

DUMPLIN'

Written by

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Based on DUMPLIN' by Julie Murphy

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1 OMITTED 1

A1 INT. LUCY'S RED GRAND PRIX - **FALL**/2007 - DAY A1

ON WILLOWDEAN DICKSON (A.K.A. 'Will'), a plump 6-year-old in a snug summer dress and red flip flops, gazing out the back window at her Texas town, DUMB BLONDE on the stereo.

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)  
I learned about most things from my  
Aunt Lucy...

CREDIT SEQUENCE begins over...

WILL'S POV, passing by a CHURCH; a DAIRY QUEEN; a BEAUTY SALON; a group of TEENAGE GIRLS jogging together in pink shorts; CLAY DOOLEY CHEVY (boasting *Clover City Chevy... Proud Sponsor of the Bluebonnet Pageant... 'The Crown Jewel of Clover City'*); and DRESS SHOPS displaying pageant gowns.

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)  
She taught me how to spell my name:  
W.i.l.l.o.w.d.e.a.n, *Willowdean*;  
she also taught me how to learn to  
like a name like that; she taught  
me how to say 'yes ma'am' and 'no,  
sir'; how to look people in the  
eye; and how to find a 'keeper' in  
a heap of junk... But most of all,  
my Aunt Lucy taught me about Dolly  
Parton...

We find AUNT LUCY (31, pretty, heavysset) behind the wheel. She looks in the rearview mirror at Will as they sing the chorus... *Just because I'm blonde don't think I'm dumb...*

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)  
It seemed whatever my aunt Lucy and  
I were feeling, Dolly had written a  
song or saying about it, like 'if  
you want the rainbow, you have to  
put up with the rain...' My Aunt  
Lucy swore by her Dolly sayings and  
they did make life easier to  
understand.

\*  
  
\*  
\*

The red Grand Prix drives through the center of town.

2 OMITTED 2

3 OMITTED 3

4 EXT. DONUT SHOP - A FEW MINUTES LATER (2007)

4

Will comes out of the donut shop balancing a big pink box, which she confidently carries toward Lucy's car. On the sidewalk, THREE TWEEN BOYS approach, heading toward Will, just as Lucy steps out of the donut shop with change.

ON THE BOYS, nudging each other over the amusing sight of the plump little girl carrying the giant donut box. As they pass Will, they make 'OINKING' sounds and bust up laughing. Lucy clocks it, picking up her pace as Will STOPS on the sidewalk and turns around, staring at the boys' backs with a confused look.

Lucy puts a protective arm around Will's shoulder and turns her back around, walking to the car.

LUCY

Pay them no mind, Willowdean. As Dolly herself would tell you, 'it's not easy being a diamond in a rhinestone world.'

Will looks up at Lucy, a BEE BROACH on her collar glistening in the sun with a magical sparkle. Will nods with a trustful look then glances back at the donut shop.

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)

It's funny how you can look at the same things over and over again in a certain way until something unexpected suddenly changes how you see everything.

A4 OMITTED

A4

5 INT. DICKSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER/DAY

5

DUMB BLONDE continues playing on a turntable as Lucy sets down a platter of donuts, Will right beside her, holding a DOLLY PARTON FAN CLUB BINDER like it's a wedding ring on a pillow. As Will sets down the binder, the door bell rings--

ON THE FRONT DOOR as Lucy opens it to greet Mrs. Dryver (30, very 'Dolly Parton'). As will joins Lucy at the door, ELLEN ('El,' 6, bean pole) shyly peers around her mother's dress.

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)

I think my Aunt Lucy knew exactly what she was doing the day Ellen Dryver showed up at our door.

Will looks up at Aunt Lucy who smiles reassuring.

6 INT. DEN - A FEW MINUTES LATER 6

Will and El sit on a couch, legs dangling, watching a CARTOON with bored eyes, not sure how to connect.

WILL'S RED SHOE starts to TAP out the beat of the song.

ELLEN'S SANDAL begins to do the same.

They notice each other's foot bouncing, shy smiles spreading.

ON WILL, looking over at Aunt Lucy who's observed it all and gives Will a little nod of permission... *go on up.*

ON THE STAIRS, little feet and giggles escalating.

OFF LUCY's smile.

7 INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 7

Will guides El into Lucy's room like it's a secret hideout, opening the door to the alcove 'shrine'...

Will puts Dolly on the turntable for their own fan club 'meeting' as they sing and dance around, making each other LAUGH with their swagger.

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)

El and I once wrote Dolly Parton a thank you letter for giving us each other... She wrote back ...'The greatest friends have nothing and everything in common all at once. Sounds like you two girls are different versions of the same story.' -Love, Dolly

\*  
\*

HOLD ON THE GIRLS, having the best time.

WILL AT 17 (V.O.)

Sometimes I think my Aunt Lucy gave me Dolly and Ellen to help get me through the one thing she couldn't teach me herself... how to live in this world without her.

DISSOLVE TO:

A7 INT. LUCY'S RED GRAND PRIX/EXT. CLOVER CITY - AUGUST/2018 A7

Will (now 17) is behind the wheel, windows down, HERE I AM (alt DUMB BLOND) blasting on the stereo. Will SINGS along to the song with her passenger...

Ellen (17), as the girls drive through town on this gorgeous summer day, pausing at a crosswalk to let a group of TEENAGE GIRLS jog past them in Boot Camp gear. Will rolls her eyes, Ellen just smiles as they sing the chorus, driving on...

8 A CANNON BALL SPLASH TAKES US TO--

8

INT. CLOVER CITY PUBLIC POOL - SIMULTANEOUS/11AM

Will and El react to the disturbance as they FLOAT on their backs in inner-tubes.

ELLEN

That Patrick Thomas is ten pounds of stupid in a five pound bag. Boy needs a swift kick in the pants.

The girls settle back into their peaceful state, linking pinkies to keep their inner-tubes connected.

WILL

Remember when summer days felt like they'd go on forever?

ELLEN

Yep, and Lucy would bring us here and blast Dolly on her boom box and buy us cherry-lime snow cones...

WILL

But only on Mondays...  
(El chimes in)  
*'Because Fridays didn't deserve all the attention.'*

They smile at the Lucy-ism until Ellen realizes--

ELLEN

Sorry, didn't mean to bring her up.

WILL

It's okay. It actually feels good to talk about her.

They float.

WILL (CONT'D)

I don't know how I'm gonna survive my mom's pageant season without Lucy. My mom already started her diet.

ELLEN

I thought that was only a September thing.

WILL

My pee-lates just isn't cuttin' it, Dumplin', and I've got to zip up that dress come October. It's *tradition*.

El laughs at the spot-on impression.

WILL (CONT'D)

Our fridge has been reduced to bunny food and condiments.

ELLEN

Well you know you can always come to my house for real supper.

The girls clock Patrick's next cannonball victim, the plump-cheeked **MILLIE MICHALCHUK** (16), who just smiles as she towels off the splash, assuming it was an accident.

WILL (O.C.)

I have to confess something or I might go straight to hell...

Ellen looks at her.

WILL (CONT'D)

Whenever I see Millie Michalchuk, I think, 'I'm fat but at least I'm not *that* fat.' I know that's terrible of me, but hopefully admitting it means I'll only have like a short layover in purgatory.

Millie continues smiling, to no one in particular.

ELLEN

She always seems happy.

ON WILL... she does, *annoyingly so*.

9

EXT. POOL/SNACK BAR - A LITTLE LATER

9

Will and El stand at the snack bar, waiting as **HANNAH DOMINGUEZ** (17), dressed in all black and combat boots, makes their snow cones. Hannah turns, holding their cups--

HANNAH

I put the grossest flavor on the bottom. No extra charge.

The girls take their snow cones, El with a smile, Will with a 'what's wrong with you?' look as the girls walk away. We HOLD on the snack shack as Patrick, dripping wet from the pool, walks by and makes a horse face at Hannah.

PATRICK  
Haaaaaaaaanah.

Hannah whips a plastic knife at him, misses.

A9

EXT. PUBLIC POOL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A9

Will and El walk out of the pool, connected by an earbud umbilical cord, one bud for each as they munch on their snow cones. **CALLIE** (17, thin & bronzed, bikini) gets out of her cute car and intercepts them--

CALLIE  
El-Bell!!

It's instantly clear Will is not a fan.

ELLEN  
HI! Will, you remember Callie who works with me at Sweet 16.

WILL  
Hey.

CALLIE  
Nice to see you.

Ellen tries to bridge the divide between these two--

ELLEN  
(to Will)  
Callie's doing the pageant this year.  
(to Callie)  
We were *just* talking about the pageant...

ON WILL, *not really*.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
Will's mom is the pageant director.  
She was Miss Teen Bluebonnet 1991.

Callie hides her shock that Will's related to a *beauty queen*.

CALLIE  
Rosie Dickson's your mom?

WILL  
Far as I know.

CALLIE  
My sister was a runner-up a few years ago, so I guess it runs in both our families.

Callie smiles, Will crunches her ice.

CALLIE (CONT'D)  
Hey... maybe sometime Elbell and I could come over and I could ask your mom some questions about the pageant, just casually.

WILL  
Unfortunately my mom's not home all that much. She's either at pageant meetings or at the nursing home, wiping old peoples' butts. That's what happens to a lot of ex-beauty queens.

OFF CALLIE, considering her possible future.

TIM (El's boyfriend) pulls into the parking lot, blasting his MUSIC. Callie uses the distraction as her out--

CALLIE  
(eyeing the pool)  
Oh, there's Morgan, I better go.  
See y'all later.

As Callie gets out of there--

ELLEN	WILL
(sweet)	(sour)
Bye, say Hi to Morgan.	See ya.

El turns to Will--

ELLEN  
What was that all about? She's harmless.

WILL  
So's a blowfish till you get too close. Then they're deadly, *Elbell*.  
(off El's look)  
I gotta get to work.

El hands Will her earbud, bummed.

ELLEN

You know if you worked at the mall  
with me you could stay at the pool.

WILL

I like working at Harpy's...

As Will moves to her car, Tim walks up, towering over El.

WILL (CONT'D)

(to El, their 'goodbye')  
But you're still my everything!!  
(beat)  
Hey Tim.

TIM

Hey Will.

ELLEN

(to Will, their 'goodbye')  
You know I'd die without you, just  
straight up cease to exist!

TIM

Hey now.

Will rolls down her window, thumb hovering over her phone...

WILL

(game show host)  
For today's grand prize...  
(eyes Tim's truck)  
A slightly-used Chevy Silverado...  
Name the Billboard hit that  
features the sound of a typewriter,  
off the Odd Jobs album.

ON TIM, no idea.

ON ELLEN, playing a 'lucky' contestant--

ELLEN

9-TO-5?

WILL

The truck is all yours, and it  
comes with a personal driver!!

El dances around with winner's delight, the LOUD 'CLICK-  
CLACK' of a TYPEWRITER blaring from Will's speakers as the  
girls DUET the OPENING of the song, then--

WILL (CONT'D)

Bye Tim.

TIM

Bye Will.

Will drives away as El and Tim head back toward the pool.

10 OMITTED 10

11 OMITTED 11

12 OMITTED 12

13 INT. WILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS 13

9-TO-5 takes us through town toward HARPY'S BURGERS & DOGS...

14 EXT. HARPY'S BURGERS & DOGS - CONTINUOUS 14

Will pulls behind Harpy's and parks.

15 EXT. HARPY'S BACK DOOR - CONTINUOUS (1PM) 15

Will rings the freight bell, still humming 9-TO-5, her cheeks pink from the pool. A little impatient, she rings again.

The door cracks open, revealing **BO LARSON** (17), lips 'permanently' red from the signature sucker in his mouth--

BO

I heard you the first three times.

With an irresistible half-smile, he holds open the door--

BO (CONT'D)

Willowdean.

Will has to duck UNDER BO'S ARM to get by.

Will goes to her locker...A SMILING DOLLY PARTON (AUTOGRAPHED HEADSHOT) stares back at her. With a look to Dolly, Will grabs her UNIFORM and red 'all stars.'

16 INT. HARPY'S - A MINUTE LATER 16

Will walks up to the register, tying her apron, noticing a table of unhappy customers. Nabbing MARCUS as he cruises by--

WILL  
What's up with Table 7, they look  
'hangry.'

Marcus' eyes bug out as he suddenly realizes--

MARCUS  
I forgot to put their order in.

Marcus flips back through his ticket pad.

MARCUS (CONT'D)  
One more complaint and my uncle's  
gonna give me the boot, and my  
mama's gonna give me worse than  
that, and my grandma--

To save his butt - or shut him up - Will snatches the ticket--

WILL  
Make three chocolate shakes, STAT.

MARCUS  
Right now?

WILL  
Yes. Now.

MARCUS  
Okay. I got you. Thanks Will.

He rushes off to the shake machine; Will walks over to Bo.

WILL  
How fast can you whip up combos?

Sucker dangling from that sexy half-smile--

BO  
Time me.

Will rolls her eyes, indulging a clock check as Bo starts slinging burgers, one eye on his grill, one curious eye on Will as she quickly rips a few paper NAPKINS into TINY PIECES, then grabs a COWBELL from under the counter, giving it a SHAKE as she approaches the disgruntled customers--

WILL  
We have a winner!

They look up as 'confetti' rains down on their table.

WILL (CONT'D)  
We just did our end-of-summer  
drawing and it's lucky table 7!

Another cowbell jingle as other customers look over with table envy.

WILL (CONT'D)

Y'all won free shakes with your combos and your meal's on the house! Looks like it's a dessert-first kinda day... *because Fridays don't deserve all the attention.*

ON BO, watching Will work her magic as Table 7 smiles from ear-to-ear, shakes arriving just in time.

WILL (CONT'D)

Your combos will be right up.

Will heads back to Bo who holds up three plated combos with a flourish. Will eyes the clock, *not bad, but--*

WILL (CONT'D)

I did say 'hold the salmonella'?

Bo shakes his head, nope.

BO

Hopefully our winners make it out alive.

Will takes the plates... *'we'll see.'* Bo watches her go.

A16

INT. HARPY'S EMPLOYEE LOCKERS - LATER

A16

Will opens her locker to get chapstick, stops short.

INSIDE HER LOCKER: A MAGIC 8-BALL.

ON WILL, baffled... who would *gift* her with a Magic 8-Ball?? Will picks it up, testing it out with a SHAKE.

ON THE ORACLE'S RESPONSE: *Concentrate And Ask Again.*

ON WILL, a little freaked out by its seeming omniscience.

She looks at the locker next to hers labeled 'Bo.' She makes sure no one's looking, closes her eyes, shakes again.

ON THE ORACLE: Signs Point To Yes.

Will puts the 8-Ball down like it's not to be trusted. A beat. She picks it back up, heads into...

B16 INT. HARPY'S - CONTINUOUS (BETWEEN LUNCH & DINNER) B16

Will glances at the grill - no Bo. She goes to the counter where Marcus is attempting to refill salt shakers, spilling more than he's filling.

WILL

(slyly)

Did you put something in my locker?

MARCUS

(panicked)

Was I suppose to?

Will looks at him with pity. She pulls a FUNNEL out from under the counter, sets it down in front of Marcus and walks away with the Magic 8-Ball.

C16 EXT. HARPY'S - A MINUTE LATER C16

Will opens the back door, sees Bo talking to a very attractive TEENAGE FOURSOME in an expensive convertible. The passenger fist-bumps Bo as the convertible drives away. Bo goes to toss trash bags into the dumpster.

WILL

You and your rich prep school friends are so lucky you have two more weeks left of summer.

BO

(his back to her)

Not everybody who goes to Holy Cross is rich...

WE SEE Bo has something more to say, but he hesitates. Will picks up the slack with nervous chatter--

WILL

Well, rich or poor, we all have to deal with the same 'prepare for the future' thing like we're supposed to have some big plan mapped out, while most of the adults in this town still haven't figured out what they want to be when they grow up.

Bo walks back toward Will.

BO

(re: Magic 8-Ball)

If only they had one of those.

Mystery solved.

WILL  
Thanks by the way. Weirdly, I  
always wanted one.

Bo comes closer, taking her hand, shaking the Magic 8-Ball.

BO  
'Will Marcus burn Harpy's down to  
the ground one day?'

They check the little blue window, their heads close...

ON THE ORACLE: *Most Likely.*

WILL  
Woah. That's freaky, like big  
brother in a bottle.

Bo holds open the door for Will...

BO  
Guess we better go check on him.

Will has to duck under Bo's arm to get past, a very perplexed  
look on her face.

17 OMITTED 17

18 INT. DICKSON KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY/EARLY EVENING (5PM) 18

Will comes in holding the Magic 8-Ball, still replaying the  
interaction with Bo in her head. She opens the FRIDGE: bare  
save for a saran-wrapped SALAD and condiments.

ROSIE (O.S.)  
Dumplin'?!

Will cringes at her mom's term of endearment.

WILL  
Mom!

19 INT. ROSIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 19

The room of a southern belle on a budget: pastels, chintz,  
ruffles and lace. We notice NURSE SCRUBS tossed on the bed as  
Will comes in, looking around, feeling out of place in here.  
She sees a slightly-tarnished sparkling CROWN on the dresser.

**ROSIE** (42), a PETITE BEAUTY in full makeup and hair teased  
high, comes out of the bathroom wearing a ROBE. She sees  
Will in her Harpy's uniform, tries not to look alarmed.

ROSIE

I can't be late, Dumplin'. Can you please put on that blue dress I got you for Mimi's wedding.

It's clear from Will's expression she hates that dress.

Rosie faces the mirror, taming her teased hair into a perfect bouffant helmet, a warrior preparing for battle.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

And let's run a brush through your hair. A well-styled head of hair--

WILL

*Is a head above the rest.* I know.  
(white lie)  
The thing is, I kinda forgot about tonight. I made plans with El.

Rosie looks tense, her comb pausing.

ROSIE

You know I can't drive myself. We made a deal. Bring Ellen.

Will's stuck.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Any holes?

Will has no idea what she's talking about.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

In the back.

Oh. Will examines Rosie's hair while Rosie scrutinizes Will in the mirror.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

You've got a little breakout there on your forehead. You're not eatin' that greasy food at Harpy's, are you?

Will knows Rosie's comment is not directed at her *forehead*.

WILL

You know I don't even like burgers and hot dogs. There's one on your left.

Rosie expertly feels her way to the hole with the skill of a blind beautician, teasing it out with a comb. She grabs her HAIR SPRAY and circles her head four times over as Will backs out of the room.

ROSIE

Tell Ellen she needs to be ready in ten! We have a half hour drive!

We HOLD on Rosie as she carefully sets the crown upon her perfectly-coiffed head with a satisfied look in the mirror.

A19 INT. ROSIE'S CAR - 45 MINUTES LATER A19

Will (looking miserable in her blue dress) pulls into a parking spot. El rides shotgun, looking adorable in a sparkly dress. No sign of Rosie. Will gets out of the car.

B19 EXT. SWEET WATER AUDITORIUM PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS B19

Will opens the back door, Rosie's crowned head flopping (lying supine across the seat IN A FORM-FITTING GOWN).

ROSIE

Dumplin'! The other side!

WILL

('whoops')

Oh right.

Ellen opens the other back door, helping Rosie shimmy out.

ROSIE

*Thank you.*

Once Rosie's upright, she straightens her crown, realizing Will parked further away than she needed to. Refusing to let it get to her, she begins the high-heeled trek to the entrance, Will and El trailing behind.

20 INT. SWEET WATER AUDITORIUM BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 20 \*

Rosie leads Will and Ellen backstage like it's the Grammys. \*

ROSIE \*

I think they'll let you girls watch from the wings. \*

WILL \*

(quietly to El) \*

You're welcome. \*

El shushes her, *be nice*. \*

IN THE B.G., a PAGEANT EMCEE announces the runners-up, building anticipation with the 'special guest' who'll be coming out shortly to announce the winner. \*

21 BACKSTAGE WING--

21 \*

Will and El glimpse SKINNY GIRLS in gowns standing on tiered platforms in front of SHIMMERY BACKDROPS, smiles plastered across their faces as they watch a teary FOURTH RUNNER-UP graciously accept her single rose. \*

Ellen stands between Will and Rosie as Rosie looks out at the contestants with adoring eyes. \*

ROSIE \*

I wish they all could win. They've worked so hard for this. \*

WILL \*

Yes, walking is so, so hard. \*

Rosie pretends not to hear that as the PAGEANT DIRECTOR (DELIA, a fellow 'former,' 1992 SASH across her gown) approaches, greeting Rosie, half-joking, half-not-- \*

DELIA \*

Miss *Teen* Bluebonnet! \*

ROSIE \*

Miss *Teen* Sweet Water! \*

A careful cheek kiss between two expert lipstick deflectors. \*

ROSIE (CONT'D) \*

Look at you, you haven't aged a minute. \*

DELIA \*

Backstage lighting. Thank you so much for making the trip. \*

ROSIE \*

Oh you know I'd drive a million miles to support these girls. \*

ON WILL in the shadows, an eye-roll to El. \*

DELIA \*

It's such a nice treat to have a special guest. That audience is plum tired a' only seeing *my* face up there! \*

Her good-natured laugh peters out, *they really are*. Rosie looks out at the stage, 'admiringly'--

ROSIE  
It looks like the Miss *America* Pageant out there.

DELIA  
(taken as a compliment)  
Thank you. The new backdrops give our social media a nice '#pop.'

ROSIE  
Oh, *social media*.

Delia links her arm through Rosie's--

DELIA  
Hoping to give you Bluebonnets a run for your money this year for that Best Pageant award!!

Rosie smiles, eyeing the contestants' dresses.

ROSIE  
Best keep an eye on those hemlines, then.

Delia suddenly notices the girls, focused on *Ellen*--

DELIA  
This must be your daughter.

Delia goes to shake Ellen's hand.

ROSIE  
Oh, no, this is Ellen, my daughter's best friend... *this is my daughter, Willowdean.*

Delia tells her face not to look so surprised.

DELIA  
Well nice to meet you both.

Saved by the A.D. who swoops in to grab Delia & Rosie, handing Rosie a GOLD ENVELOPE and Delia, a microphone.

Delia walks ONTO THE STAGE--

DELIA (CONT'D)  
Good evening. It is my pleasure to introduce our special guest, all the way from Clover City, visiting royalty, please welcome...

(MORE)

DELIA (CONT'D)  
 Miss Teen Bluebonnet 1991, Ms.  
 Rosie Dickson!!!

\*  
 \*

Rosie steps onto the stage, greeting the adoring crowd with a well-oiled beauty queen wave as she steps to a stand mic.

ROSIE  
 Thank you, Ms. Delia. Girls, let me first say, y'all look stunning tonight.

The girls blush. The audience CHEERS. Will sighs, *oh please*.

ROSIE (CONT'D)  
 It is my great honor to be given the opportunity to introduce you to your new Miss Sweet Water...  
 (opens the envelope)  
 Miss Darlene Williams!!

ON DARLING DARLENE, quaking with joy as she walks toward Rosie for her first official hug as a *beauty queen*.

OFF WILL watching her mom envelop this complete stranger in a nurturing embrace, welcoming her to the club with a crown.

22	OMITTED	22
23	OMITTED	23
24	OMITTED	24
25	OMITTED	25
26	OMITTED	26
A26	INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT	A26

Will is in her room, listening to Dolly, rolling the Magic 8-Ball between her hands, deep in thought, when she hears NOISES (i.e. the 'screech' of packing tape) coming from across the hall. Will ventures out to see what's going on...

27 INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

27

Rosie (dressed casually) stands among an assortment of assembled MOVING BOXES, engrossed in her task. She looks up, startled by the sight of Will at the door.

ROSIE

Oh my stars. You scared me.

Will silently watches Rosie pack things into a box until Rosie finally pauses under the weight of her gaze--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Dumplin', it's been six months. We agreed to do this before the end of summer.

WILL

What are you planning to do with everything?

ROSIE

Well, I guess donate most of it.

Rosie tries to open a dresser drawer that's over-stuffed.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

God she was such a pack rat. We just need to make some room.

Rosie pulls out muumuus four times her size and begins stacking them on the dresser.

WILL

Room for *what*?

ROSIE

(just the facts)

Without Lucy's extra income, I need to start doing alterations to help us make ends meet.

WILL

You mean, alterations for the pageant *in Lucy's room*?

ROSIE

Yes, Willowdean.

(beat)

We can't let this room collect dust forever and I can't do *everything* at the dining room table.

Will goes into the alcove and scoops up Lucy's treasured DOLLY PARTON RECORD COLLECTION.

She puts it on top of a taped-up MOVING BOX labeled 'DONATE,' and awkwardly carries it to the door.

WILL  
I want to look through everything  
before it gets *donated*.

She leaves. Rosie hears Will's door slam across the hall.

OFF ROSIE, going back to purging, a sense of purpose in taking control of this mess.

28 OMITTED 28

29 INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING/SUNDAY 29

ELLEN (O.S.)  
Get up sleepyhead! It's our last  
day of freedom!

Will stirs from sleep, opening an eye to find Lucy's records in her arms as El comes through her door, eating celery.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
You weren't kidding about the bunny  
food. It's slim-pickins down there.

El notices the MOVING BOX.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
You threatening to move out?

WILL  
My Mom's packing up Lucy's room.

Ellen pauses, looks through Will's door to Lucy's HALF-PACKED ROOM, knows how hard this must be for Will.

ELLEN  
Well you should keep as much of it  
as you want.

WILL  
I know. I just want to find her bee  
broach.

ELLEN  
(gets it)  
That bee broach reminds me of her  
too... that little bit of flair she  
always had.

El notices the MAGIC 8-BALL on Will's night stand. Like a homing beacon, she goes to it, shakes it.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

When'd you get this?

WILL

'Prep School Bo' gave it to me.

ELLEN

You know that means he likes you, right?

WILL

(I wish)

He does not. He's nice to everybody. That's just how he is.

Ellen looks doubtful.

ELLEN

Oh he gave everyone one of these?

(off Will's look)

Boys don't give girls sweet little presents unless they're trying to get their attention. That's a fact.

Will camouflages her hint of hope.

WILL

Boys like Bo don't date girls like me. He just wants to be friends so he can ask me questions about girls he actually likes.

El rolls her eyes, shakes the Magic 8-Ball.

ELLEN

Is that true?

She checks the reply.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

*My Sources Say No. Told ya.*

El hunts around the room for Will's red flip-flops. Bingo!

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Now shake a leg! Time to pick up my check!

31 EXT. MALL/SWEET 16 CLOTHING STORE - CONTINUOUS

31

The girls walk through the mall, sharing one pair of earbuds, landing in front of SWEET 16's *BACK-TO-SCHOOL* DISPLAY featuring skinny jeans and little Tees.

El looks at Will, an unspoken understanding.

ELLEN

Be right back.

El hands her earbud to Will, goes inside to get her check.

CALLIE (O.C.)

El-Bell!

Will looks around the mall... Nothing very appealing until she suddenly spots BO, in shorts, standing outside a shoe store, looking at his phone, bored.

A beat.

WILL (O.C.)

You never struck me as the mall type.

Bo looks up, surprised to see her.

BO

Hey. I'm being tortured by my brother. He's been looking at shoes for 45 minutes.

WILL

I'm so lucky to be an only child.

BO

He's the worst.

They laugh. A WOMAN (LORRAINE, 40's) steps outside the store's entrance, interrupting--

LORRAINE

Bo, we better get Sammy to practice.

Bo suddenly seems uncomfortable.

BO

Okay.  
(to Will)  
I gotta go.

Bo starts walking back to the shoe store.

LORRAINE  
Who's your friend?

Will translates Bo's awkwardness as embarrassment - over *her* - as Lorraine comes closer to Will and Bo has to backtrack.

BO  
Uh, this is Willowdean. We work together at Harpy's. This is my step-mom, Lorraine.

Bo's eyes search for an exit.

LORRAINE  
*Willowdean.* Now that's a mouthful.

ELLEN (O.C.)  
But you can call her 'Will.'

Ellen walks up, holding her check.

WILL  
This is Ellen. Ellen... This is Bo, who I work with, and his step-mom, Lorraine.

ELLEN  
Nice to meet y'all.

Bo looks more uncomfortable by the second, trying to figure out how to get his step-mom out of there.

BO  
Ok, well it was good to see you.

LORRAINE  
You girls go to Clover High?

They nod in unison. Bo tries to intercept...

BO  
Lorraine--

LORRAINE  
How wonderful Bo will have some friendly faces on his first day.

Bo looks down, avoiding Will's eyes.

ELLEN  
(sunny)  
We'll be there.

Will forces a smile as Bo's younger brother (SAM, 14) walks up with a shoe bag.

LORRAINE

It'll be good for the boys to have  
a fresh start.

Bo nods, faintly, eyes the exit.

BO

We better get Sam to practice.

LORRAINE

Oh, right. Well, you girls take  
good care.

ELLEN

Bye now. Nice to meet y'all.

Bo, Sam and Lorraine walk one direction, Will and El, the  
other. When they get far enough apart, El swats Will--

ELLEN (CONT'D)

'Prep School Bo' is way hotter than  
you let on.

WILL

I guess he's 'Public School Bo'  
now.

ELLEN

He didn't tell you he was  
transferring?

WILL

No, I told you he didn't like me.  
You should have seen how  
embarrassed he was just introducing  
me to his *step-mom*. I'm just his  
'secret buddy' at work where no one  
has to know.

ELLEN

That's absurd. The lack of oxygen  
in here is depleting your brain  
cells.

El pulls Will along, picking up their pace--

ELLEN (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's get outta here.

A31 INT. ELLEN'S JEEP - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A31

El and Will fly down the street, wind in their hair, singing  
HOLDING ONTO YOU... mother nature's anti-depressant.

B31 OMITTED B31

32 OMITTED 32

33 OMITTED 33

34 OMITTED 34

35 OMITTED 35

A35 INT. DICKSON HOUSE/KITCHEN - MONDAY MORNING A35

Will comes down the stairs, backpack over shoulder, hears Rosie's voice coming from the kitchen...

ROSIE (O.C.)

Well, Sweet Water's workin' hard to keep up with the times, which is a fool's errand if you ask me.

ON ROSIE, green smoothie in one hand, cell phone in the other, mid-pageant call as Will comes in, opens the fridge.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Hold on one second.

Rosie covers her phone, offers Will a glass of smoothie--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I made extra.

WILL

It's okay, I'm just gonna take a banana for the car so I'm not late.

Will grabs a banana, heads for the back door. Rosie tries--

ROSIE

Have a... great first day!

Already half out the door--

WILL

Thanks!

We STAY ON ROSIE, a tinge of sadness as she goes back to her call--

ROSIE

So all I'm saying is, these city pageants are lookin' more generic by the year. Nothin' Texas about 'em as if they just popped up out of the ground yesterday. Pageants like ours are meant to be handed down, from generation to generation not bought on the Amazon dot com.

The SOUND of Will's engine GRINDING. A beat. More GRINDING. Rosie moves to the window.

ON ROSIE'S POV of Will in her car as her forehead drops defeatedly to the steering wheel.

36

EXT. CLOVER HIGH - A FEW MINUTES LATER

36

Rosie pulls into school, still on her call via bluetooth.

ROSIE

Well, that's exactly my point, I don't care how popular she is, we are not doing a Bay-once song for the opening number... our bylaws strictly outline the types of music and lyrics deemed appropriate and it is my job to uphold those guidelines, however *unpopular* that makes *me*.

Will rolls her eyes as Rosie pulls to the curb. Will starts to get out, Rosie covers her phone, leaning over--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I'll get Joe's garage to tow your car over to see what's wrong.

WILL

Thanks.

Will nods, closing the door, heading under a giant SADIE HAWKINS BANNER, into the busy courtyard, when suddenly--

ROSIE (O.C.)

DUMPLIN'!! DUMPLIN'!! You forgot your phone!!

Will's body goes rigid. ALL HEADS TURN to see who won the Most Embarrassing Nickname Sweepstakes as Rosie - smiling through the car window - holds up Will's phone like a prize.

CUT TO: Will looking at her mother through the PASSENGER WINDOW as she takes her phone... if looks could kill.

WILL

*Thanks.*

Rosie's too engrossed in her call to translate as she distractedly gives Will a little wave before driving off.

Will can already hear the TITTERS coming from every direction as she turns and heads back into the courtyard, mortified.

A36 INT. HALLWAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

A36

Ellen spots a distressed Will. She makes her way over, linking arms, having missed it--

ELLEN

What's wrong... what happened?

WILL

My mom happened. That's what.

Will and El come around the corner where Patrick Thomas and his cronies loiter by lockers. One of Patrick's sidekicks walks up to him and whispers something that makes Patrick laugh. Patrick looks up, Will in his crosshairs.

PATRICK

Here... comes... Dumplin'!!!

Will's momentarily paralyzed. STUDENTS LAUGH.

ELLEN

Just ignore it, he's an idiot.

Ellen keeps them moving forward as Will tries to let it roll off her back, seeing Millie coming toward them from the other direction, blissfully unaware of the trap ahead. As Millie passes Will and El with a big smile, Patrick and his crew block Millie's path as if trying to 'squeeze' past her.

PATRICK

Whoops, I guess they need to widen the hallway.

His two friends chuckle.

ON WILL, STOPPING in the middle of the hall, turning around, something in her SNAPPING as she swiftly backtracks to Patrick, his expression turning from smug to SHOCK as something rather valuable to him gets KNEED, quite directly.

We STAY ON PATRICK'S FACE, bravado draining.

The hallway goes quiet, everyone suddenly still.

Hannah (all black, combat boots) strolls by, a nod to Will--

HANNAH

Good aim.

OFF THE STUNNED looks of Millie, Ellen and... Will.

37

EXT. CLOVER HIGH/VISITOR PARKING LOT - A LITTLE LATER

37

A mortified Rosie (in scrubs, cardigan) marches Will toward the car, trying not to attract attention while she explodes--

ROSIE

Suspended for 'indecent violence'?!  
I've never even *heard* of such a  
thing! What is wrong with you?!

WILL

Me?! It's your fault!

ROSIE

My fault?!?

WILL

I was just defending myself from a  
bully who called me that hideous  
nickname you've been calling me my  
whole life. He deserved it!

A fellow parent passes by. Rosie pulls her sweater tightly around her, forcing a smile as she passes--

A PARENT

Have a lovely afternoon, Ms.  
Dickson.

ROSIE

You too, Mrs. Hall.

When they're safely alone, Rosie leans into Will, quiet fury--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I raised you to be a lady, not a  
savage! And why are you being so  
sensitive about a dumb *nickname*!?

WILL

Mom, this is about so much more  
than a '*nickname*.' You'll never  
come out and say it, but I know you  
can't stand that your daughter  
looks like this, like a little  
round... '*dumplin*.'

ROSIE  
That is not true.

WILL  
Oh *please*. I don't fit into your  
world, mom, I get it.

Rosie looks around, careful not to make a scene...

ROSIE  
I just want you to have  
opportunities. It's harder for big  
girls. I know...

Will sighs with 'oh please' frustration as Rosie reminds--

ROSIE (CONT'D)  
I was a big girl, too. Me and Luce  
both were...

WILL  
Yes, I know! I've heard the story,  
about how you lost weight the  
summer before high school and Lucy  
didn't, and how you won the Miss  
Teen pageant, quite literally your  
life's 'crowning achievement.'

This hits Rosie where it counts. She fires back--

ROSIE  
Don't speak to me in that tone,  
young lady. I am still your mother.

Will can't stand Rosie suddenly playing 'mom.' As they reach  
the car, a hunk of metal between them...

WILL  
For the record, we both know who  
'raised me.' And she never once  
made me feel bad about myself.

Rosie fumbles for her keys.

ROSIE  
You really shouldn't idolize her so  
much. She'd probably still be with  
us if she just took better care of  
herself.

Rosie almost instantly regrets saying that out loud.

WILL

You were always so focused on her weight, you never got to know who she really was.

(beat)

I'll walk home.

Will walks away from the car. Guilt and anger propel Rosie out of her parking spot, screeching to a halt to yell through her window--

ROSIE

I'm sorry I never got to 'hang out' at all your Dolly Parton parties!! Someone had to work overtime to keep the roof over our heads because that's what mothers do!!

Will doesn't even turn around. Rosie jams her car in drive and heads the opposite direction.

38

INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - THE ALCOVE - LATER

38

Will listens to Dolly's *MY BLUE TEARS*, MOVING BOXES in the b.g., Lucy's room all packed up.

Will pulls a box labeled 'STORAGE' into the alcove, seeking solace. She opens the box...

ON A SHOEBOX OF PHOTOS... CHILDHOOD PICS OF LUCY AND ROSIE, the sisters a SIMILAR BUILD until their TEENAGE YEARS tell a different story as ROSIE THINS DOWN.

Underneath the photos, Will finds an old NEWSPAPER CLIPPING: ROSIE DICKSON CROWNED CLOVER CITY'S MISS TEEN BLUEBONNET 1991. Will stares at the faded newspaper image of HER MOM, AGE 16, a slender beauty in a SEQUIN DRESS, crown and sash, beaming proudly.

Will dives deeper into the box: an old report card, old letters. Will opens a FOLDED piece of paper and PAUSES, perplexed.

CLOSE ON **A MISS TEEN CLOVER CITY PAGEANT APPLICATION filled out by LUCY OPAL DICKSON, dated August 1993.**

Will stares at Lucy's name, trying to make sense of this with the shocking realization that Lucy wanted to do the pageant two years after her big sister, but didn't.

ELLEN (O.S.)

Will!

WILL

Up here!

El comes bounding up the stairs.

ELLEN (O.S.)

Patrick Thomas has the brains of a sponge! I can't believe you got suspended on the first day of school, you overachiever. I brought your homework--

El pauses at Will's empty room then gravitates to Lucy's, slowing her pace as she enters, more reverent.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Will looks up at her, a fire building in her belly.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

You okay? You got that look of the devil.

WILL

I was just sitting here thinking about signing up for the pageant.

El stares at her, dumbfounded.

ELLEN

I'm sorry, you lost me at... pageant.

El comes and sits with Will in the alcove. Will hands her Lucy's yellowed application. El reads it, just as stunned.

WILL

Lucy never said a word. She obviously didn't feel welcome, with people like *my mom* lording over it with their measuring tape.

(forming a plan)

I wanna march right in there on sign up day, just to see the look on my mom's face.

The mere thought of this gives Will great satisfaction.

WILL (CONT'D)

She's always been embarrassed by me, now she'll have good reason.

ELLEN

Kind of like a protest in heels?

WILL

Yeah, exactly. Go in blazing, force all those girls to deal with their skinny club bullshit, and get out before they call the fashion police.

El chuckles. Will waits to be talked out of it.

WILL (CONT'D)

You think I'm crazy?

ELLEN

Oh, you're totally nuts, but I'm behind ya all the way.

39 OMITTED

39

40 INT. CLOVER HIGH GIRLS BATHROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER

40

As El keeps watch through the cracked bathroom door...

ELLEN

(a la pageant M.C.)

Miss Willowdean Dickson, if you were to describe yourself as a pie, what type of pie would you be?

WILL

(from the stall)

Well, Miss Sugar Britches, I'd have to say a *lemon crunch pie*... a little bit sweet, a touch sour, and a whole lotta crunch.

El laughs. Will comes out of the bathroom stall in a DRESS, throwing El a beauty queen wave as if she's just won...

WILL (CONT'D)

(to her fans)

Thank you...Thank you. Pie for everyone!

Will goes to the mirror to apply lipstick.

WILL (CONT'D)

I cannot wait to see the look on my mom's face.

She puckers her lips. The SOUND of a toilet flushes. El and Will look at each other, what the hell? Millie comes out of a stall, bursting with excitement.

MILLIE

Are y'all planning on signing up  
for the pageant?!?

Will looks at Millie, definitive.

WILL

No.

OFF MILLIE's confused smile as she watches them leave.

41

INT. REC CENTER - A LITTLE LATER THAT AFTERNOON

41

The room abuzz, a variety of THIN GIRLS in form-fitting  
dresses and heels wait in a LONG LINE, holding APPLICATIONS.

Will enters, on a mission, albeit a teetering one, in her  
borrowed heels, Ellen right behind her...

WILL

I can't believe your mom can walk  
in these torture devices.

Will trips, stumbling, ALL EYES TURNING HER WAY, wondering  
what she's doing here. Will holds her head up high as she  
recovers, taking her place in line, Ellen beside her.

The door opens and in comes MILLIE wearing a 'church dress'  
and flats, holding a form. All eyes gravitate as Millie walks  
right up to Will, catching her by surprise.

MILLIE

If you're signing up, I am too.

WILL

What? No. I'm not the Joan of Arc  
of fat girls. Go home. Bad idea.

MILLIE

All my favorite things start as bad  
ideas.

Will rolls her eyes.

WILL

Millie, No.

El leans into Will, quietly--

ELLEN

Remember we're here for Lucy.

Will sighs, turning her back to Millie.

WILL

Do what you want. Just don't crowd me.

Millie scoots back a smidge, her enthusiasm far outweighing Will's rebuff as she takes her place in line behind them, drawing whispers and confused looks from other applicants.

42

AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE:

42

Two Former Beauty Queens (FBQs) try not to look surprised as Will approaches the table, handing over her application. Will watches the women squirm as they review it... hair color: red... talent: taxidermy. FBQ1 discreetly slips away from the table as FBQ2 continues reviewing...Age... Height... Weight (slight pause)...then a blank line--

FBQ2

You're missing your parent signature, darlin'. You can't--

ROSIE (O.S.)

*Willowdean Opal.*

Will grabs her form, milking Rosie's bewildered expression as Will *saunters over*, a little unsteadily. Rosie grabs Will's arm with a faux smile, pulling her aside--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Are you trying to get back at me for something?

WILL

Why do you assume the only reason I'd want to do the pageant is for revenge? I'm Rosie Dickson's daughter, this runs in my blood. Besides, as far as I'm concerned, a 'swimsuit body' is a body with a swimsuit on it.

Rosie blinks like there's something irritating her eye.

ROSIE

I will not have you make a mockery of me or this institution, which has been a cornerstone of our community--

WILL

Since 1933. I know. I could probably recite your bylaws by now, I've heard them so many times.

Will and Rosie stare at each other - a showdown - waiting for the other to shoot or call truce. All the skinny girls pretend to be minding their own business. But don't know how.

ROSIE

You can't enter unless I sign that form.

In Will's periphery, a skinny clique exchange looks of pity and a chuckle at Will's expense, adding fuel to her fire.

WILL

Mom, if you don't sign that form, you're saying I'm not good enough. You're saying every girl in this room right now is more deserving than me because I'm not built like them, because I'm built like *Lucy* and I don't belong here. Is that what you're saying?

Rosie's eyes narrow, her voice low, calling her bluff.

ROSIE

So what do you have planned for the talent event?

Will glances at Millie who smiles and waves from the SIGN-UP TABLE, *really* excited. Will looks at her mom, poker face--

WILL

It's a surprise.

Rosie exhales, every eye in the room on her, no way out. She takes Will's form, just to be clear--

ROSIE

No special treatment.

WILL

Wouldn't expect it.

Rosie sighs, hands the form back to Will. As she walks away--

ROSIE

Pageants are harder than you think.

Will has a private *What Did I Just Do?* moment before she turns around and confidently walks back to--

Will hands her *signed* application back to The FBQs who pretend they're pleased to accept it. Millie looks at Will with a worshipful smile, submitting her application as well.

Will leans over to El, quietly worried--

\*

WILL

I just made a deal with my mom.

\*

\*

ELLEN

I heard. We all did.

\*

\*

Ellen picks up a blank application from the table and starts filling it out. Will looks confused.

WILL

What are you doing?

ELLEN

I'm not gonna make you do this alone.

Something about Ellen signing up really bothers Will, but El doesn't notice as she pulls out her phone--

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I gotta call my mom.

Just then, HANNAH walks up to the table, slaps down her app written in black SHARPIE.

ON FBQ JAW DROP... *what is happening to our pageant??*

MILLIE

Yay! This will be so fun!!

Hannah takes in Millie, El and Will, the ball-buster.

HANNAH

Oh. Totally fun.

Will eyes Hannah skeptically.

WILL

What are you doing?

HANNAH

(beauty queen gesture)

Whatever do you mean?

Will looks at her like she's nuts.

ROSIE (O.C.)

Okay girls, everyone, please find a seat...

ON WILL and company sitting in the back row. Callie sidles up to El with a whisper--

CALLIE

I'm so excited you signed up. Did you see that Bekah Cotter?

Callie eyes Bekah.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

She's our competition.

Rosie does her best not to let the back row presence get to her as she celebrates a moment she's been looking forward to--

ROSIE

I would like to welcome you to The Clover City Miss Teen Bluebonnet Pageant, the first beauty pageant established in the great state of Texas, back in 1933. Now the next six weeks are guaranteed to be a whirlwind. Someone in this very room will be crowned this year's Miss Teen Bluebonnet, and will go on to compete in the Miss Texas Outstanding Teen pageant...

OFF THE EXCITEMENT...

45 INT. HARPY'S - TWO DAYS LATER/FRIDAY

45

Will comes from the kitchen to the register. A frazzled Marcus hands her a BANNER and tape.

MARCUS

Ron needs us to hang this up. Oh, and your friends are here, table six.

A confused Will looks at the banner now in her hands: *Harpy's...proud sponsor of the Bluebonnet Pageant. Free refills for contestants.* She puts it on the counter, looks over at table six--

ON MILLIE chatting her little head off to Hannah who's slumped down, eyes on her phone.

Will walks toward them, catching--

HANNAH

I think for my talent I'll just trot around the stage in a horse costume hee-hawing.

MILLIE  
(taking it literally)  
Well, maybe we could brainstorm  
some other ideas.

Will lands at the table, noticing multiple RAINBOW BINDERS.

WILL  
What are you guys doing here?

Only Millie looks up.

MILLIE  
Hi Will. We were gonna see if you  
could join our pageant meeting when  
you take your break.

Millie tries to hand her a binder--

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
I made one for each of us.

Will pushes the binder back down.

WILL  
I really don't need one, thanks.

Bo's BELL DINGS, order up. Marcus comes over carrying a tray of drinks. He delivers two drinks to Millie and Hannah. The BELL DINGS again. Marcus looks at Will--

MARCUS  
Could you grab that?

Will nods reluctantly as Marcus goes to deliver drinks to other tables. She looks at Millie and Hannah, annoyed by their very presence. She turns, pulling out her phone to TEXT ELLEN: **SOS. HAPY'S...** as she walks back toward the grill.

AT THE GRILL, Will takes the order off of Bo's shelf, avoiding eye contact.

BO  
Will... can I explain?...

She silences him with her look.

WILL  
Don't worry about it. I get it.

Bo sighs, watching her walk away with the order.

As Will delivers the order to a nearby table.

MILLIE (O.C.)

But if we play to our strengths and bring our showmanship, we've got as good a chance as anyone to win this pageant. And a lot of pageant winners go on to do very important things--

ON WILL, oh boy. She swings back by their table--

WILL

Millie, I think there's been a misunderstanding. We're not *doing* doing the pageant.

She looks up at Will, her world shattered.

MILLIE

We're not??

WILL

Well, I'm not.

Eyeing Hannah--

WILL (CONT'D)

And I have no idea what her deal is.

Bo's bell DINGS again. OFF MILLIE'S confused look--

WILL (CONT'D)

Millie, it's a protest, to make a point.

HANNAH

Count me in.

AT THE DOOR-- Ellen rushes in, out of breath, heads toward Will as Millie holds back tears.

MILLIE

(disillusioned)

What's our point?

Will can't believe Millie doesn't get this as a fellow big girl. Ellen slides into a seat. Hannah finally looks up.

HANNAH

(stating the obvious)

It's a revolt against the oppressive hetero patriarchy unconsciously internalized by the female psyche.

OFF MILLIE'S confusion--

WILL

Or...

Hannah picks up a salt shaker to illustrate--

HANNAH

World History, Miss Salazar's  
class...

(re: the salt)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

We're Spartacus, and the pageant--  
(grabs a sugar packet)  
is the Roman Empire.

Hannah puts the sugar down and violently smashes it with the salt shaker, over and over again, drawing attention to their table until Will grabs the shaker from her.

WILL

Okay.

HANNAH

(her point, to Millie)  
All revolutions start small.

WILL

Well, this one's gonna be extra  
small cuz I'm not in it.

MILLIE

(reeling)  
I don't want to revolt. I've wanted  
to do the pageant since I was eight  
years old.

Millie's lip starts to quiver, making Will feel bad and Ellen feel worse. Will looks across the diner, spotting Bo behind the counter, making a shake for the stunning BEKAH COTTER.

HOLD ON WILL'S POV OF BO AND BEKAH...

ELLEN (O.C.)

Millie, I think what everyone's  
trying to say is we're technically  
doing the pageant and...

(almost convincing)

It will still be fun...

(eyeing the binders)

You just need to pull back a bit.

HANNAH (O.C.)

Like to the border of Idaho. Right around there.

ON MILLIE, despondent, as Will turns her attention back to the table.

ELLEN

Millie, you can show me your binder, let's put it away.

Millie smiles opening to the first tab. Hannah looks up at Will.

HANNAH

Anything else, Spartacus?

Will stares at her, not amused. Hannah stands.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Alright then, good meeting.  
(to Will)

**ALT #1:** Let me know when you actually want to blow this shit up.

**ALT #2:** Let me know when you're ready to take this thing down.

Hannah puts on her aviators and leaves. Will watches Hannah go, her gaze drifting back to Bo and Bekah at the counter.

46

EXT. BEHIND HARPY'S - A MINUTE LATER

46

Will comes out with garbage bags just to get some air. She drops the bags. Bo comes out.

BO

Willowdean... I was going to tell you.

WILL

It's cool.

BO

I got kicked out of Holy Cross... I got into a fight with a player on my team. I was there on scholarship so, that was that.

(beat)

I knew you'd ask me a bunch of questions because... you're just smart like that, and I didn't want you to write me off as some kind of crazy hot head.

ON WILL, taking that in.

WILL

I guess you haven't heard I'm a  
crazy hot head too.

ON BO, a little smile, actually *he has*. He picks up the bags.

Will starts to help--

WILL (CONT'D)

Here.

BO

I got it.

Bo goes over to the dumpster, tossing in the bags. Will  
starts to go back inside.

BO (CONT'D)

I don't know if you're into this  
sort of thing, but there's a meteor  
shower tonight... it's just a small  
one, but could still be cool to  
see... If you're interested.

OFF WILL, pausing... is Bo asking me out on a meteor date??

WILL

Um, okay. Sure.

Will turns and goes inside, no idea what to make of that.

A46 OMITTED A46

B46 OMITTED B46

C46 EXT. HARPY'S - THAT NIGHT C46

Will stands at the open door in street clothes, looking up at  
the sky. She steps outside.

47 EXT. HARPY'S - CONTINUOUS/NIGHT 47

Bo stands at his truck, radio on, changing into a clean  
shirt. Will covers up her nerves--

BO

Sorry, my truck's a mess, but you  
can sit on this.

Bo grabs his letter jacket and throws it on the truck's roof, offering his tool box and a hand to help Will up. Bo climbs up after her.

Bo and Will sit on the roof, looking up at the sky, legs close, closer than they've ever been. Will fills the silence--

WILL

I once saw an eclipse with my friend, Ellen. Apparently if you stare at the sun for more than a minute and a half, you can permanently wreck your eyes, so we got her grandma's dark glasses and--  
(catching herself)  
Sorry, I know I can talk a gate right off its hinges.

BO

Don't be sorry. At first it was kind of terrifying, you talking to me so much. But the sound of your voice has actually gotten kinda comforting.

Will processes the nicest thing a boy has ever said to her.

BO (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something?

WILL

Sure.

BO

I couldn't help but notice the photo of that lady in your locker. What's that all about?

WILL

You don't know who Dolly Parton is?

Bo shakes his head.

WILL (CONT'D)

Dolly's one of the greatest singer/songwriters of all time. She's kinda hard not to notice. I got to know about her through my Aunt Lucy. I was probably singing Dolly Parton songs before I could talk.

Bo smiles, charmed by Will.

WILL (CONT'D)

I guess I like how Dolly's kind of in on every joke you could tell about her... she's got a wicked sense of humor, always one step ahead, ya know?

Will feels Bo looking at her... when she turns, his lips find hers for a KISS, a surprise first kiss better than Will's ever dared to imagine. When they open their eyes, Will looks STUNNED, like hit-by-a-bus stunned. She looks up--

WILL (CONT'D)

I think... it's starting.

Faraway STREAKS OF LIGHT split the sky, leaving dusty traces.

They keep their heads tilted, as if waiting for an encore, uncertainty filling the air.

BO

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have just, without asking--

WILL

That's okay.

A beat.

BO

'That's okay,' as in *don't let it happen again?*... Or, *that was okay?*

Will is struck speechless.

BO (CONT'D)

Because I think you kissed me back.

WILL

It happened so fast, I honestly can't remember.

BO

So, not memorable?

Will bites her lip, not exactly.

WILL

We might need a do-over, like best two out of three, for me to honestly answer that.

Bo smiles, going in for an undeniably memorable second kiss. As Bo's hand travels DOWN WILL'S BACK TO HER WAIST, Will's eyes WIDEN IN ALARM, A SHOCK-WAVE OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS TAKING HER BY SURPRISE. She STOPS KISSING BO, pulling back, feeling a vulnerability she's never known before.

WILL (CONT'D)

(fumbling)

I'm sorry... it's getting late... I have to get home.

Will climbs down quickly, leaving a befuddled Bo on the roof.

BO

Wait...Will...

Will speed-walks to her car--

BO (CONT'D)

Willowdean. I'm sorry if I...

WILL

It's okay! Thanks for the...meteor.

Will gets into her car and drives away as quickly as possible.

48 INT. DICKSON HOUSE - 10 MINUTES LATER

48

A panicked Will sneaks past ROSIE'S ROOM where she's WORKING OUT to an exercise video (very Jane Fonda circa 1985).

49 INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

49

Will comes into her room now CROWDED with Lucy boxes. She goes straight to her MIRROR, turning to look at her LOWER BACK, running her hand down to her waist, JUST LIKE BO DID, trying to imagine what it felt like to him... she doesn't like what she imagines.

Will stares at herself in the mirror like she's an idiot.

WILL

'Thanks for the meteor.' So stupid.

Will falls onto her bed face-first, mortified.

50 OMITTED 50

50A OMITTED 50A

B50 INT. ELLEN'S JEEP - NEXT MORNING/SATURDAY B50

A spirited El (in shorts and a T-shirt) drives a glum Will (in pajamas). El plays Dolly to get them in the mood.

WILL

Why are we even going to this?

ELLEN

You're the one who started a bull  
fight with your mom, remember?  
(ever the optimist)  
Don't worry, we'll make it fun.

Will stares out the window. El turns off the music.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

What's up?

A beat.

WILL

Bo kissed me last night.

Ellen swerves with excitement.

ELLEN

What?! I toooooold you!!!

WILL

Save the confetti, didn't end well.

ELLEN

Why?!

WILL

Well, at first it was amazing and I  
wanted to keep kissing him until my  
lips fell off, but then he touched  
this spot on my lower back and I  
*freaked*, suddenly wondering why  
this hot guy would ever want to  
kiss me... and then I started  
hating myself for being that girl--

ELLEN

Okay, whoa, hold up. I just need to  
mark this moment. Willowdean Opal  
Dickson has found her weakness.

Will exhales, can't deny it.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Okay. Well, if it makes you feel any better, I've had that same freaky feeling with Tim.

Will looks at her.

WILL

Really?

ELLEN

Yes! I'm worried his neck is just gonna snap right off from always bending over. And when he touches my stomach or a spot of acne on my chin, I clam up like a psycho.

It does help Will, but only a little. El checks the time then looks back at Will, still glum.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I have an idea-- just tell Bo you need to see him in the supply closet for a 're-inventory.'

El raises her eyebrows. Will rolls her eyes, doesn't see that happening. She turns up the music to change the subject.

51 INT. REC CENTER - A FEW MINUTES LATER

51

The room is filled with pageant CONTESTANTS dressed in WORKOUT GEAR, toned and tan, warming up to TWANGY MUSIC with Rosie who's in a leotard and dance skirt.

Will and El walk in late. Rosie tries to ignore it.

ROSIE

Okay, is everybody warmed up?

Contestants glare disapprovingly at Will's pajamas as she and El gravitate to the BACK ROW next to Hannah (in black jeans/combat boots) and Millie (in a pink sweat suit).

Will mock 'stretches' to Hannah's amusement.

Rosie looks around the room--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Who's memorized the dance steps from the link I sent out?

Most hands shoot up, including MILLIE'S. Will looks at her, *put your hand down*. Millie slowly retracts.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Bekah, why don't you come up and demonstrate for us.

ON BEKAH, walking her perfect lithesome limbs forward. On top of Bekah being thin and beautiful, she's also coordinated. God giveth from both hands.

ON CALLIE, a flash of jealousy.

ON ROSIE, scanning the room...

ROSIE (CONT'D)

And... Ellen, why don't you come up as well. Let's see how these steps fit together.

Ellen, caught off-guard, comes forward. Will watches, agog.

ON WILL'S POV as Ellen joins Bekah and Rosie at the front. Rosie starts the music. Adding insult to injury, Ellen KNOWS THE DANCE STEPS and performs them quite gracefully alongside Bekah.

ON CALLIE, doing the steps, eyeing BEKAH as her competition.

At the end of the sequence, the room claps for this attractive duo as Bekah high-fives El--

BEKAH

That was awesome!

ROSIE

Beautiful, girls.

(to the room)

The difference between winning and losing is *all* in the details, so practice, practice, practice!... it will serve you well in life. Okay--

(to Bekah and Ellen)

You two stay where you are and everyone else... Let's try it from the top! Five counts left. Five counts right...eight counts front, eight counts back... repeat...

El self-consciously gets back into position next to Bekah.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Oh, and a friendly reminder as you're preparing your talent audition, whatever you choose must be deemed 'appropriate' by our panel of judges, so save the sexy, girls... you're not in *Sweet Water*.

OFF THE MUSIC starting back up...

52

CUT TO: LATER--

52

At the end of rehearsal, El starts to walk back to Will who's fuming.

WILL

Nice moves.

ELLEN

Will, I just watched the video once. They're easy steps. What's the big deal?

WILL

The big deal is you're prancing around like the perfect little pageant girl, which is the opposite of our point.

Ellen takes a breath. She looks at Millie.

ELLEN

Maybe there's a better way to make your point besides just trying to ruin it for everybody else.

Ouch. After eleven years of solidarity, Will feels betrayed.

WILL

Ruin it? That is the point. But you wouldn't understand because you're not built for the revolution.

ELLEN

What are you talking about?

WILL

You have to quit. You're the kind of person who could actually win, El, without even trying.

ELLEN

Wait, so you're judging me for the way I look?

Will doesn't see it like that.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

Has it occurred to you that I feel as out of place here as you do?

WILL

You actually seemed quite comfortable up there. I thought you hated pageants.

ELLEN

(realizing)

I never gave them a chance because I always listened to you!!

Ellen sees CALLIE by the door with Rosie. She turns to Will with a pained look.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I can't believe you think you get to pick and choose who joins... "the revolution."

Ellen marches toward Callie.

WILL

Oh, great, yeah, run away with Coppertone Callie and live happily ever after at the store that hates fat people.

Ellen spins around, comes back to Will--

ELLEN

For your information, Willowdean, I  
NEVER thought of you as 'fat.'

Ellen turns, heartbroken, making a beeline for the door.

ON WILL, flushed cheeks, catching her reflection in the  
mirror, feeling so stupid standing there in her pajamas.

ON THE REVOLUTIONARY EAVESDROPPERS, an awkward beat.

Hannah stands, camo bag over shoulder, to Will--

HANNAH

I did think of you as fat, since  
we're doing like a truth-telling  
thing.

Will ignores Hannah, her eyes on Ellen as she leaves with  
Callie.

53 OMITTED 53

54 OMITTED 54

A54 OMITTED A54

B54 OMITTED B54

C54 EXT. REC CENTER STAIRS - A LITTLE LATER C54

Will sits on the steps, stuck between regret and indignation,  
staring at El's empty parking spot. She puts in her earbuds,  
stands, and walks away.

55 INT. DICKSON HOUSE/KITCHEN - LATER THAT DAY 55

Will gets home, goes into the kitchen, opens the fridge: a  
lonely saran-wrapped salad stares back at her. Oh joy.

She hears VOICES upstairs. What now?

A55 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS A55

Eating the salad, Will comes up the stairs, overhearing--

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Thank you for your help, Miss Rosie. My mama just doesn't get all this pageant stuff. Sometimes I'm not sure she gets me, to be honest.

ROSIE (O.S.)

Well that's a shame, but not everybody understands what the pageant's all about.

56 INT. LUCY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

56

Will peeks into Lucy's room (now cluttered with Rosie's CRAFT SUPPLIES, PROPS, SEWING MACHINE and FABRIC BOLTS), seeing her mom PIN A DRESS for BEKAH COTTER. Will tries to duck out as Rosie glances up--

ROSIE

Oh Will, you know Bekah...

WILL

Yeah, of course, hey.

BEKAH

Hi!

(having a moment)

You are so lucky, your mom is so good at... *everything!*

Rosie soaks up the appreciation like a desert plant.

ROSIE

Oh this fits you so well, it barely needs a thing.

(holding hem, distracted)

Dumplin', could you grab me my extra pins from the desk?

Will cringes, reluctantly crossing the room to get the pins.

BEKAH

(suddenly clicking)

Wait, don't you work at Harpy's with Bo Larson?

Will nods as casually as she can, hands the pins to her mom.

BEKAH (CONT'D)

(to Rosie)

Bo's a new boy at our school. *Such a cutie.*

(to Will)

Am I right?

Will nods uncomfortably as she gravitates to the door.

BEKAH (CONT'D)  
 (a little secret)  
 I'm gonna ask him to Sadie Hawkins.

Will feels nauseous, escaping--

WILL  
 G'night.

Bekah and Rosie look up, she's already gone.

ON WILL, in the hallway, heading to her room...

ROSIE (O.S.)  
 You think you'll need any help  
 fitting your talent costume?

BEKAH (O.S.)  
 I'm just gonna wear my leotard and  
 boots, so I'm fine there, Miss  
 Rosie, thank you.

57 INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

57

Will closes her door, distraught, desperately in need of her best friend. Lucy's POSTER taunts her, Dolly's encouraging smile comin' at her like a pair of headlights.

Will picks up her phone, clicking 'FAVORITES.' She presses 'CALL' before losing her nerve.

ELLEN (O.S.)  
 Hello.

CUT BETWEEN WILL AND ELLEN (**AT SWEET 16**, folding clothes).

WILL  
 (her best apology)  
 2007. First single released on her  
 very own record label.

ELLEN  
 (not playing)  
 I'm at work right now.

WILL  
 Oh, okay.  
 (long silent beat)  
 El, this just feels wrong, us  
 fighting.

ELLEN

Yes, it does. And so does rejecting people for things they can't change.

Will closes her eyes, knows El's right. We hear someone (Callie?!) calling for 'El-bell' in the b.g.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

I have to go.

The phone clicks. Will falls onto the bed, on her side, staring at the wall, heartbroken.

A57 INT. LUCY'S BEDROOM - ALCOVE - DAY (2007) A57

Lucy and Young Will are dancing around to Dolly, having a dreamy good time. Will looks up at Lucy, that bee broach, that smile.

Will is suddenly ALONE in the alcove dancing.

FROM THE FAR END OF LUCY'S ROOM, we watch Young Will standing alone.

B57 INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - MORNING B57

Will wakes with a start. She looks around... no Lucy, no alcove, no Dolly music. She stares at all of Lucy's boxes crowding her room. Will climbs out of bed, goes to a box labeled 'DONATE.'

Will starts digging through it, for what she doesn't exactly know, just excavating on instinct, pulling out costumes and wigs, a MAGICIAN'S CAPE, WAND, and BOOK OF MAGIC. She flips through the book, pausing at the DISAPPEARING COIN trick.

Will digs deeper into the box. Underneath some scraps of leopard skin fabrics, she finds Lucy's DOLLY PARTON FAN CLUB BINDER. She stops, almost afraid to open this pandora's box. Slowly, she peers inside... secretary minutes to Lucy's Fan Club meetings; ticket stubs, press clippings, and...

A COLORFUL FLIER: **'DOLLY PARTON NIGHT EVERY SATURDAY AT THE HIDEAWAY...9PM...BRING YOUR FRIENDS!'**

Will stares at the flier, compelled, her eyes traveling to her phone.

CLOSE ON THE PHONE as Will starts to TEXT Ellen then erases it with a deep sigh.

She looks at her Magic 8-Ball, picks it up.

WILL  
Should I ask the freakshow?

She gives the ball a shake.

ON THE ORACLE: *As I see it, yes.*

Swallowing her pride, Will starts a GROUP TEXT to Millie and Hannah: FIELD TRIP. 8PM SATURDAY. BRING WHEELS.

58 OMITTED 58

59 OMITTED 59

60 OMITTED 60

61 INT. MILLIE'S VAN/EXT. THE HIDEAWAY - SATURDAY NIGHT 61

Millie pulls into a roadside restaurant parking lot...

MILLIE  
I've never been this far away from  
home...

She pulls into a parking spot with a little screech as the girls spy a group of BIKERS heading inside.

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
This feels so exciting and  
dangerous!!

HANNAH  
Millie, nothing within a hundred  
miles of Clover City warrants that  
kind of enthusiasm.

WILL  
C'mon.

They get out of the van.

62 EXT. THE HIDEAWAY - CONTINUOUS 62

The girls approach the entrance, spotting a BOUNCER. Hannah looks at Will--

HANNAH  
What was your plan to get us in?

ON WILL, plan? They reach the door.

BOUNCER

I.D's.

HANNAH

No wonder your Aunt Lucy never brought you here. It's a bar.

DALE (O.C.)

Lucy who?

The girls look up at DALE (40's, the manager).

WILL

Uh, Lucy Dickson... she was--

DALE

I knew Lucy pretty well. I'm really sorry. She was good people.  
(reaches out his hand)  
The name's Dale.

WILL

Willowdean.

DALE

So you're Willowdean.

Dale looks at his bouncer with a nod. The girls are impressed as the bouncer steps aside, letting them pass--

BOUNCER

If any of you so much as look at the bar, you're out.

63 INT. THE HIDEAWAY - CONTINUOUS

63

The girls walk down a long, dimly-lit hall, lights up ahead.

HANNAH

Why do I feel like we're about to join a cult?

They pop out the other side into a music hall, finding a table close to the STAGE, as far from the bar as possible.

M.C. (O.S.)

Tramps, vagabonds, ladies and lords, welcome to Dolly Parton Night at The Hideaway!

The crowd goes wild. The girls sit down.

M.C. (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Y'all give a warm Texas welcome  
 to... Miss Candee Disch!

A SPOTLIGHT hits center stage on CANDEE DISCH, HUGE BLONDE HAIR, floor-length velvet gown... Dolly Parton from another dimension, singing *JUST BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN*. \*

ON THE GIRLS, awed, but something a bit 'off' that they can't quite put their finger on. Millie leans over--

MILLIE  
 Willowdean, correct me if I'm  
 wrong, but that is a man. A very  
 lovely man. Is it not?

Will has just had the same realization. She nods, seems so.

64 CUT TO: A WHOLE ROW OF 'DOLLYS' stepping onto the stage for <sup>64</sup>  
*TWO DOORS DOWN*, dancing and singing and having a party. \*

FLASH ON WILL looking at Millie and Hannah, mouths agape--

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
 Sweet Baby Jesus.

HANNAH  
 I'm almost impressed.

Will can't help but smile, looking back at the stage, equally amazed at the sashaying of hips as the Dollys infiltrate the audience, throwing FEATHER BOAS over our girls' shoulders, getting them up and out of their seats to sing and dance along. It takes a rather burly Dolly to coax Hannah who finally gives in much to Will's surprise.

TIME LAPSE:

65 M.C./CANDEE DISCH 65  
 Hallelou y'all! The god of wigs is  
 shining down upon us tonight...  
 Back by popular demand, a  
 miraculous arrangement, let's put  
 our manicures together for the one,  
 the only... Miss Rhea Ranged!!

The crowd goes crazy as a spotlight finds our headliner, RHEA RANGED, glorious blonde wig, Dolly-inspired sequin dress.

RHEA RANGED  
 Y'all know what Dolly said...

## THE BAR PATRONS

'It's a good thing I was born a girl, otherwise I'd be a drag queen!'

## RHEA RANGED

Oooh, y'all are mind readers!

(looks around)

Oh it's good to be home.

(cheers and whistles)

Thank you for missing me. It can get lonely out there on the road, spreading the gospel of Dolly to every Tom, Dick and Kenny. But it's my calling, so what's a girl to do?

'JOLENE' begins to percolate in the b.g. The bar erupts into CHEERS as Rhea Ranged LIP SYNCs this Dolly classic.

ON WILL, an unbridled enthusiasm she can't help but share with Millie and Hannah--

## WILL

This is my favorite song.

The bar patrons - and Will - all sing along with Rhea, something so poignant about this ballad coming from a man dressed as a woman pleading with a woman to not take her man. When the tempo suddenly changes to a 'DISCOFIED' JOLENE, everyone in the bar stands up to DANCE.

ON WILL, floored by this new spin on her favorite song.

## WILL (CONT'D)

(to Millie & Hannah)

What is happening?! Bootleg Dolly!!

Will is sucked into the disco Dolly vortex, singing and dancing along. As Rhea brings home the song, she CATCHES WILL'S EYE and WINKS just as the lights DROP OUT.

ON WILL, forever changed by this moment, a moment she can't deny she has shared with *Millie and Hannah*.

As people around them start to leave, Dale comes to the girls' table, touching Will's arm.

## DALE

Someone would like to say a quick hello to you, if you have a minute.

Will looks at the girls, Millie gives her a smile--

## MILLIE

We'll meet you in the van.

66 EXT./INT. HIDEAWAY DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

66

Dale leads Will down a darkened hallway...

DALE

What'd you think of the show?

WILL

I think it's safe to say it was a formative experience.

Dale chuckles, opening the door to a robed LEE WAYNE ('Rhea Ranged'), sitting at his vanity, deconstructing Dolly. When Lee sees Will in the mirror, he stands with open arms--

LEE

*Child*, I saw you in the audience and thought I was seeing the ghost of Lucy Dickson, bless her soul.

WILL

I can't believe you knew my aunt. \*

LEE \*

(holds her hands) \*

Your Lucy was such a beauty, inside and out. \*

Will nods, welling up at the outpouring for Lucy. Lee backs up and marvels at Will's eyes, a quick look to Dale.

LEE (CONT'D)

I cannot get over the resemblance. Genetics... You can run, but ya can't hide. I've got my daddy's nose to prove it.

Lee laughs, looking in the mirror at his not-very-Dolly-nose, drawing him back to his vanity to finish removing his makeup.

Dale heads out as Will gravitates over to Lee's vanity, fascinated by his Dolly accoutrements. Lee peels off an eyelash, studying Will in the mirror, reading her mind...

LEE (CONT'D)

It's just not the same around here without her.

Will nods.

WILL \*

I just wish I could talk to her. \*

LEE \*

I do too, sugar, I do too. \*

WILL

I think I came tonight to try and  
feel somehow closer to her. She  
used to help me think through  
everything and now... I got myself  
into something, for her really, and  
I don't know what I'm doing.

\*  
\*

Lee removes his wig, his masculinity reemerging. He stares  
at his reflection, having a moment.

\*

LEE

I understand. You know if it  
weren't for your Lucy, I would  
never have gotten up on that stage  
in the first place.

\*

(a little lump)

She somehow knew that's where I  
belonged. She saw it before I did.

Lee looks at a lost Will, coming to the rescue.

\*

LEE (CONT'D)

I bet we already know what she  
would say.

\*  
\*

Will looks at Lee like she's forgotten.

LEE (CONT'D)

*Go big or go home*, but either way--

\*

WILL

Do it in a red pair of shoes.

\*  
\*

Will and Lee share a smile-- *exactly*. Lee sighs.

\*

LEE

But in all fairness, it took Lucy a  
while to get *all the way* there,  
like it does most of us. You know  
that Dolly saying, 'figure out who  
you are and do it on purpose?'

Will nods, she does. Lee stands, zeroing in.

LEE (CONT'D)

Imagine if you just jumped right  
in. Mother may I? Yes. You. May.

\*

Lee plants a very maternal RED KISS on Will's forehead.

\*

LEE (CONT'D)

We're always here for you  
sugarplum.

\*  
\*  
\*

67 INT. MILLIE'S VAN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

67

Will climbs into the van, a bit dazed.

HANNAH

You've got big red lips on your forehead.

Will touches her forehead, may never wipe it off.

MILLIE

What happened in there?

Will looks at Millie, big girl to big girl.

WILL

I heard Lucy's voice.

MILLIE

(mesmerized)

What did she say?

WILL

(still digesting it)

She said... *go for it.*

Millie smiles like it's Christmas morning.

OFF WILL, trying to figure out what this means for her.

A67 OMITTED

A67

B67 EXT. DICKSON PORCH - DAY

B67

Will reclines on a bench reading her MAGIC BOOK. She checks her phone with a sigh, dreading a call she has to make. She dials. As the person on the other end picks up--

WILL

Hey Marcus, it's Will. I'm not gonna make it in today. Actually, for a while. Can you let Ron know.

(listens)

You guys will be *fine*.

(listens)

No, I can't.

(listens; reluctant)

*Because...* I'm doing the pageant, okay.

(frustrated)

Yes I'm serious.

(as if someone's calling)

I gotta go.

She hangs up. Stares at her magic book.

68 INT. REC CENTER - THE NEXT AFTERNOON 68

CONTESTANTS watch each other audition their 'talent' in front of a panel of JUDGES (including ROSIE).

Bekah finishes a BATON TWIRLING extravaganza, contorting into a one-handed back-bend for her final astounding feat.

Rosie doesn't even need to confer with her fellow judges...

ROSIE

Approved. Thank you, Bekah.

(to everyone)

Just a reminder, final approval for talent costumes and formal wear will be on the day of your personal interview.

(quoting the bylaw)

'Any changes beyond minor modifications thereafter will result in immediate disqualification,' that includes *hemline* girls, so save the surprises for the *audience*, not the judges.

(moving on, her list)

Okay, next up we have Ellen Dryver.

69 ELLEN takes the stage wearing a western-themed dance costume and CLOGS. With impressive skill, Ellen CLOGS her heart out. Her fellow contestants CHEER, Callie the annoyingly loudest.

QUICK CUT TO: THE JUDGES, APPROVED.

70 -A YODELER. APPROVED. 70

AA70 OMITTED AA70

AB70 -A TUMBLER in a backbend loop. APPROVED. AB70

AC70 -A FLAG GIRL. APPROVED. AC70

AD70 -A VIOLINIST (*Devil Went Down To Georgia*). APPROVED. AD70

A70 -QUICK CUT TO MILLIE, looking intimidated by the competition. A70

B70 -QUICK CUT TO HANNAH, cracking her knuckles. B70

71 OMITTED 71

AA71 OMITTED AA71

AB71 -QUICK CUT TO WILL, a worried look as she glances down at ~~the~~ the water bottle in her hands.

A71 -A DANCER in a SEXY CHICAGO-style costume, twerking. A71

B71 QUICK CUT TO ROSIE, shaking her head, absolutely not. B71

72 Millie, clearly nervous, carries hula hoops onto the stage.72  
The other CONTESTANTS titter, poor Millie. Millie starts to hula hoop and soft shoe while SINGING, trying really hard... A little too hard, but--

*APPROVED.*

73 HANNAH takes the stage in (shocker) ALL BLACK. She stands 73 there for a moment in silence, then--

HANNAH

Hey Hey! Ho Ho! Patriarchy has got to go! Hey Hey! Ho Ho! Patriarchy has got to go!

She lifts her fist into the air. A long beat.

ON ROSIE--

ROSIE

Is that... it?  
(appears so)  
I'm sorry, we can't approve that, it's technically not a *talent*.

Hannah starts to walk off then looks over at Millie and Will, realizing this would mean she's out for good. She backtracks.

HANNAH

Could I try one more thing?

Rosie nods, a little reluctantly.

Hannah shouts a loud 'KIAI' and swings into an intimidating series of BLACK BELT maneuvers, culminating in a 'death fall.'

ON THE CONTESTANTS and JUDGES, scared shitless...

ON ROSIE, *approved*.

ON WILL, impressed but now even more nervous.

74 ON WILL'S RED ALL-STARS standing on stage. We PAN UP to her74 MAGICIAN'S CAPE, Will determined, but only half-prepared.

WILL

Here in my hand is a perfectly normal water bottle, one that I drank out of earlier this morning. And a regular quarter...

Will tosses the QUARTER into the air and catches it with flair.

WILL (CONT'D)

...which is going to magically travel *through* the bottle.

Will accidentally DROPS THE QUARTER TO THE FLOOR. The room grows uncomfortably quiet as Will searches for the quarter.

From the audience--

CALLIE

To your left!

Will bends down to pick up the quarter, trying to play it off as she attempts the trick one more time with a flourish. Again, the quarter FALLS TO THE FLOOR.

Exasperated, Will picks up the quarter, finds the 'secret' slit and SHOVES IT THROUGH. The opposite of magic.

ON FELLOW CONTESTANTS, embarrassed for her. Ellen has to look away, too painful to watch. The ONLY ONE CLAPPING is MILLIE. Will looks to the wincing judges (ugh, her *mom*), contrite--

WILL

I'll practice more. I promise.

The judges huddle a beat, then, reluctantly--

ROSIE

Approved based solely on that assurance.

Will nods, humiliated and humbled.

75

INT. DICKSON KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

75

Will comes into the kitchen, carrying her bag. She finds Rosie in her scrubs, finishing a salad before she goes to work. Will checks the fridge, waiting for something to magically appear.

ROSIE

(re: her talent audition)

Well, that certainly was a surprise  
and the one free pass you weren't  
supposed to get from me.

WILL

I don't want to talk about it.

Rosie searches for answers.

ROSIE

You know, I really don't get why  
you're doing this pageant, why  
you're putting yourself *and the  
rest of us* through this.

Will slams the fridge.

WILL

Sorry to be such a burden.

Will runs upstairs.

ON ROSIE, frustrated. She puts down her fork.

A75

EXT./INT. WILL'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A75

Will comes up the stairs, taking refuge in her room. She  
throws her bag down, looking around at Lucy's boxes, wishing  
she could cry.

Rosie comes up the stairs and stands at Will's door--

ROSIE

Dumplin'--

WILL

(cutting her off)

Do you miss her?

A beat. Rosie softens.

ROSIE

Yes, of course I do.

Will looks at Lucy's boxes, wondering--

WILL

Did Lucy ever talk about doing the  
pageant?

Rosie's surprised by the question and certain of the answer--

ROSIE

No. M-mm. It wasn't her thing.

Will nods, not surprised by that response.

WILL

I can see why.

(beat)

It's harder than it looks.

Rosie smiles a little at that.

ROSIE

It's okay to ask for help you know.  
You don't have to do it all on your  
own.

Will stares at the ground, but nods, enough acknowledgement  
for Rosie who lingers a moment, then leaves.

76	OMITTED	76
77	OMITTED	77
78	OMITTED	78
A79	OMITTED	A79
79	INT. WILL'S RED GRAND PRIX/EXT. ROAD - A FEW DAYS LATER	79

Will drives through town, window down, Dolly on. She rolls  
past Boot Camp JOGGERS, one lagging a bit behind... *Millie*.

A shocked Will slows, rolling down her window--

WILL

Millie!

Millie sees Will, waves with a smile, jogging over to say Hi  
to Will as she pulls over.

WILL (CONT'D)

What are you doing??

MILLIE

I thought this would be a nice way  
to get to know some of the girls.

Will stares at Millie like she's a scientific discovery as Millie glances around nervously--

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I just need to blend in, in case my mom drives by.

WILL

Blend in? Why?

MILLIE

Because I forged my mom's signature on my pageant application, she thinks I joined needlepoint club.

WILL

(shocked)

Millie, it's gonna be nearly impossible to keep your mom from finding out.

MILLIE

I don't have a choice. When I asked her, she said no, a *church no*, which means don't ask again. So I just have to stay one step ahead of her.

Millie looks at her squad, now many steps ahead of her, then quickly to Will--

MILLIE (CONT'D)

I'll see you later at the Hideaway.

WILL

Okay, Millie.

A TRUCK passes by, INSULTS shouted at Millie. In quick succession--

WILL (CONT'D)

(out her window)

Eat shit!!

MILLIE

(from the sidewalk)

We'll pray for you!!

(to Will, little wave)

Bye, Will!

Millie runs to catch up to her squad.

81	OMITTED	81
82	OMITTED	82
83	OMITTED	83
84	OMITTED	84
85	OMITTED	85
86	OMITTED	86
87	OMITTED	87
88	OMITTED	88
89	OMITTED	89
90	OMITTED	90
91	OMITTED	91
A91	EXT. HARPY'S BURGERS & DOGS - A LITTLE LATER	A91
	Will walks from her car toward Harpy's, grateful the back door is propped open with a bucket.	
AA91	OMITTED	AA91
AB91	INT. EMPLOYEE LOCKERS/HARPY'S - A FEW MINUTES LATER	AB91
	Will (now in uniform) puts her street clothes into her locker then heads through the STORAGE ROOM to get to the register.	
	Bo sees her, trying to catch her eye, but Will keeps moving, passing Marcus--	

MARCUS

Table 9 needs water.

Marcus goes to pin orders on Bo's carousel as Will picks up the pitcher of water, walking toward table 9, recognizing TWO of Bo's preppy FRIENDS from Holy Cross, sitting with DATES (17), one of whom we recognize from the pageant. PAGEANT GIRL looks up as Will gets to the table and pours water.

PAGEANT GIRL

Oh, hey.

Will smiles thinly, would love to disappear right about now.

PAGEANT GIRL (CONT'D)

Are you gonna make it to pageant practice today?

Everyone at the table pauses.

WILL

No, I have to work the rest of the day.

Bo's bell dings, her out--

WILL (CONT'D)

I'll be right back.

As Will turns, she hears the GUYS at the table SNICKERING. Will passes Marcus--

WILL (CONT'D)

Can you take their order, I'll be right back.

Will walks out. Bo's eyes follow her.

B91 EXT. HARPY'S - CONTINUOUS

B91

Will comes out carrying a garbage bag. She throws it into the dumpster, taking out some aggression. The door behind her opens, she doesn't turn around.

BO (O.C.)

Will. Everything okay?

WILL

Yeah.

BO

That's the first time I've ever heard you give a one-word answer, to anything.

She doesn't respond. He closes the door, comes closer.

BO (CONT'D)

You've been hard to pin down, so  
I'm just gonna come out and say it.  
I like you Willowdean.

She turns--

WILL

WHY? What about Bekah?

BO

(confused)

Bekah?! What about her? She asked  
me to a dance, that's it. We don't  
have a single thing in common.

WILL

I don't understand.

BO

It's pretty simple.

WILL

No, it's not. We don't work in the  
real world, *trust me*. You're  
*supposed* to be with someone like  
Bekah.

BO

What are you talking about?

WILL

I'm talking about this!!

(her body)

Do you have any idea what you'd  
have to put up with to be with me??  
The constant stares, the little  
jabs, the laughs behind your back--

BO

You never struck me as someone who  
cared too much about what other  
people think.

WILL

Yeah, well, you don't get it  
because you haven't been tormented  
your whole life. It wears you down.  
And the worst part is, in your  
case, it would be because of *me*.

She starts to walk back to the door.

BO

You think I don't know what it feels like to be on the outside? I was the poor kid at the rich prep school - I always stuck out--

WILL

I can't, Bo. Not a public thing. That might make me a coward, but--

BO

It does.

She turns, surprised. Bo finds her eyes.

BO (CONT'D)

Willowdean Dickson, I think you are *beautiful*. To hell with anyone who's ever made you feel anything less.

(a long beat)

But it doesn't really matter what I think, does it?...

His point hangs there. Will feels an overwhelming grief. She turns, goes through the door, leaving Bo outside.

BA91 INT. HIDEAWAY BAR -- A LITTLE LATER (7:30PM)

BA91

Hannah stands by the stage, holding her phone as it rings and rings, Millie and Lee in the B.G. as Lee demonstrates how to walk in heels.

LEE

Either you own this stage or *it* owns you, and it's all in the hips, baby girl.

Millie gives it a try, taking to it like a duck to water.

LEE (CONT'D)

That's it! One foot in front of the other sets the ocean in motion!

ON HANNAH, Will's voicemail picking up. Frustrated, Hannah hangs up.

C91 INT. DICKSON HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

C91

Will comes home to an empty house, unraveling. She stands at Rosie's bedroom door, staring at a sequined PAGEANT GOWN hanging on a steamer, getting ready for its big day, Rosie's CROWN displayed on the dresser.

Will's phone buzzes. She looks at it: a TEXT from HANNAH: **Where RU? You said 7.** Will stares at it. Hannah texts **weapons and explosion emojis.** Will puts her phone in her pocket and rushes up the stairs into her bedroom, moving to her desk with a fury as she takes out Lucy's pageant application and RIPS IT TO PIECES. Will looks around, suddenly feeling suffocated by Lucy's boxes.

D91 INT. DICKSON HALLWAY/WILL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS D91

Will pushes and pulls boxes out of her room, into the hallway, with an intensity that builds until she's got every box at the top of the stairs and her room is empty.

DA91 INT. LUCY'S ROOM/ALCOVE - CONTINUOUS DA91

Will ventures into Lucy's room, past Rosie's sewing machine, props, and craft supplies.

She goes to the CLOSED DOOR of the alcove, slowly turning the knob, not sure what she'll find behind this door...

REVEAL THE ALCOVE: preserved exactly as it was when Lucy was alive, untouched by Rosie. Will exhales, tears streaming as she steps inside, like a portal back in time.

E91 OMITTED E91

EA91 INT. LUCY'S ALCOVE - NEXT MORNING EA91

Will wakes up on the floor of the alcove to the sound of the DOORBELL ringing over and over again.

F91 INT. DICKSON HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - A MINUTE LATER F91

A sleepy-eyed Will opens the door, finding Hannah on the porch, about to open a window.

WILL  
What are you doing?

Hannah pauses.

HANNAH  
I was looking for a way to break in  
cuz you weren't answering.  
(levels her eyes at Will)  
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Thanks for leaving us hanging last night. I was forced to walk in heels with a drag queen breathing down my neck.

Will crosses her arms, leaning against the door jam. Hannah studies her, intuiting--

HANNAH (CONT'D)

I know what you're doing.

WILL

It was a bad idea to begin with...  
(I'm out).

(off Hannah's look)

Look, Hannah, girls like us, we get two choices... to be miserable in private or crucified in public. Why make it *harder*?

HANNAH

That's a load of crap. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. So girls like us don't get invited to beauty contests. Why are you acting so surprised?

WILL

Why do you suddenly care so much??

Hannah sighs.

HANNAH

Because this morning Millie's mom found her binder and freaked. Millie told her how your mom runs the pageant and is letting you do it, and Mrs. Upchuck finally agreed, so long as you're there to look out for her, like a big-girls-stick-together thing.

WILL

Sorry, that sucks.

Hannah stares at her.

HANNAH

So that's it. That's all you're gonna say? I was so wrong about you. Turns out you're just like everybody else.

Hannah takes something out of her pocket, slams it down on the porch banister.

HANNAH (CONT'D)  
Thanks for the protest.

Hannah walks away.

OFF WILL, her eyes landing on the SALT SHAKER from Harpy's.

G91 EXT. DICKSON HOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

G91

Will shoves a box into her trunk among other boxes she's already wedged in. She tries to close the trunk. It won't close. She slams it down, over and over again, nope. She lifts the trunk, rips open the offending box that's bulging. She pulls out everything from the top of the box and drops it on the ground, SLAMMING the trunk closed. Finally, it sticks.

Will looks down at her feet, some random items including a velvet jewelry box. She stares at the box.

ON THE BOX, opening: an assortment of costume jewelry, Lucy's BEE BROACH glistening like a diamond in a rhinestone world.

OFF WILL'S look--

The SOUND of a phone ringing and then Will's voice--

WILL  
I'm not prepared.

HANNAH (O.S.)  
We have time.

ON WILL, sighing.

WILL  
It's gonna be a total disaster.

HANNAH (O.S.)  
I'm kind of counting on it.

OFF WILL'S LOOK--

CUE LOUD, FUN MUSIC as we land on--

92 OMITTED

92

93 SLOW-MO OF OUR REVOLUTIONARIES WALKING TOWARD US, HOLDING 93  
BOLTS OF FABRICS, A LUCY BOX, AND GARMENT BAGS.

94 OMIT

\*

95 MONTAGE:

95

-The girls dig through LUCY'S BOX, pulling out costume jewelry and muumuus.

-Lee tries on one of Lucy's MUUMUUS... the girls laugh at how enormous it is on him. Lee grabs a black sash and belts it, suddenly fabulous. The girls look at each other, *schooled*.

-Millie, Hannah and Will TRY ON DOLLY COSTUMES, playing dress-up. Hannah struts around in a BREAST PLATE, making everyone laugh. (Will notices MAGIC PROPS around Candee Disch's dressing vanity.)

\*  
\*  
\*

-DALE MEASURES WILL from head-to-toe as Lee ponders her like the Mona Lisa.

\*  
\*

WILL

What are you seeing?

\*

Lee looks *into* Will more than at her.

\*

LEE

I see a fitted bodice, sequins flowing down to the ground... as you walk, a feathered collar is lifted by a mystical breeze.

Will swallows, looking around the room, not seeing ANYTHING like that on the racks. As if reading her mind--

LEE (CONT'D)

First, you have to see it in here, baby girl...

Lee points to Will's heart. Will nods, getting that.

\*

-Candee does Millie's makeup, another DRAG does her hair. REVEAL: Millie's drag makeover. OFF THE GIRLS reaction.

\*  
\*

-ON THE HIDEAWAY STAGE... the girls practice the steps to their OPENING NUMBER. Lee yawns. He walks center-stage demonstrating how the steps *should* be done... with flair.

\*

-Millie brings out her hula hoops. Lee shakes his head, no. He plants her in front of the mic, chin up. Millie sings, arms out. Lee settles her, be still, *sometimes* less is more.

-Candee Disch works with Will, helping refine her magic act (scarf trick).

\*  
\*

-Will sits at the Hideaway MIXING BOARD, collaborating with the SOUND GUY - both wearing headphones - working on a track. Will smiles, *loving* what she's hearing.

-Lee teaches the girls to WALK IN HEELS. They teeter, trying to get the hang of it. \*

LEE (CONT'D) \*  
 Chin up baby girls, the only thing \*  
 you'll find on this floor is a \*  
 dirty penny and your attention's \*  
 worth more than that! Bend your \*  
 knees and breathe!! \*

The girls bend and breathe, a little too much. \*

LEE (CONT'D) \*  
 Not that much! \*

They pulls back a bit, settling into their stride. \*

LEE (CONT'D) \*  
 That's it. One foot in front of the \*  
 other sets the ocean in motion. \*

Lee whips a turn, kicks up his heel much to Millie's delight. \*

Hannah sets her ocean in motion... a little too much as she FALLS right off the stage. \*

Millie, Will and Lee HALT, OH NO.

A STILETTO juts into the air--

HANNAH (O.C.) \*  
 I'm okay. I am o-kay. \*

DISSOLVE TO:

A95 -Will pulls up to a DONATION CENTER in her red Grand PrixA95  
 She opens her trunk and stares at the remaining BOXES. She  
 pulls one out and carries it inside.

96 EXT. CLOVER CITY CIVIC AUDITORIUM - A FEW DAYS LATER 96

Behold the Grand Palais of Clover City as Will pulls up in her car, jumping out with her garment bag, rushing to the door where Millie nervously waits with her garment bag.

WILL \*  
 I told Lee I needed my wardrobe by \*  
 noon and he said-- \*  
 (her best Lee) \*  
 (MORE) \*

WILL (CONT'D)

'I'm a designer, sugar plum, not a magician.'

MILLIE

But the approval deadline is *today*.

WILL

I know! I had to bring backups.

97 OMITTED

97

A97 INT. CLOVER CITY CIVIC AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

A97

Will and Millie rush inside to find Hannah (holding a garment bag) staring at a display case of BLUEBONNET CROWNS from years past. They pull Hannah along, walking in unified stride as Will channels her inner-pageant coach--

WILL

Okay, remember... speak clearly, you never get a second chance at a first impression. Avoid using 'um' and 'like,' makes us sound ignorant; be brief, it's a sign of confidence, and speak from experience, it shows you've lived a life worth paying attention to.

(realizing)

Those are all Rosie-isms.

Millie's impressed... Hannah, suddenly nervous, slowing to a stop, hands to knees.

HANNAH

Public speaking makes me want to barf.

Will and Millie link their arms through hers, moving them all forward.

98 INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

98

All the contestants sit together in front of an empty stage that faces THREE JUDGES. Will suddenly spots ELLEN sitting next to Callie a few rows away. Will tries not to stare.

Rosie steps onto the stage.

ROSIE

Welcome to the preliminary event of this year's Clover City Miss Teen pageant.

(MORE)

ROSIE (CONT'D)

I'd like to introduce you to your esteemed pageant judges... Ms. Tabitha Herrera from Tabitha's salon, 'elevating hair for over two decades.'

CUT TO MS. TABITHA, big hair, bigger highlights.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Mr. Clay Dooley of Clay Dooley Chevy 'where value meets quality.'

CUT TO CLAY DOOLEY, a salesman's smile.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

And Miss Burgundy McCall, a former Miss Teen herself who now graces the halls of Century 21.

CUT TO MISS BURGUNDY, beauty queen-turned-realtor.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Now I'll turn it over to our judges who will randomly select names and questions for our contestants.

Tabitha reaches into a plastic bin, pulls out the 'winner.'

ON BEKAH, hoping it's her.

MISS BURGUNDY

Miss Willowdean Dickson.

ON WILL, horrified she has to go first. She stands, having to shimmy past knees to get to the stage, catching El's eye in the process.

Will takes her place behind the mic.

MISS BURGUNDY (CONT'D)

Our question for you today is:  
define 'loyalty.'

Will takes her time to find her answer, a strange calm coming over her.

WILL

Loyalty.

Will is struck by the word, what it's come to mean to her. She glances at Ellen and then Hannah and Millie, speaking from the heart--

WILL (CONT'D)

Loyalty means never giving up on someone, even through doubts and differences. It's a noun with action behind it, fueled by shared experiences that are meaningful, memorable and... irreplaceable.

Will's eyes connect with Ellen's...

WILL (CONT'D)

But loyalty isn't blind love, it shouldn't be taken for granted. Loyalty means telling someone they're wrong when no one else will, or apologizing when you're wrong, in honor of the trust you've built over time.

Will takes a breath, a bit emotional as she distills it...

WILL (CONT'D)

Loyalty is true friendship.

ON ELLEN, Will's answer bringing tears to her eyes.

ON ROSIE, pleasantly surprised.

ON THE JUDGES, impressed, moved.

MISS BURGUNDY

Thank you, Miss Dickson.

Will steps off the stage, following an A.D. to a side door--

PAGEANT A.D.

You'll take your picture for the paper over here, then wardrobe approval, then you'll set up your dressing area backstage.

Will nods, got it.

IN THE B.G., we see CALLIE step onto the stage for her question...

MISS BURGUNDY (B.G.)

Our question for you today is... if you had a homemade pie crust, what would you fill it with?

ALT:

MISS BURGUNDY (CONT'D)

What cause are you most excited about?

CALLIE (B.G.)

Miss Burgundy, I would fill my pie crust with world peace and the humane treatment of animals who have feelings and rights just like us, but can't very well say so...

ALT:

CALLIE (B.G.) (CONT'D)

Miss Burgundy, I have been an advocate for animal rights since I was thirteen. That's when I became a vegetarian. I stand for the humane treatment of animals who have feelings just like us, but can't very well say so...

CUT TO:

99 OMITTED 99

100 WILL'S FROZEN SMILE as The PHOTOGRAPHER, a HEAVY-SET WOMAN, peers through her lens, then looks OVER the camera at Will--

PHOTOGRAPHER

It's never easy being first, but someone's got to do it. Thank you.

The photographer's warm smile puts Will at ease as the camera FLASHES, capturing an *authentic and beautiful* Will.

101 INT. AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - LATER 101

A long stretch of PARTITIONED 'open-air' booths with mirrored vanities, some already adorned with 'good luck' balloons and bouquets. NAME TAGS identify each stall alphabetically, Dickson next to Dryver.

Will sets her things down on her vanity, noticing a GREETING CARD addressed to 'DUMPLIN.'

Will stares at it like it's radioactive.

A HAND reaches in and turns the envelope over.

ELLEN

It's just a word. Doesn't mean anything unless you let it.

(MORE)

ELLEN (CONT'D)

(beat)

But if it hurts you, it hurts me.

Will's chin trembles.

WILL

I'm sorry.

ELLEN

Me too.

WILL

I was wrong to think you weren't built for the revolution.

ELLEN

Damn straight. This booty can do more damage than you think.

Will laughs through her tears, having missed her best friend.

More CONTESTANTS file past, looking for their booths. Ellen takes Will's hand, guiding her to a little couch for privacy.

ON THE COUCH, El throws her legs over Will's, as if no time has passed at all. Will starts--

WILL

I felt like I had to stand up for Lucy by myself when the truth is, with you, I'm my strongest.

ELLEN

Me too.

Will smiles, looking around at the roomful of thin girls, Callie among them, busily setting up her dressing room.

WILL

I want to stop judging people so much; everyone's got their story, even Callie... if you want to be friends with her, I'm okay with that--

ELLEN

(save your breath)

Willowdean Opal Dickson, you're my best friend. You always will be.

(beat)

Plus, Callie doesn't know a single Dolly Parton song, so...

WILL  
That'll never work.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
That'll never work.

Jinx. They smile.

ELLEN (CONT'D)  
You're not still doing that sketchy  
water bottle trick, are you?

ON WILL'S devilish grin--

WILL  
I got a few tricks up my sleeve,  
but I could sure use a skinny girl  
like you to pull 'em off.

El hooks her pinkie around Will's, accomplice for life--

ELLEN  
Viva la revolution, ba-by.

102 EXT. WILL'S HOUSE/CURB - LATER

102

Rosie's and Will's cars are parked outside when El and Will  
pull up in El's jeep. Will climbs out.

ELLEN  
Hey, by the way, to answer your  
question... 2007, Dolly's first  
single on her very own record  
label?... *Better Get To Living*.

Will smiles, *nailed it*.

WILL  
You were about to owe me ten bucks.

Ellen BLASTS *Better Get To Living* as she drives off.

103 INT. WILL'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

103

Will comes up the stairs with a smile on her face...

104 OMITTED

104

105 INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

105

...surprised to find her mom in her room, standing at the  
dresser, her back to us, a laundry basket beside her.

WILL

Hi.

ROSIE

I thought you might need a few things cleaned for the pageant...

Will gets close enough to see that Rosie is holding TAPE.

WILL

Is everything okay?

Another few steps closer and Will sees Rosie is shakily taping the pieces of LUCY'S PAGEANT APPLICATION back together as she starts to fall apart.

ROSIE

You were right, I never got to know all of who she really was.

The subtext of Rosie's regret hangs there between size-4 mother and size-18 daughter.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

When we were kids, Lucy's confidence always scared me. I never imagined she'd want to do something and not do it.

Will nods, can relate to that phenomenon. Rosie stares at the yellowed application, allowing a memory to surface.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

The year I won the pageant, we didn't have enough money for me to buy a new dress, so Lucy helped me find one last minute at the thrift store, and she insisted on staying up all night to work on it even though I told her it fit well enough and no one would ever notice a few missing sequins. When she handed it back to me the next morning, she said, 'In life, the difference between winning and losing is all in the details.'

(lump in her throat)

Lucy taught me that.

ON WILL, absorbing this.

WILL

You never told me that before.

Rosie looks around the bare room, sadly.

ROSIE  
Where did they go?

WILL  
They?

ROSIE  
Lucy's boxes.

WILL  
Oh. I donated them.

Rosie nods, her heart breaking--

ROSIE  
I think I gave too much of her  
away.

Rosie feels the grief she stuffed into those boxes.

106 EXT. WILL'S HOUSE - MORNING 106

It's a sunny FALL day in Clover City.

107 INT. WILL'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS 107

Will is asleep.

ROSIE (O.S.)  
Rise and *Shine!* It's game day!

Rosie COMES IN, puts the NEWSPAPER on Will's bed, folded open to the FULL-PAGE of PAGEANT HEAD SHOTS. Will rolls over and looks at the paper--

ON THE HEADLINE: CLOVER CITY HIGH SCHOOLS TAKE THEIR ANNUAL 'SNOW DAY' IN HONOR OF LOCAL PAGEANT.

Will checks out the many FACES we have come to know then lies back on her pillow, picking up her MAGIC 8-BALL and shaking it with a question. She reads the answer (which we don't see), eliciting a little smile.

108 INT. AUDITORIUM/BACKSTAGE - LATER 108

Nervous excitement percolates as GIRLS WITH BIG HAIR haul in duffle bags stuffed to the gills with grooming supplies.

109

INT. WILL'S DRESSING AREA - CONTINUOUS

109

Will comes in carrying hanging bags and a large duffle.

She sees a DOZEN RED ROSES, her curiosity piqued, hoping. She sets everything down, opens the card.

ON THE CARD: GO BIG OR GO HOME. Love, Lee, Dale & Candee.

Ellen pops her head around the adjoining divider just as--

MILLIE'S MOM (O.S.)  
Millie Amethyst Michalchuk!!

Will and El see MILLIE'S MOM march by, holding a NEWSPAPER.

Will pokes her head out next to El's, to see what's going on. Hannah, a few booths down, does the same.

ELLEN  
(to Will)  
What's up?

WILL  
Not sure.

HANNAH  
Oh...

Will catches the peculiar *Oh*, tilting her head toward Hannah.

WILL  
Oh *what*?

HANNAH  
(re: 'the Millie card')  
I lied. I definitely lied.

WILL  
Are you kidding me?

HANNAH  
(not sorry)  
No. That whole 'big girls stick together' thing...I made it all up.

Will wants to throttle Hannah, but goes to Millie's rescue as Millie's mom lays into her--

MILLIE'S MOM  
Millicent. You lied. Straight to my face. *Needlepoint club??*

Millie's Mom is momentarily distracted by the HEIGHT of Millie's hair - *Candee Disch* high - and her arched eyebrows.

Rosie appears, summoned by the A.D.  
(to Millie)  
Is this true?

ROSIE

MILLIE  
(contrite)  
Yes, I forged my mom's signature.

It seems Millie might crumble, but then she looks up at the Revolutionaries (complete with Ellen) who've gathered around her like a fortress. She straightens, facing her Mom--

MILLIE (CONT'D)  
But you were wrong for saying 'no'  
when I asked. I get that you were  
just trying to protect me, but  
sometimes I need you to *support* me.

Millie's mom is not going to argue in public--

MILLIE'S MOM  
We will discuss this in the car,  
young lady.

Millie sighs, about to give up.

WILL  
Mrs. Michalchuk, Millie *has* to  
compete. She's worked so hard, she  
really deserves this. And she's  
not fragile. She's got this thick  
skin you don't even expect...

Will looks at Millie.

WILL (CONT'D)  
And you know she's been dreaming of  
doing the pageant since she was  
eight years old.

Millie's Mom looks at Millie, surprised...

MILLIE'S MOM  
Is that true?

Millie nods, touched that Will remembered.

MILLIE  
There's nothing in the rules that  
says big girls need not apply.

This hits two targets, Millie's mom *and* Rosie.

Mrs. Michalchuk deliberates, impossible to read. All the girls hold their breath. Mrs. Michalchuk finally turns to Millie, speaking in a measured language only they understand.

MILLIE'S MOM

How much wood could a Michalchuk  
chuck if a Michalchuk could chuck  
wood?

Fighting tears, Millie answers, a call-and-response--

MILLIE

As much wood as a Michalchuk could  
chuck if a Michalchuk could chuck  
wood.

Everyone waits for translation. Rosie checks her watch, suddenly stressed. She interrupts--

ROSIE

I'm sorry. Is that a Yes?

Mrs. Michalchuk nods. The Revolutionaries exhale. Millie hugs her mom.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Opening number in six minutes!!  
Costumes, boots, places in six!!

Rosie claps, rushing off as the girls begin dispersing into the haze of hair spray, Millie's mom stopping her briefly--

MILLIE'S MOM

Honey, who did your makeup and  
hair?

MILLIE

It's a long story, mom. I'll tell  
you later.

110 INT. PAGEANT STAGE/AUDITORIUM - SIX MINUTES LATER

110

M.C. (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please put  
your hands together for this year's  
Clover City Miss Bluebonnet  
contestants...

Lights come up and MUSIC swells as a curtain opens on--

ALL THE CONTESTANTS in matching costumes doing their OPENING NUMBER, some with a little more *flair* than others. ON THE AUDIENCE...finding a proud Lee, Dale and Candee, sitting next to Millie's mom who's amazed by Millie's moves.

ON THE STAGE as the girls finish the number to audience applause then make their way off stage as an M.C. appears.

M.C. (CONT'D)

Let's give another round of applause to our beautifully-coordinated contestants and Miss Rosie Dickson's homage to this year's theme, *Texas, Ain't She Grand!*

111 INT. BACKSTAGE/DRESSING ROOMS - A FEW MINUTES LATER 111

WIDE ON THE DRESSING AREA ACTIVITY as CONTESTANTS rush to get ready for the 'Lifestyle and Fitness' event (i.e. bathing suit), covering their skin with BRONZER, contouring their cleavage, and applying ADHESIVE GLUE to their butt cheeks to keep their suits in place.

112 INT. STAGE WING - A FEW MINUTES LATER 112

ON WILL AND EL, watching BEKAH COTTER hit the stage in her bathing suit, a tough act to follow.

Will looks like she's about to pass out. Ellen senses it--

ELLEN

1978. Dolly's seventh number one country single as a solo artist written the same year as *Nickels and Dimes*...

ON WILL, wheels turning, deer in headlights.

ELLEN (CONT'D)

First of all, you owe me ten bucks.  
Second of all...  
(the answer)  
*It's All Wrong, But It's All Right.*  
(Mickey to her Rocky)  
Now let's do this.

Will nods, snapping out of it as they hit the STAGE, chin up, strutting toe-to-heel like Lee taught her, Ellen right BEHIND HER...

REVEALING a TANDEM MESSAGE in pink duct tape on the FRONT OF THEIR BATHING SUITS: (on Will's) **EVERY BODY** (on El's) **IS A SWIMSUIT BODY.**

ON THE SIX JUDGES, thrown, looking at each other, no doubt a technical deduction of some kind.

But the AUDIENCE loves the statement, CHEERING LOUDLY.

IN THE WINGS, ON HANNAH AND MILLIE, watching. Hannah looks out at the audience, then to Millie--

HANNAH

Just so we're clear, I'm doing this for me, not them.

MILLIE

You go girl.

Hannah struts out in her black one-piece, combat boots, punk rock hair, chin up, not one penny in sight as she works that stage.

ON HANNAH'S MOM in the audience, cheering, teary.

113 INT. BACK STAGE WING - CONTINUOUS

113

Will, El and Hannah watch MILLIE take the stage in a skirted gingham swimsuit, matching wedges, huge white sunglasses and bright red lips.

In. Her. Element.

QUICK CUT TO MILLIE'S MOM IN THE AUDIENCE, stunned by her daughter's confidence and *stride*, a shock she feels compelled to express to the strangers sitting next to her.

BACK ON MILLIE who whips a turn and plants her heel, fierce, like Lee. The audience goes nuts.

CUT TO WILL, HANNAH and ELLEN IN THE WINGS--

ELLEN

There's a beauty queen in that cute, little fat girl.

WILL

Correction. That cute little fat girl *is* a beauty queen.

They all nod, true that. The A.D. cruises by--

PAGEANT A.D.

Keep it moving girls, talent show changeover.

Will and El exchange a conspiratorial look, *game on*.

114 INT. WILL'S DRESSING BOOTH - TEN MINUTES LATER

114

Ellen, already dressed in her WESTERN OUTFIT and CLOGS, puts on lipstick as she waits for Will, bent over (out of frame).

Will flips her head up, a DOLLY PARTON DOPPELGANGER in one of Candee Disch's BIG BLONDE WIGS, eyelashes from here to Tulsa.

ON EL, awestruck--

ELLEN

I'm having a religious experience.  
I might faint.

She sits down, feeling 'faint.' Will laughs.

WILL

Did you talk to the sound guy?

ELLEN

He's cool. I slipped him some beer money and he was *all* smiles.

M.C. (O.S.)

Next we have Willowdean Dickson performing a magic trick for you.

WILL

Oh God. That's me.

She grabs a few things, about to rush onto stage. El stops her, hands her the TOP HAT she almost left behind.

ELLEN

As Dolly would say, 'you'll never do a whole lot unless you're brave enough to try.'

Will smiles gratefully.

ON STAGE, dark except for a POOL OF LIGHT into which Willowdean steps, REVEALING a three-piece RED SATIN SUIT, cape, top hat and cane, smokin' hot as she LIP SYNCs--

WILL

"Here you come again... Just when I've begun to get myself together..."

Will taps her cane to the floor and a LONG STEMMED RED ROSE APPEARS in her hand. The CROWD APPLAUDS, impressed.

WILL (CONT'D)

"Just like you've done before...And  
wrap my heart 'round your little  
finger...

Will enchants the audience with this musical love story which she illustrates through simple, elegant MAGIC...

As the rose catches fire and DISAPPEARS, the BEAT to the song CHANGES, 'DISCOFYING' as the rose REAPPEARS out of the fire's smoke. Will carries the rose, singing to it, then lets it go. The rose HOVERS on its own as she walks away from it... *And here I go....* The Rose FOLLOWS her... *Here... you... come again...* She walks away from it.... *and here I go...* a push-pull love affair with a disco vibe.

ON THE AUDIENCE, transfixed, digging the mix.

ON THE REVOLUTIONARIES in the wings, in AWE of their comrade.

ON ROSIE, amazed by a side of Will she didn't know existed.

ON THE JUDGES, looking at each other, shaking their heads... a qualification issue.

BACK ON WILL, bringing home a triumphant finish... 'And here I go!'... lifting her arms as SPARKS SHOOT OUT OF HER HANDS.

The Audience is BROUGHT TO ITS FEET as Will tips her top hat, looking out, absorbing this moment of *true* SELF-EMPOWERMENT.

Will walks off stage, passing Hannah (in her martial arts uniform) who fist bumps her--

HANNAH

I want to be you when I grow up.

115 OMITTED 115

116 ON STAGE, the LIGHTS GO OUT as a GORGEOUS VOICE begins to 116  
sing a GOSPEL SONG in the dark. A pool of light finds MILLIE  
standing incredibly still as she sings with the angels.

117 INT. WILL'S DRESSING AREA - SIMULTANEOUS 117

Will rushes in, taking off her wig, freeing her hair. She's about to unzip her WARDROBE BAG when the A.D. pops in--

PAGEANT A.D.

Willowdean, Ms. Dickson would like  
to see you in her dressing room,  
right away.

Will pauses, afraid she knows what this summons means. She grabs a little BOX on her way out.

A117 INT. BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

A117

Will passes fellow CONTESTANTS, all dressed in their talent costumes, waiting to go on while CALLIE performs a VENTRILOQUIST ACT on stage in the b.g. Bekah stops Will.

BEKAH

Hey, I just wanted to tell you, I loved your performance.

WILL

(taken by surprise)

Thanks.

Bekah glances out at the stage, seeming nervous.

MC (O.S.)

Please welcome Miss Bekah Cotter and her twirling baton!...

Bekah looks like a deer in headlights.

WILL

Don't forget to breathe.

Bekah looks at her, grateful. She takes a deep breath and heads onto that stage, twirling that baton with a smile.

OFF WILL, watching Bekah twirl with a different perspective.

118 INT. ROSIE'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

118

Rosie's shimmying into her SEQUIN GOWN, struggling a bit, getting it over her shoulders just as Will knocks and enters. Rosie turns around with motherly pride--

ROSIE

That really was quite a surprise.

Not the reprimand Will was expecting--

\*

WILL

Thanks.

Will gravitates to the vanity.

\*

ROSIE

Lucy would have been so proud. I'm proud too.

\*

This means a lot to Will, but she knows...

\*

WILL

My talent wardrobe wasn't approved  
nor was my song... and full  
disclosure, neither was the formal  
I was about to put on.

Rosie nods, in a catch-22 as the enforcer of the fine print.

ROSIE

Just technicalities, but...

WILL

'Any changes beyond minor  
modifications made after approvals  
will result in immediate  
disqualification,' I know.

ROSIE

(gentle)  
Preparation is key.

WILL

Can I still do the final walk? Not  
to compete, just to finish?

ROSIE

It wouldn't be fair to the other  
girls, making an exception for my  
own daughter. I'm sorry, Dumplin'--  
(catching herself)  
Ugh, sorry about that too, I know  
you hate when I call you that.

\*

WILL

It's okay. It's just a word. I *am*  
Dumplin'. I am Will. I am  
*Willowdean*. I'm fat. I'm happy.  
I'm sad. I'm bold. I'm insecure.  
I'm a beauty queen. I'm  
disqualified. I'm all of it.

\*

Rosie nods, a little in awe of Will's self-possession. AN  
URGENT KNOCK interrupts the moment--

ELLEN

Sorry to barge in.  
(to Will, panicked)  
Tim is stuck in the bathroom with  
food poisoning! My escort is  
*green!!*

\*

\*

WILL

I'm disqualified, so you can have mine. He's sitting near the front row, next to the drag queen.

FLASH ON ROSIE, very confused by that. Then to El--

ELLEN

Disqualified?? Then I'm out too. I'm not finishing without you.

ON ROSIE, suddenly struck with an idea--

ROSIE

You know, nothing in the bylaws prevents a *disqualified* contestant from *escorting* a fellow contestant.

ON WILL, shocked her mom just came up with a rather devious loophole to her own bylaws... for *her*.

Will and El look at each other... Howdy Partner!!!

ELLEN

I'll go tell Tim, he'll be so relieved.

Ellen rushes out the door, a backstage announcement in the b.g.:

A.D. (O.S.)

Ten minutes till formals, ladies.

Will is about to head out.

ROSIE

Honey could you just zip me before you go?

Will puts the box she's holding onto Rosie's vanity then zips her mom's dress... about FOUR INCHES SHY of the goal. Uh...

WILL

Mom, that's as far as it goes.

Rosie feels her back, whipping around to the MIRROR, the color draining from her rouged cheeks--

ROSIE

No, no, no. This can't be. I have to wear this dress...

ROSIE (CONT'D)

It's tradition.

WILL

It's tradition.

\*  
\*

\*  
\*

\*

\*

\*  
\*

\*

ROSIE  
 (realizing, oh god)  
 And I didn't bring a backup.

WILL  
 (gentle)  
 Preparation is key.

Rosie smiles wanly, *touché*, but very real panic sets in as Rosie stares at the mirror, paralyzed, drawing a blank.

Will's got an idea. A crazy idea, but--

WILL (CONT'D)  
 Mom, give me five minutes. I have  
 an idea. And you have to trust me.

Rosie nods, no choice, as Will runs out.

WE STAY ON ROSIE, looking a little lost in her too-small dress. She suddenly notices the BOX Will left behind with a tiny card addressed to 'Mom.'

Rosie opens the CARD: *Loving each other is all in the details. And I do love you mom. -Will.*

Rosie opens the box to find Lucy's BEE BROACH.

Rosie touches it, starts to cry, the kind that might never stop once it starts. Out of desperation, she grabs her hair dryer and blows her eyes dry.

119 INT. STAGE WING - TEN MINUTES LATER 119

The CONTESTANTS and their ESCORTS are gathered in the dimly-lit wing, waiting for the formal presentation to begin...

Among them, we find a STUNNING Millie (in her fab 'Babs' gown) standing beside a BOY from church; and Hannah (looking sharp in her black tux and dramatic black eyeliner), HOLDING HER FEMALE ESCORT'S HAND. They look at each other, a little nervous but excited.

A119 INT. ROSIE'S DRESSING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS A119

A knock on Rosie's door. Rosie rushes to open it.

ON LEE, standing there with a garment bag...special delivery.

B119 INT. STAGE WING - SIMULTANEOUS B119

Will and Ellen rush in (lights too dim to see their gowns).

Our four Revolutionaries instinctively move into A CIRCLE together, holding hands, heads bowed with acute awareness that none of them would have started this, much less gone *the distance*, without the others. No one speaks for fear the floodgates will open, except--

HANNAH

Who knew beauty pageants could be a team sport?

The girls smile, happy to be on each other's team.

PAGEANT A.D.

Places everyone!

120

INT. STAGE WING/STAGE - CONTINUOUS

120

Will and Ellen stand side-by-side near the front of the line, THE DARKENED STAGE VISIBLE from their vantage point as...

A hesitant ROSIE steps into a spotlight in a rather gaudy DRAG QUEEN DRESS accented by Lucy's BEE BROACH.

ON AUDIENCE SURPRISE... confounded looks, confused whispers.

FROM THE WINGS, Will gives Rosie an enthusiastic thumbs up. With an 'oh fuck it' sigh, Rosie relaxes into a newfound freedom--

ROSIE

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce our evening formal wear presentation, bringing us one step closer to this year's title holder for Clover City's Miss Teen Bluebonnet...

THE SOUND OF APPLAUSE; FLASH TO LEE AND DALE IN THE AUDIENCE--

DALE

I'm sorry I ever made fun of you for carrying dresses in your trunk.

LEE

You should be. But more importantly, does it look that good on me?

Dale can't lie. Lee sighs.

BACK ON ROSIE, the most feminine drag queen on earth--

ROSIE

I would like to invite our first contestant onto the stage, Miss Bekah Cotter... escorted this evening by Mr. Bobby Nelson.

Bekah takes the stage, beautiful in a predictable way, escorted by a handsome young man.

ON WILL AND EL, up next. Will looks at her mom on stage, wearing Lee's dress and Lucy's bee broach, then turns to El--

WILL

Lucy may have gotten us into this, but whadd'ya say we finish for us?

Ellen hooks her arm through Will's--

ELLEN

Hell to the yes.

ROSIE (O.S.)

Please welcome Miss Ellen Dryver...

Ellen and Will step onto the stage.

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Escorted by Miss *Willowdean Dickson*...

We get our first GOOD LOOK at WILL'S GOWN in all its couture glory, a heavenly design in a devilish color that compliments Ellen's dress, the best friends a glorious pair.

ON THE JUDGES, conferring, another curve ball.

ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE for this unorthodox move as Will and Ellen set their ocean in motion, *owning this stage together*.

QUICK CUT TO LEE, DALE, & CANDEE as Dale leans over to Lee--

DALE

I think it's your best work yet.

A teary Lee can't disagree.

BACK ON STAGE, Will releases Ellen's arm, STAYING BESIDE ROSIE as Ellen takes her SOLO TURN at the front of the stage as a still-qualified contestant. For a suspended moment in time, Will and her mom regard one another, seeing each other for more of who they really are.

DISSOLVE TO:

121 ALL THE CONTESTANTS ARE LINED UP ON STAGE EXCEPT FOR THE 121  
TECHNICALLY DISQUALIFIED WILL, QUITE CONTENTEDLY WATCHING  
FROM THE WINGS AS ROSIE ADDRESSES THE AUDIENCE--

ROSIE

...not just their poise and talents  
and intelligence, but their  
courage...

(glances at Will)

Each and every one of them... So,  
without further ado, it's time to  
announce the judges' results...

Rosie opens the fancy ENVELOPE in her hand--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Clover City's Miss Teen Bluebonnet  
second runner up is... Miss Callie  
Reyes!

ON CALLIE, trying to be gracious about NOT WINNING. She  
steps forward to accept her SINGLE ROSE and sash.

ON ROSIE, looking down at the next name, pausing to compose  
herself, wishing Lucy was here for this--

ROSIE (CONT'D)

Representing Clover City as Miss  
Teen Bluebonnet's first runner  
up... Miss Millicent Michalchuk!!

ON MILLIE, the genuinely shocked - and elated - runner-up  
BEAUTY QUEEN.

ON MILLIE'S MOM, JUMPING OUT OF HER SEAT with Price Is Right  
enthusiasm, hugging Candee Disch, no longer a stranger.

ON MILLIE, cradling a DOZEN RED ROSES, her arms full, her  
heart fuller, as she walks to the front of the stage with a  
gracious BEAUTY QUEEN WAVE to ROUSING APPLAUSE.

CLOSE ON WILL, a deep sense of satisfaction as she looks at  
her fellow REVOLUTIONARIES, VICTORY TEARS all around, even  
Hannah, as they watch Millie take her place next to Callie  
whose single rose is downright pitiful by comparison (but  
who's comparing). Callie looks SHOCKED to be *MILLIE'S* RUNNER-  
UP. Hannah subtly leans forward with a loud-whisper--

HANNAH

Get used to it, Callie.

Callie smiles through gritted teeth.

ON WILL, looking out at the audience (Lee, Dale, Candee) and all the proud parents... at Rosie on stage... at Ellen, Hannah, and Millie...

WILL (V.O.)

All I could think about was Lucy, hoping she could see this from wherever she was, knowing that she had a hand in all of us girls figuring out who we were and, like Dolly, *doing it on purpose.*

\*

ON WILL as clarity takes hold. Her eyes find El's, a silent exchange between soul mates. Ellen nods, *go.*

We HOLD ON ELLEN'S POV OF WILL moving quickly through the stage wing, picking up speed in her heels... finding the EXIT, not even looking back as BEKAH COTTER IS PRONOUNCED MISS BLUEBONNET...

*Rome wasn't built in a day, y'all.*

122 EXT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS/DUSK 122

In her feathery red dress, Will throws open the door, setting her ocean in motion to Dolly's *BABY I'M BURNING*, heading for her red Grand Prix.

123 OMITTED 123

124 EXT. HARPY'S BURGERS & DOGS - A FEW MINUTES LATER 124

Bo is hauling trash bags out to the dumpster when he hears an engine revving. He turns to see Will pulling up in the Grand Prix.

Bo freezes as Will gets out of her car, like the parting of the red sea... a vision to behold.

The two stand a ways apart, staring at each other.

WILL

I consulted the Magic 8-Ball.

Bo's lips curl into a half-smile.

BO

Oh yeah? What'd it say?

WILL

It said... *outlook good.*

Bo's half-smile widens, his eyes hopeful, as Will walks toward him, planting an undeniably memorable kiss on that boy's lips as the world prepares itself for the size of this love.

125

INT. THE HIDEAWAY - NIGHT - OVER CREDITS

125

LEE (back in Dolly drag) and WILL (in street clothes) stand on stage LIP-SYNCING 'BE THAT' (an original song by Dolly Parton).

Around the party, we find Rosie standing beside Bo, Hannah and her girlfriend, Ellen and Tim, Millie and her date, Ellen's Mom and Hannah's Mom, Candee Disch and Dale, all SINGING and dancing along...

As we transition into END CREDITS... montage of Dolly Parton posing with our Dolly Parton drag queens.