAMER  
SO LOST IN HER FANTASY

*JENN begins singing to them and the audience, trying to convince them, I.Os don't listen, make "Yeah, whatever" gestures and exit.*

JENN

MAYBE SO

MAYBE SO

MAYBE I WAS ONCE ALTHOUGH

NOW THAT I'M OLDER, NOW THAT I'M WISER

I KNOW I UNDERSTAND

EVEN THOUGH NO ONE KNOWS I KNOW - I UNDERSTAND NOW!

BUT STILL, IT MAY BE SO.

*Interlude – dance, confusion ...MOM and DAD enter, shaking their heads, looking unaffectionately disappointed, KAILEY and LISA enter and both are laughing coldly at her, then the I.O.s re-enter, doing the same. JENN can't face these people, they laugh and point, swirling, very dream-like, and finally JEREMY enters shaking his head. All join in laughing at her/pitying her, and then sing in unison.*

INNER WORLD

SO YOUNG

SO FOOLISH

SO UNSUSPECTING

SO CARELESS

SO CHILDISH

SO NAÏVE

SO WISTFUL

POOR CHILD

A CAREFREE DREAMER

SO LOST IN HER FANTASY

JENN vs INNER WORLD

MAYBE SO

SHE'S ALWAYS DRIFTING

MAYBE SO

SHE'S ALWAYS DREAMING

MAYBE I WAS ONCE

ALWAYS BELIEVING

AND SO

HE'S NEVER LEAVING

NOW THAT I'M OLDER, NOW THAT I'M WISER

SHE'S SO CAREFREE UNTIL HE KNOCKED HER DOWN

I KNOW, I UNDERSTAND

IT KILLED HER SPIRIT, BUT SHE WON'T HEAR IT

EVEN THOUGH

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE SCREAMING LOUD AND CLEAR

NO ONE KNOWS I KNOW - I GET IT NOW!

WHAT CAN WE DO TO HELP YOU DEAR?

BUT STILL, IT ...um ...it is nice to look on the bright side of things...I mean, you have to have faith in people, right? I mean, you don't want to be too cynical right? Right? Fine. It MAY BE SO!

*Inner world throws hands in air, exasperated, giving up. Bell rings. People fade away from her dream, leaving her alone in a daze. She stays frozen, looking off straight above audience. LISA approaches her.*

LISA

Hey Jenn. Are you feeling okay?

JENN

What? Oh yeah. I was just thinking.

LISA

Are you heading home? I'll walk with you.

JENN

No, I have to go to 8<sup>th</sup> period.

LISA

That's what I thought. Jenn, school just got out. Are you sure you're feeling okay?

JENN

Yeah, I'm sure.

LISA

Do you want to go get something from Mitch's with me?

JENN

Yeah, that'd be great.

*As LISA and JENN exit stage right, the tree is coming down.*

**Scene 10 – Jenn's park**

*Five seconds, park scene is brought out by gossiping I.Os then JENN enters alone, with her sketchbook, and sits on the bench.*

JENN

Well, the past is behind me now. And thank God. Kailey designed a program for me to get me through this time of inner turmoil. So that's why I've been gone the past few afternoons. I'll give you a run-down of my progress. Basically, there is no "the one." It's not even possible. For now, until I'm better, I have to assume all men are out to hurt me, and treat them with the same reserve I'd treat a snake. I just have to read this list to myself every half-hour. 1. Women are everything, men are not. 2. I am everything to me. No one else can be everything to me. 3. I like lots of things, not just boys. I can never like just boys. 4. I am always free to make my own decisions. 5. There is nothing wrong with saying no. 6. Friends are always better than boys, friends will not lead you astray. Kailey knows so much, sometimes I wish I were her. I didn't think to ask, but I wonder if my Dad counts. Oh well, I'll ask at our next session. Just remind me next time: no boy is ever worth all I went through. Ever. I think I'll do an abstract sketch about it.

*Enter JAMES stage right, leather jacket, sunglasses.*

JAMES

Hey there.

JENN

*Barely looking up*

Hello.

JAMES

What are you working on?

JENN

Just a sketch.

JAMES

Can I see it?

JENN

I don't know. It's not done.

JAMES

Oh, okay. What's your name?

JENN

*Not looking up*

Jenn.

JAMES

Listen Jenn. I'll get straight to the point.

**Song: BELIEVE IN ME**

I'VE ONLY SEEN YOU FROM AFAR

BUT I THINK THE WORLD OF YOU.

*This sparks her attention*

YOU KNOW ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW OF ME

I KNOW ALL I'D CARE TO KNOW OF YOU

SO COME WITH ME AND BE MY GIRL, I'LL KEEP YOU LOVED AND SAFE.

*SHE tries to ignore him, but falls heavy in adoration.*

AND I'LL EVEN TAKE YOU OUT EACH NIGHT

(IF IT HELPS ME GET MY WAY)

*THEY embrace, during this, HE twirls her and they smile lovingly.*

BELIEVE IN ME – HIDE WITHIN MY SHADOW

BELIEVE IN ME – I'LL NEVER LET YOU FALL

THE WORLD WILL TURN AROUND YOU, BUT I WILL NEVER LEAVE

BELIEVE IN ME – THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR AT ALL.

*THEY kiss, he turns away.*

JAMES

You know, Jenn. This isn't working out. It just doesn't feel right.

*JAMES exits.*

JENN

OH WOE IS ME – HE WAS ALL I HAD IN LIFE

OH WOE IS ME – I FEEL SO ALL ALONE

THERE’S NOTHING LEFT BUT SORROW

WILL SOMEONE SHOOT ME PLEASE

OH WOE IS ME – I’LL NEVER LOVE AGAIN.

*Enter JEFF, stage right, sweater vest, button down, preppy.*

JEFF

POOR DEAR, YOU SEEM SO TROUBLED.

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU’VE BEEN HURT.

COME TELL ME ALL YOUR BROKEN DREAMS, I’LL HANG ON EVERY WORD.

I’M DEPENDABLE AS ONE CAN BE.

I’M STABLE AS THE FARMER TED

AND I’LL HOLD YOU IN MY ARMS EACH NIGHT

(IF YOU’LL COME WITH ME TO...)

BELIEVE IN ME – HIDE WITHIN MY SHADOW

BELIEVE IN ME – I’LL NEVER LET YOU FALL

THE WORLD WILL TURN AROUND YOU, BUT I WILL NEVER LEAVE

BELIEVE IN ME – THERE’S NOTHING TO FEAR AT ALL.

*JEFF holds her, they enjoy a prolonged gaze, then HE looks away.*

You know Jenn. I don’t feel like this relationship is two-sided. I feel like the one putting all the effort in, and I can’t take it anymore.

*JEFF exits.*

JENN

OH WOE IS ME – I HAVE NEVER FELT SO LOW

OH WOE IS ME – LAST TIME WAS CAKE TO THIS

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I'D HAD THE WORST, YOU STRIKE ANOTHER BLOW

OH WOE IS ME – HOW MANY MORE TO GO?

*JENN is in mourning, new guy enters – JIMMY – she instantly resumes girlfriend mode, playful dance music begins, JOSH and JUSTIN enter, each dancing with her in turn, spinning her around until it gets faster and faster, amidst the sung lines.*

JIMMY

I've only seen you from afar

JOSH

I've only just seen you too

JUSTIN

Me too

JIMMY

But I think the world of you.

JOSH

Me too

JUSTIN

Do you?

JENN

*Dizzy*

I do. Do you?

BOYS

We do!

*Dance continues...faster, faster.*

JIMMY

I've changed my mind.

*JIMMY exits.*

JENN

The death of me.

JOSH

I've changed mine too.

*JOSH exits.*

JENN

I'm fainting, see?

JUSTIN

Let's stop this game.

*JUSTIN exits.*

JENN

You're killing me.

*Alone on stage, messy music, spot on JENN as she crumples to the floor.*

I'm nothing.

I'm nothing.

Nothing...

END ACT I

# ACT II

## Scene 1 – the coffeeshop

*Scene opens in coffeeshop. JENN is sitting at a table alone, stage left, dressed in all black. TWO I.O.s both alone, are also dressed in lots of black (beatnik, berets, etc) but not as much as Jenn. As much as one can stand out in black, JENN should. They all look “mellow.” The look of the hardened, or contemplative, or the depressed, cynic. JENN is drawing in sketchbook, breaks pencil.*

JENN

Uh! That’s just my luck.

*No one looks up. JENN looks around the room. SHE gets up, goes up to girl at table closest to her.*

Do you have a pencil by any chance?

LONE SCONE-EATER

*Shakes her head, sadly, far too personally*

No. I’m sorry.

JENN

That’s ok.

*Mumbled, as she walks to next table*

Figures.

*JENN walks to boy w/ coffee and journal on stage right.*

Excuse me.

LONE COFFEE-DRINKER

*Calmly*

Uh, just a sec.

*Begins to write frantically to try to get his thoughts down as he was having them, clearly he has lost them, mumbles something like “crap”, frustrated, huffs a little then finally looks up.*

*Calmly.*

Yes?

JENN

I’m sorry. I was just wondering if you by any chance had another pencil?

LONE COFFEE-DRINKER

Oh. No. I don't.

JENN

Okay. Well, thanks anyway.

*JENN walks back to her seat. Mumbling to self.*

*A young woman, the LONE PAPER-READER, walks into the coffeeshop and goes to the imagined counter, stage right, looks at menu overhead. Everyone glances a little but no big friendly hellos or signs of recognition.*

LONE PAPER-READER

Um, yeah. I'll take a double mocha. Do you have skim milk? Great. Thanks.

*Sits at bar stool. Talking to offstage.*

Yeah. He finally left me. What's that? Oh no, it's a good thing. He just didn't get it. I would tell him he was full of it, and he wouldn't listen. He'd swear he loved me, but then he'd treat me like a payless shoe. Still I could never leave. He'd always say the right thing, just as I was about to. I was sucked in. It was like I couldn't think I was so caught up in his game.

**Song: OH MANIPULATION!**

LONE PAPER-READER

OH MANIPULATION! HOW YOU TORMENT ME.

I CANNOT TELL YOU'RE PLAYING TIL YOUR GAMES REVEAL THEMSELVES TO ME.

LONE COFFEE-DRINKER

OH MANIPULATION! WHEN ON MY SIDE YOU'RE SUCH A FRIEND.

BUT WHEN I MEET YOU FROM BEHIND, IT'S A BITTER DIRTY END.

LONE SCONE-EATER

OH MANIPULATION! MAYBE WE COULD END THIS DUEL.

I'LL STOP USING YOU, IF YOU'LL STOP PLAYING ME THE FOOL.

JENN

OH MANIPULATION! NO MATTER HOW I TRY –

THE MOMENT LIFE SEEMS REAL TO ME, I FIND YOU BY MY SIDE.

COFFEESHOP QUARTET (ALL FOUR)

OH MANIPULATION! THE GAMES THAT WE ALL PLAY

TO USE THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE GOT, TO WIN THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE NOT

TO TWIST THE TRUTH, TO BEND THE LIGHT, REFRACTING ALL IN VIEW.

OH MANIPULATION! I AM SUCH A SLAVE TO YOU.

*Interlude – the manipulation waltz – JENN and the LONE COFFEE-DRINKER get together, dance, break up, HE is crushed, this repeats with this LONE PAPER-READER, the seductive one, who also crushes him, and finally he is consoled by the LONE SCONE-EATER, who picks him up but then drops him again. By the end of the dance, LONE COFFEE-DRINKER is crushed and they are each alone in their original places as he looks to them, they each reject him with their gestures in turn while singing.*

THREE GIRLS

OH MANIPULATION! THE GAMES THAT WE ALL PLAY

TO USE THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE GOT, TO WIN THE THINGS THAT WE HAVE NOT

TO TWIST THE TRUTH, TO BEND THE LIGHT, REFRACTING ALL IN VIEW.

OH MANIPULATION! I AM SUCH A SLAVE TO YOU.

*LONE COFFEE-DRINKER plops in his seat, crushed, then all four resume as if nothing happened.*

JENN

*Looks at sketch, looks for pencil.*

Great.

*Enter JAY, nice enough, normal guy. He goes to the counter and talks to the imaginary attendant.*

JAY

Yeah, could I get a cup of coffee? Nothing fancy...what is that? No, nothing with the word “café” in it. Do you have some kind of a house blend? Really? What’s the closest to that? Um...I’ll go with the Columbian. Thanks. Do you have sugar packets? Ok, thanks.

*Goes to condiment counter, back to original counter.*

Do you have anything other than this raw stuff? No, just plain sugar. Oh okay. Well, do you have regular half-and-half by any chance? No that’s okay. Black is fine.

*Surveys scene, seeing no more tables, approaches JENN.*

Do you mind if I sit here?

JENN

Do I know you?

JAY

Well, there's no more tables and I thought...

JENN

You thought what?

JAY

I'm sorry. How about I buy you a cup of coffee?

JENN

Look, Look, I know this game and it isn't going to work. This would be the part where we talk and get to know each other when we really couldn't care less how many siblings the other has or what the other's childhood was like, and after we've done the whole "getting to know you" thing a few times, we'll go hang out at my place or yours, more likely yours for purposes of control, and if you're the smooth one, you'll prolong the emotional tension until it's almost unbearable and I break down in desperation, needing you like a baby, crying and pleading, my only source of comfort in this cruel hard world. Or the other way around. Either way, the point is that this only goes on until one of us gets bored and moves on to someone else. Don't take this personally, I'm just trying to open your eyes a little. I mean, if you really want that kind of life for yourself, by all means, go right ahead. But it sure as heck won't be with me.

JAY

I had no intentions of anything like what you just described and I really don't appreciate...

JENN

I'm not accusing you and I don't expect you to understand, it's just that I've figured things out. That's just how it goes. Whether you want it to or not... I'm just trying to help.

JAY

Whatever, you're a real drag.

*JAY exits, indignant.*

JENN

Good job Jenn. You were strong. Really strong. See? That's all it takes. Piece of cake. I should add that one to my list. Rejection number 8. He tried to take advantage of me and I kicked him down. A few more of these and, according to Kailey, my self-esteem will be back to normal. It's all about balance. I'm way off balance. Too many people have taken control out of my hands, and so if I take control at the expense of others, I will obtain control of myself and my life. I'm feeling better already.

*Watch alarm goes off*

Ooh. Time to read the list again.

*JENN starts reading and mumbling, reciting tidbits.*

*JONATHAN, a handsome innocent youthful happy boy, enters coffeeshop.*

*HE goes to counter, orders a Snapple or sports drink, surveys scene, approaches JENN.*

JONATHAN

Jenn?

JENN

Jonathan!? Um, hi!

JONATHAN

How've you been? I've never seen you here before.

JENN

Yeah. It's never really been my scene until recently.

*SHE instantly puts the list away, and other boy related things (closes sketchbook)*

JONATHAN

I used to come here a lot on my breaks from work. Have you tried their muffins?

JENN

No.

JONATHAN

So are you here with anyone?

JENN

No.

JONATHAN

Do you mind if I join you for a minute?

JENN

No, not at all.

JONATHAN

I see you're still doing a lot of sketching?

JENN

Well, sometimes.

JONATHAN

You used to be so funny about it, going to “your tree.” Do you remember when you let me come along that one time?

JENN

*Playfully, but not w/o inner turmoil*

Yeah, and you were a terrible distraction.

JONATHAN

Well, you know me. I never had any individual hobbies.

JENN

Are you still playing soccer?

JONATHAN

Yeah, actually, I’m team captain now.

JENN

Oh Jonathan, that’s so great.

JONATHAN

Well, what have you been up to these days? I can see you finally ditched the rainbowwear.

JENN

Knock it off. Yes, I outgrew that.

JONATHAN

That’s too bad, actually. I always admired your ability to get away with orange and blue together. You know what, I’m on my break right now, and Max gets mad when I’m gone too long.

JENN

Ok.

JONATHAN

But we should go get coffee sometime.

JENN

Ok.

JONATHAN

Great!

*While preparing to exit*

I'll call you. ...It was really nice seeing you again.

*JONATHAN walks off left.*

JENN

You too.

*JENN sits there in a daze for a few seconds, then takes out her list, tries to recite. Looks up, thinks, looks down. Reads, mumbles, looks up, thinks, shakes her head, reads, mumbles, etc...then looks up abruptly.*

Wait, what if he meant like a date. No. Shoot. Of all people, I could never...

*Fade to black, two spots come up, JONATHAN and JENN, pantomime phone call (downstage)*

JONATHAN

So what are you doing Friday night?

JENN

Well, I don't know, it depends.

JONATHAN

What do you mean?

JENN

I want to go but...well, what do you have in mind?

JONATHAN

You mean like what would we do? Well, I thought we'd just get coffee, but I don't really like coffee anyway, so if you'd rather...

JENN

See, this is all wrong. We can't. Of all people.

JONATHAN

Wait, what can't we do?

JENN

Um...

*Pause*

I'm sorry. I'm not making much sense, am I.

JENN (cont')

*Pause.*

Of course we can go get coffee.

JONATHAN

Are you sure? Cause I mean, if you're busy, I understand...

JENN

No that's not it. Really Jonathan, I'd love to get coffee. I've just been a little spacey lately. I think I'm coming down with something.

*Spots fade, JONATHAN walks off as kitchen comes out, JENN stays in front of kitchen.*

**Scene 2 – the kitchen**

*Lights slowly come up on kitchen area.*

*JENN is working frantically on a sketch. Crumples it, starts again.*

JENN

What's wrong with me?!? I can't do anything right anymore!

**Instrumental second reprise: SOMEONE**

*JENN is sketching, frustrated, looking somewhat hopeless*

Ahh! That's all wrong too!!

*MOM enters.*

MOM

Well, hello young lady. What are you up to?

JENN

*Not looking up*

This sketch is due tomorrow and it's not working.

MOM

Were you planning on making lunch?

JENN

No.

MOM

Well, we're about to. I'm just making tunafish sandwiches. Do you want one?

JENN

No, that's okay.

MOM

Are you sure?

JENN

Mom, please. You're distracting me. I have to get this done for tomorrow.

MOM

Sorry

*DAD enters*

DAD

Hey Jenn, what are you up to?

JENN

*JENN abruptly packs up sketchbook.*

Actually, I'm going out.

DAD

*Kindly*

Where are you going?

JENN

Please dad, don't start.

*JENN exits.*

DAD

I don't know Jean. I think she's suicidal.

MOM

Now John, don't start.

DAD

What do you want me to do Jean? I could never live with myself if I was one of those statistics who missed the obvious warning signs. You know the commercial. Maybe we should lock her in her room until she gets her head on straight.

MOM

Oh dear.

**Song: LISTEN TO HERSELF**

DAD

SHE MEETS A GUY AND SWEARS IT'S LOVE

RECITES HIS THOUGHTS AS HER OWN

HIS NAME COMES UP IN CONVERSATIONS

OF LIFE OR WHAT'S FOR DINNER

BUT THEN HE LEAVES OR SHE GETS BORED

AND NOW HIS NAME'S TABOO

AND HER THOUGHTS GO ALL WHICH WAY TIL SHE'S A BORN-AGAIN BEGINNER.

YOU'D THINK SHE'D LEARN

YOU'D THINK SHE'D LEARN

AND SHE SEEMS TO EVERY TIME

BUT ONE MORNING THEN SOON AFTER

ALONG HAS COME ANOTHER AND SHE'LL MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES AND DOESN'T MIND

I THINK SHE'S CRAZY

SHE MUST BE CRAZY

HOW SHE'S CAREFREE YET SO INTENSE

BUT WHAT I STILL CAN'T UNDERSTAND IS HOW SHE CAN BE SO BRIGHT BUT AT THE SAME TIME  
HAVE NO COMMON SENSE!

SHE SAYS SHE

DOESN'T NEED A PREACHER OR A COUNSELOR OR A DOCTOR OR A MOTHER OR A FATHER'S  
HELP TO GUIDE HER

SHE DOESN'T NEED ADVICE OR SUGGESTIONS

YOU CAN GIVE THEM BUT I PROMISE SHE WON'T LISTEN

NO SHE DOESN'T NEED A PREACHER OR A DOCTOR OR A COUNSELOR OR A MOTHER OR A  
FATHER'S HELP TO GUIDE HER

IT'D BE ALRIGHT THAT SHE WON'T LISTEN TO ANYONE ELSE

IF ONLY SHE'D JUST LISTEN TO HERSELF.

MOM

Now John, just settle down. It can't be that bad. I'm sure black is just the "in thing" right now.

*DAD storms off.*

*MOM, to audience.*

I'll bet you think I'm oblivious to all that's going on. On the contrary, I have noticed and I've tried to help. Just not when my husband's around. You know how it is. I have to be the stable one. As you can see, he tends to over-dramatize things a bit. No, I do see it...but parental control only extends so far.

I WISH SHE'D LEARN

I WISH SHE'D LEARN

AND SHE SEEMS TO EVERY TIME

BUT ONE MORNING THEN SOON AFTER

ALONG HAS COME ANOTHER AND SHE'LL MAKE THE SAME MISTAKES AND DOESN'T MIND.

SHE'S SO NAÏVE

SHE JUST CAN'T SEE

SHE'S FORGOTTEN HOW TO FOLLOW WHAT SHE BELIEVES

AND WHAT I WISH SHE'D UNDERSTAND IS THAT OTHERS WANT TO HELP HER SEE THAT

THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM.

BUT...

SHE SAYS SHE

DOESN'T NEED A PREACHER OR A COUNSELOR OR A DOCTOR OR A MOTHER OR A FATHER'S  
HELP TO GUIDE HER

SHE DOESN'T NEED ADVICE OR SUGGESTIONS

YOU CAN GIVE THEM BUT I PROMISE SHE WON'T LISTEN

NO SHE DOESN'T NEED A PREACHER OR A DOCTOR OR A COUNSELOR OR A MOTHER OR A  
FATHER'S HELP TO GUIDE HER

IT'D BE ALRIGHT THAT SHE WON'T LISTEN TO ANYONE ELSE

IF ONLY SHE'D JUST LISTEN TO HERSELF.

DAD

Hi dear.

MOM

Oh, hi.

DAD

Uh-huh.

MOM

Yeah.

*Tempo increases, and they do a goofy dance break*

*In half time...*

BOTH

IT'D BE ALRIGHT THAT SHE WON'T LISTEN TO ANYONE ELSE,  
IF ONLY SHE'D JUST LISTEN TO HERSELF.

*Fade to black, coffeeshop comes out (one small table, two chairs in center)*

**Scene 3 – the coffeeshop from a romantic perspective**

*JENN and JONATHAN are seated at the chairs as lights come up.*

JONATHAN

So if I'd had the guts, I would have told him to cram it. But you know me.

JENN

You could never say anything mean to anyone.

JONATHAN

Yeah, but people like me never get anywhere. It gets old, being the nice guy.

JENN

Don't say that. Don't ever change.

JONATHAN

Don't worry, I probably won't. God knows I've tried to toughen up a little. Everyone tells me I should. Especially Stephanie. She thinks someone is going to walk all over me someday.

JENN

How is Stephanie?

JONATHAN

Good I think. I never see her, now that she's in college.

JENN

I was always jealous of you, having a sister. Steph was always so cool.

JONATHAN

Yeah, she always liked you. I think secretly she'd have rather had a little sister. We never really had much in common.

JENN

Well yeah, but what are the chances of you having been into fashion design?

JONATHAN

I suppose. You always see the positive in everything, don't you?

JENN

*This triggers something, slow mood change to end of scene.*

Yeah, well...not really. I mean, not in all things.

JONATHAN

It's been so nice hanging out again.

JENN

Yeah.

JONATHAN

It's kind of like the old days.

JENN

Kind of.

JONATHAN

So what are you doing tomorrow night?

JENN

Actually, I'm busy.

JONATHAN

Oh, ok. Well how about Thursday?

JENN

Oh, yeah. I'm going out with Kailey.

JONATHAN

Oh. What about Saturday?

JENN

Saturday night?

JONATHAN

You have plans?

*He is growing a little indignant*

JENN

Well, Lisa told me to keep that night open.

*pause*

I think it's some sort of surprise. You know how that goes.

JONATHAN

Ok, well, next weekend sometime?

JENN

Actually, you know, I try not to make plans too far in advance.

*SHE is packing up, about to fake an appointment*

JONATHAN

Since when? I don't get this. Look, if you ever do want to see me, why don't you just give me a call.

*Gets up.*

JENN

Oh Jonathan, it's not that I don't want to see you, it's just that...

JONATHAN

*A little pissy.*

I know, you're really busy. Really, it's no big deal. I'm sure I'll see you around.

*Begins to leave*

Ok, I'm not going to waste a perfectly good cup of coffee over it.

*Tries to laugh it off. Both drink in silence. Finally...*

You know, Jenn. I just don't get it. Every time I think things are really getting good with you and I, you go and ...oh, never mind. Just forget it.

*This time, as JENN talks, we can tell HE can't hear her, his head is somewhat down.*

JENN

I know you don't understand Jonathan. But I don't want to hurt you. I could never tell you about why I've changed. Even if I told you, you wouldn't understand. I know that. But what if I'm wrong, I keep thinking. What if I'm supposed to chance it? Maybe you really do know me. No there's no way. It'd be just like all the other times. It's not worth all that. Why can't everything just make sense?

*THEY sing but can't hear each other. Dual soliloquies.*

THESE SILLY GAMES I PLAY –

WHAT A WASTE OF TIME.

BUT HE WOULD NEVER LIKE THE THINGS THAT I MUST HIDE.

HE'D FIND ME IMMATURE, TOO UNAWARE OF LIES.

NO HE WOULD NEVER WANT THE GIRL INSIDE.

JONATHAN

WHAT SILLY GAMES SHE PLAYS –

WHAT A WASTE OF TIME.

BUT I SEE SOMETHING THERE, SOMETHING SHE HIDES.

HAS SHE BEEN HURT BEFORE? IS IT JUST FOOLISH PRIDE?

IF SO I'D LOVE TO KNOW THE GIRL INSIDE.

JENN

BUT COULD IT BE THAT HE WAS MEANT TO SEE INSIDE?

JONATHAN

AND COULD IT BE THAT I'D ADMIRE THE THINGS SHE HIDES?

JONATHAN/JENN

WHAT SILLY GAMES SHE PLAYS

JUST PLAYING, I'M JUST WASTING TIME.

THIS TIME I KNOW THERE'S SOMETHING THERE –

THERE'S SO MUCH THERE

SOMETHING SHE HIDES

THAT I MUST HIDE.

HAS SHE BEEN HURT BEFORE

I WAS SO HURT BEFORE

IS IT JUST FOOLISH PRIDE?

IT'S NOT JUST FOOLISH PRIDE.

IF SO, I'D LOVE TO KNOW

NO, HE COULD NEVER WANT

THE GIRL INSIDE

THE GIRL INSIDE.

HAS SOMEONE MADE HER SCARED?

IT'S NOT JUST FOOLISH PRIDE.

OH HOW I'D LOVE TO LOVE

NO HE WOULD NEVER LOVE

THE GIRL INSIDE.

THE GIRL INSIDE.

JONATHAN

*BOTH look down at coffee, spoken*

Jenn, I think I'm going to go home. I'm not feeling too good. But you can give me a call sometime if you want.

JENN

Jonathan, please, don't be angry.

*HE leaves, stage left*

It's just that...

YOU'D SEE I'M SO UNSURE

AND SO AFRAID OF LIFE.

NO, I'LL NEVER LET HIM SEE

THE GIRL INSIDE.

*Fade to black on Jenn alone, but SHE doesn't move, everything moves around her. Coffeeshop table and Jonathan's chair disappear, Kailey's bed and beanbag come out.*

**Scene 4 - Kailey's Room**

*JENN repositions, still in chair, now part of room. KAILEY is sitting on the bed, LISA is on the beanbag.*

KAILEY

Ok, what was your answer Lisa?

LISA

I said C.

KAILEY

Jenn?

JENN

Umm, I don't know. A or C.

KAILEY

Well you can't pick both.

JENN

I can't decide.

KAILEY

Okay, whatever. Let me add these up.

*Adds up score to self*

Yep that's what I thought. Lisa, you rank under feminazi. According to this, you wouldn't date a guy if your life depended on it.

LISA

No thanks to you.

KAILEY

You seem to be finding every possible way to avoid that particular half of the human race. Your message: wake up, honey. You've gotta give in sometime. Ok, Jenn, yours is all screwed up. You got equal scores for hopeless romantic and SUPER feminazi. Which YM obviously didn't prepare for. Like I can't even read the average of the two scores cause that category claims you're normal. So here, I'll just read one first and then the other. You believe there is someone out there, someone perfect, waiting for you and that when you find him, the two of you will live happily ever after for the rest of your lives, amen. Message: you go girl. It's hard to find people who still believe in love these days. But be careful you don't set your expectations too high. He may be right under your nose. Ok, here's the other one: You are not into men, in fact you distrust them. You believe their motives are evil, and that all relationship will end up in failure, also involving deception and pain along the way. Message: get a grip or consider a sex change. Ok, now you guys do me.

LISA

Jenn, what's wrong you've been in quite a funk.

JENN

I don't know. I think it's just PMS.

LISA

If it has anything to do with that boy, Jenn, you've got to let it go. It's been weeks and you're always unhappy.

JENN

No, it's not him, it's me.

LISA

Jenn, really. I don't want to see you get hurt again.

JENN

No really, guys. This is different. I'm not with him, we're not dating at all.

KAILEY

*Unconcerned, as if having solved a detective story*

Then why are you so unhappy? You're in that same funk you were in back when Jeremy left.

JENN

Can we please stop talking about it?

LISA

Sorry Jenn.

KAILEY

Hey, why don't you try dating someone at school? That'd probably make you feel better.

JENN

Kailey, if I were YOU, that'd make me feel better. I think I'm going to go. I'm sorry.

*Bedroom moves off, KAILEY exits upstage, JENN heads downstage, deep contemplation or self-pity, LISA stays as scenery moves.*

**Scene 5 – the park**

*Park bench comes out, not the tree, hazy, night, stars. JENN goes to tree. LISA approaches.*

LISA

Jenn, I know she doesn't always say the rrrright things, but she has gooood intentions.

*JENN lauggghs a little.*

No, really. She just wants you to be happy too.

JENN

I know, Lisa. I just couldn't deal with it tonight. I shouldn't have even come over. I knew I'd be a drag. I just want so much for him to...never mind.

LISA

No, what?

JENN

It's just that I don't even know what I want anymore, and he's so....good. He's what I used to want. But now it feels off-balance. And I can't talk to him about it so I just end up treating him like crap or telling him I'm busy. And he doesn't know why I'm pushing him away but I know he won't put up with it much longer. I come off like I hate him but that's not it at all. I just don't know what else to do.

LISA

Did you try telling him any of this?

JENN

Sort of. But I just get jumbled up. It's all the stuff I don't really want him to know about me. I don't even want him to see that anyone could be like this.

LISA

He's that naïve, huh.

JENN

Yeah, he reminds me of how I used to be.

LISA

Well, he's going to be hurt by something someday.

JENN

I know. There's a part of me that wants to smack his eyes open with the truth. Life hurts buddy, but you've got to face it. But I can't. I should just move far away so he wouldn't have to see me anymore.

LISA

*Pause, observing with a smile.*

Jenn, it sounds like you really care about this guy.

JENN

I know, huh.

*Laughs giddily.*

But still I wish he would find someone else, someone nice who still believes in peace and love and goodness like him. Not someone all messed up like me.

LISA

For what it's worth, you're not really all that "messed up" in my opinion. I had a really long period of ugly thoughts, but I think underneath I'm still the same person.

JENN

I don't know Lisa.

*THEY sit comfortably together.*

LISA

I think I'm going to head home. Do you want to walk with me?

JENN

No, I think I'm going to stay here awhile. But thanks.

LISA

Stop by on your way home if you still want to talk. Just knock on my window.

JENN

Ok, thanks Lisa.

*JENN slips into her thoughts and the I.O.s enter in some dreamlike way for the audience to see, as if we are watching her conscience. JENN is looking downish while they sing.*

**Reprise: THAT'S THE WAY TO BE**

I.O's

IF YOU SHOW YOUR HEART, THEN YOU'RE FREE AT LAST

IF YOU SPEAK YOUR THOUGHTS, THEN THE WORDS COME FAST.

IF YOUR HEART IS FULL, YOU CAN FORGET THE PAST  
THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

IF YOU TRUST HIS HEART, YOU CAN TRUST YOURS TOO  
IF YOU STILL BELIEVE, WHICH WE KNOW YOU DO,  
YOU CAN LOOK INSIDE AND SEE THAT YOU'RE STILL YOU AND KNOW  
THAT'S THE WAY TO BE.

GIRLS

CAUSE BENEATH THE BLACK YOU'RE THE SAME EXACT GIRL YOU WERE BEFORE

BOYS

AND THE ACT GETS FLAT WHEN YOU CAN'T GIVE LESS AND YOU CAN'T GIVE MORE

I.O's

'CAUSE IF IT'S ALL AN ACT, THEN HIS LOVE IS TOO  
HE WILL LOVE THE ACT, BUT HE WON'T LOVE YOU.  
WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, HE'LL PROBABLY SHOVE YOU  
IS THAT THE WAY TO BE?  
IS THAT THE WAY TO BE?

CHRIS

HEY WHERE THE HECK'S THE TREE?

*ADAM runs off stage, grabs tree, resumes place in song.*

I.O.s

HOW COULD THAT BE THE WAY TO BE?

*I.O.s drift off at end of song. JONATHAN enters.*

JONATHAN

I was hoping I'd find you here.

JENN

*This snaps her from her thoughts*

Oh...you scared me.

JONATHAN

It's been so long since I've been here. Was it when we were dating?

JENN

I don't remember.

JONATHAN

I remember. Fifth grade. I wanted to kiss you, but I didn't 'cause I wanted to be sure we were always friends.

*JENN doesn't respond to this.*

I almost called you once I was at Prairie, but then I heard you had a boyfriend. Some new guy in town.

JENN

You heard about that?

JONATHAN

Yeah. I didn't really know what to think. He had a pretty bad rep at Prairie.

JENN

Wait. He went to Prairie.

JONATHAN

Yeah.

JENN

Oh.

JONATHAN

He was seeing two different girls at my school. He was pretty sly about it. Told them both he was in college.

JENN

Oh.

JONATHAN

Anyway, I'm glad he left. You're too good for him.

*Pause, laughs awkwardly*

You've always been one of my favorite people.

JENN

Why are you telling me all of this?

JONATHAN

*Hurt*

I don't know. Maybe I thought you felt the same way. Maybe I don't know anything. I'd just hoped that maybe you and I, that we could, be something. Like the old days.

JENN

Jonathan, I'm not the same as I used to be. You keep talking to me like I am. Why can't you try to get to know me as I am now?

JONATHAN

I'm trying to, but you won't let me.

JENN

No, you're not trying. You want me to dress like I used to and show you my sketches at recess. You're stuck there and I've changed. You just keep reminding me of everything that I'm not anymore. Don't you see that? I've changed, for better or for worse. And you just can't accept that.

JONATHAN

Jenn, you're wrong. You haven't changed. If you have, it's in some stupid ways that don't matter. I know you.

JENN

No, you're wrong. This is me. Take it or leave it.

JONATHAN

Jenn, I don't know why you're being so cold. If you'd just stop and really think about what you're saying...

JENN

Please leave. Please?

*JONATHAN walks away, and a streetlamp comes down for him in the corner. Lights fade down on Jenn and her tree. JENN slips off, SR, a few lines into the song in the darkness.*

**Song: HOPE**

JONATHAN

I GUESS SHE WASN'T WHO I THOUGHT SHE WAS.

I THOUGHT I SAW A PEARL AND I BELIEVED BENEATH THE SHELTERING COCOON SHE WORE  
LIVED A GIRL I COULD BELIEVE IN.

BUT FROM THIS GIRL I'VE LEARNED THE COLDNESS OF THE WORLD.

I'VE LEARNED OF FAITH AND WHERE IT LEADS.  
I SAT AND WATCHED MY FATE AS IT UNFOLDED.  
SO OFTEN NOTHING GROWS FROM THE BIGGEST SEEDS.

FOR IT'S THE MOST BELIEVED IN THAT ARE SOMETIMES FILLED WITH NOTHING.  
AND NOTHING WAS ALL SHE GAVE TO ME.  
BUT EVEN NOW I PAUSE TO WAIT A MOMENT MORE, THOUGH I'VE WAITED TOO LONG ALREADY.  
WHY IS IT SO HARD TO LEAVE?

*JENN re-enters, now dressed in her "rainbowwear," with sketch book and a smile, and moves about in a hopeful pantomime ballet, sketching things around her. JONATHAN watches at times through the song, climaxing with a dance together, but inches apart, not quite touching but moving in perfect harmony.*

HOW WILL I LEARN WHEN TO GIVE UP HOPE?  
WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO WALK AWAY?  
HOW WILL I LEARN WHEN TO SAY GOODBYE?  
AND ONCE I'VE LEARNED, THEN HOW WILL I REMEMBER WHEN TO STAY?

I THOUGHT THAT I COULD CRACK HER SHELL WITH KINDNESS, THAT I COULD TAKE HER IN FROM THE COLD.  
I THOUGHT HER HEART WAS JUST CONFUSED WITH BLINDNESS AND SOMEHOW I COULD HELP HER TO UNFOLD.  
BUT IT WAS VAIN OF ME TO PLAY THE GOD HERE.  
IT WAS PRESUMPTUOUS TO BELIEVE THAT IF I WANTED HER TO BE THE ONE THAT I COULD CLOSE MY EYES, PRETEND NOT TO SEE.

*The dance climax begins*

HOW IT'S THE MOST BELIEVED IN THAT WE ALLOW TO SEEM IMMORTAL.  
AND SHE WAS A GODDESS TO ME.  
SO EVEN NOW AS I PAUSE TO WAIT THOUGHT I'VE WAITED TOO LONG ALREADY.  
WHY IS IT SO HARD TO LEAVE?

*JENN begins to fade away. JONATHAN tries to leave, but she does it for him. He stares at the space she once filled and eventually returns to his streetlamp.*

HOW WILL I LEARN WHEN TO GIVE UP HOPE?

WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO WALK AWAY?

HOW WILL I LEARN WHEN TO SAY GOODBYE?

AND ONCE I'VE LEARNED THEN HOW WILL I REMEMBER WHEN TO STAY?

SO IF I LEARN, I HOPE THAT I WILL REMEMBER WHEN TO STAY.

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*Black, street lamp lifts. Kitchen comes out.*

**SCENE 6 – the kitchen**

*JENN is sitting alone in kitchen, with sketchbook or journal.*

**Reprise: I CAN'T SLEEP**

JENN

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS BUT I CAN'T SLEEP...

VOICES FIGHTING, I WON'T LISTEN.

I WANT TO SLEEP.

*MOM and DAD enter, DAD hangs back, MOM approaches JENN*

MOM

Jenn? What are you doing up?

JENN

I was just making a snack.

MOM

It's way past midnight.

JENN

I know. I'm just really hungry.

MOM

Yeah, I just forgot to eat dinner.

DAD

Well if you'd come home for dinner like you're supposed to...

JENN

Dad, please I don't feel good

*DAD exits.*

MOM

You know, he loves you very much

JENN

I know.

*MOM starts to leave.*

MOM

Don't forget, you have a doctor's appointment tomorrow.

JENN

I know.

MOM

Goodnight.

*MOM exits*

JENN

Mom?

*Pause*

You have a goodnight too.

MOM

Thank you, Jenn.

*MOM exits stage right.*

JENN

SOMEWHERE I MADE A WRONG TURN BUT PLEASE LET ME SLEEP.

TOO FAR GONE TO FOLLOW MY HEART NOW.

I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM OR HOW I GOT THIS FAR.

EVERY NIGHT I STAY AWAKE, SO AFRAID TO HEAR.

I SEE THIS GIRL IN THE MIRROR STARING BACK AT ME IN FEAR

SAYING "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHY DID YOU LEAVE ME?

WHY CAN'T I BE YOU? WHY CAN'T YOU BE ME?

WHY THE FAÇADE?" SHE SAYS "WHY THE SHOW?"

"WHY SO STUBBORN? MUST YOU ALWAYS PRETEND TO KNOW WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU?"

BUT YOU'RE SO PROUD THAT YOU CAN'T SEE.

YOUR HEART KNOWS THE TRUTH THAT YOU CAN'T SEE.

SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE SO YOU CAN SEE THAT ONCE YOU LISTEN YOU CAN SLEEP.

YOUR HEART WILL SPEAK AND LET YOU SLEEP.

OPEN YOUR EYES SO YOU CAN SLEEP.

ONLY YOU CAN SING YOURSELF TO SLEEP.

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*Lights down on JENN, who exits with removal of kitchen.*

**SCENE 7 – the park**

*Tree comes down. JENN is standing in front of tree. JONATHAN is hiding behind it.*

JENN

‘Jonathan, I’m going away. I can’t see you anymore’ That would be so much easier.. Maybe if I just ...

*Sits, reading a written out speech to herself*

Let’s see. I can’t say that.

*Crosses something out*

And I probably shouldn’t say that either.

*Crosses something out*

He must have really decided not to come. I guess I would too after the way I treated him.

*JONATHAN appears from behind the tree, while SHE is looking left.*

Jonathan. Hi!

JONATHAN

Hi.

JENN

I’m glad you came.

JONATHAN

Look Jenn, I should tell you...

JENN

Wait. Please don’t say anything yet. I have to tell you something first. I don’t know if I deserve another chance, but please just hear me out.

JONATHAN

But I know what you’re going to say.

JENN

*Laughs*

Really Jonathan. It’s not what you think. It’s worse than anything you could imagine. But I’m ready to tell you everything. I mean, I want you to know me.

JONATHAN

Jenn...Ok. Sit down. Promise you won't get mad.

JENN

Ok.

JONATHAN

Well...I already heard your speech.

JENN

WHAT?!?

JONATHAN

I've been here. Over there.

JENN

Are you kidding?

JONATHAN

No.

JENN

So you heard the part about the boyfriends?

JONATHAN

Yeah.

JENN

And about...wow. You're not kidding.

JONATHAN

Please tell me you're not mad at me. I just figured you'd tell the truth more than you'd tell me.

JENN

Well, you're right. And no, I'm not mad at you. This is just all so unexpected. I was afraid you'd hate me.

JONATHAN

I told you. I could never hate you. You're one of my favorite people. And trust me, you haven't changed that much.

JENN

Huh. Well, this was easy. Almost too easy...

*To audience*

No long involved scene of argument and discussion.

JONATHAN

I don't really like long, drawn-out resolutions. You don't regret my having heard all this, do you?

JENN

No. It's wonderful. It's perfect. Now I don't have to go through it all again. We jump right to the happy ending part.

JONATHAN

Oh good. So that means I get to kiss you.

*THEY kiss.*

**Reprise: BELIEVE IN ME**

BELIEVE IN ME – HIDE WITHIN MY SHADOW

BELIEVE IN ME – I'LL NEVER LET YOU FALL

THE WORLD WILL TURN AROUND YOU, BUT I WILL NEVER LEAVE

BELIEVE IN ME – THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR AT ALL.

*MOM, DAD, KAILEY, LISA, AND I.Os come out, join in last part of refrain*

THE WORLD WILL TURN AROUND YOU, BUT I WILL NEVER LEAVE

BELIEVE IN ME – THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR AT ALL.

*Pianist breaks into the carousel sounding music from opening, and actors have a good time and go straight into a characterized curtain call, running off finally in some vaudevillian way.*

***THE END.***