

FRACTURE

Written by

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Inspired by True Events

OVER BLACK

Pacing footsteps against concrete. Steady panting.

FADE IN:**EXT. SIDEWALK - DAWN - (TRAVELING)**

A RUNNER plants one shoe in front of the other, creating a steadfast, unwavering rhythm.

Her matching jogger pants and sweatshirt suggest a varsity level competitor. She's no amateur.

She's ROBYN VAUGHN, 18, African American. Earbuds in, she's in her element, a headspace where 'pain is gain' is the most comfortable place she can be.

She jogs past colonial architecture as the sun peaks through an early morning overcast.

CAMPUS CENTER

Approaching a massive sculpture, Robyn stops. In front of her, a KNEE-BENT WARRIOR STATUE grips the handle of a sword, driving it into the ground. She stares intently, in a trance.

Then, something in the distance draws her attention. Finally, we see what she sees:

A SPEEDING AMBULANCE WITH FLASHING LIGHTS. No siren. It races through campus, turning white prestige eerily somber.

As the ambulance races out of sight, Robyn readjusts her earbuds and returns to her jog.

CARD: SOUTH SUMMIT UNIVERSITY, SPRING SEMESTER**INT. DORM ROOM - LATER**

A typical two-bed dorm room, except in this one, one side has an empty desk and unoccupied bed.

Laying on the floor, Robyn starts intervals of crunches.

On her side of the room, spike shoes hang over the desk chair. Signed batons are placed like awards on a shelf.

On the desk is a newspaper clipping of Carmelita Jeter crossing the 2012 Olympic finish line with the 4x100 meter victory.

Next to a wall clock is a poster of John Carlos and Tommie Smith, holding their fists in the air atop the podium.

And underneath it all, is Robyn, unrelenting as she grimaces with every crunch, as if to prove something to these legends.

INT. STUDENT ATHLETE DINING HALL - LATER

Earbuds still in, Robyn smears peanut butter on toast beside unfulfilling looking egg whites.

She sits alone but catches the stares and whispers of OTHER STUDENT ATHLETES from a nearby table. Avoiding eye contact, Robyn tends to her plate as if used to being the topic of others' discussions.

Beside the plate, Robyn's cellphone lights up and vibrates. The caller ID reads: MOM.

Silencing the phone, she ignores the call.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY - (TRAVELING)

A MID-DISTANCE COACH, 30s, the epitome of those-who-can't-do-coach, leaves a conference room with other COACHING STAFF.

DECATHLETE COACH (O.S.)

Simon!

A DECATHLETE COACH, 30s, catches up to him. He looks over his shoulder with antsy energy before speaking.

DECATHLETE COACH (CONT'D)

So what do you think?

MID-DISTANCE COACH

I don't think anything. As far as I'm concerned, I have nothing to do with it.

DECATHLETE COACH

Did you talk to the family?

MID-DISTANCE COACH

Luther said he would call.

DECATHLETE COACH

And say what?

MID-DISTANCE COACH

That there was an accident.

The decathlete coach grabs his arm, stopping the mid-distance coach from continuing on.

DECATHLETE COACH

I'm just saying, he wasn't just your athlete. He was a multi. I trained him also...A collapsed lung is a hell of an accident.

The mid-distance coach stares at his colleague, then down at the grip on his arm. The decathlete coach releases.

MID-DISTANCE COACH

Yeah, it is. That's the life of a student athlete.

The mid-distance coach continues on by himself.

EXT. MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICE - DAY

KIM PAK, 30s, Asian, business-chic, hurriedly enters the office where a placard reads: MEDIA RELATIONS.

INT. MEDIA RELATIONS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Making her way to the back of the office, phone RINGS grow louder and incessant. A RECEPTIONIST stands to her feet upon seeing Kim.

RECEPTIONIST

Thank God. They've been calling non-stop for the past two hours.

KIM

Who?

RECEPTIONIST

Reporters. Local News. They want statements.

Kim takes this in for a minute. There's only one team that can cause such drama.

KIM

Please don't say it's Track and Field.

RECEPTIONIST

It's Track and Field.

Kim takes a deep breath. She turns back for the door.

KIM

Tell them no statement will be released until four.

RECEPTIONIST

Where are you going?

KIM

Upstairs. I need to find out what the hell is going on.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Robyn sits in the back as PROFESSOR BURKE, 40s, shaggy haired, hippy, rule breaker type, circulates the room.

PROFESSOR BURKE

...And it's true. You have to start thinking in terms of digital journalism, not just print.

Spotting a SNOOZING STUDENT, Professor Burke retrieves an air horn from his desk drawer and slowly approaches the snoozer.

Students perk up, snickering at what's to come.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)

Think about it. Where do 99 percent of you receive your information nowadays? Online. With your generation we all know that unless it comes in the form of a one minute video with 140 character description, there's no way you could possibly pay attention.

BUUUUURRRR! Professor Burke blares the horn over the snoozer who springs up, embarrassed. The entire class erupts in laughter.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)

You can catch Z's, just not in my classroom, Mr. Wallis.

(to class)

Now, as of today, we're at the two week mark of the Spring semester so you can't drop this class. And just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, I already have graded papers to return.

Moans and sucked teeth ripple through the classroom. Professor Burke retrieves a stack of graded papers from his desk and passes them to students.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
Now these were just to give me a sense of what you guys already know about progressive journalism.

Professor Burke hands Robyn her paper. He taps at the top, indicating a sticky note with the message: 'SEE ME AFTER CLASS.'

Robyn frowns looking at the note as she sinks back into her chair.

INT. PROFESSOR BURKE'S OFFICE - LATER

Robyn takes a seat in front of Professor Burke's desk. She looks around the office, taking in the homey atmosphere.

PROFESSOR BURKE
I wanted to talk to you about your paper.

Robyn looks down at the paper, avoiding eye contact.

ROBYN
I don't understand why I didn't get a grade. I followed the rules. I quoted five different textbooks.

PROFESSOR BURKE
I'm giving you an A.

Taken off guard, Robyn relaxes a bit.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
But the assignment was for me to hear *your* thoughts. I don't want you to tell me what you think I want to hear. I wanted to hear what you had to say.

ROBYN
I thought journalism is all about stating fact over opinion?

PROFESSOR BURKE
Not progressive journalism. There's a difference.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
But despite all of that, I found it
very interesting that you wrote
about being a track legacy. And
then it hit me when I was reading
your essay...

Professor Burke reaches for a photo album on the shelf behind him. He flips through the book, filled with scraps of news clippings. Finally landing on one, he turns the book towards Robyn.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
You're Jackie Vaughn's daughter.

Robyn inches forward, looking over the newspaper clipping. There's an action shot of a sprinter mid-stride with long curly hair flowing down her back.

ROBYN
Yeah, that's my mom.

PROFESSOR BURKE
That's amazing! I covered her a
couple times when I first started
in sports journalism.
(ref. clipping)
She was amazing the night she broke
the 440 record at worlds. What's
she doing now? Coaching?

The bottom pocket of Robyn's backpack vibrates. Holding her bag on her lap, Robyn peeks at her phone sticking out the unzipped pocket. 'MOM' is on the caller ID again.

Robyn drops her head. In a soft tone:

ROBYN
She works in human resources now.
Office job.

PROFESSOR BURKE
Well, she's a legend in track. It's
no wonder you're following in her
footsteps. You're essay's very
strong but I want to hear more of a
point of view in your writing. I
gave some thought to this. I want
to invite you to take a special
topics course on sports journalism.
It's a grad class, but I think it
would interest you.

ROBYN

Really? I mean, I would just need to clear it with my coach first.

PROFESSOR BURKE

It shouldn't conflict with your practices.

ROBYN

No, actually it's just, our coach doesn't like for us to take over eight credits per semester.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Eight? That's barely full time.

ROBYN

Yeah, it's his thing...He doesn't believe we should get bogged down with classwork and stuff.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Bogged down? You come to school and they don't want you to learn? I guess that's college athletics for ya. Well look, find out and let me know.

Nodding, Robyn stands and grabs her belongings.

INT. ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY - (TRAVELING)

Kim paces the reception area when GEORGE SHANNON, 50s, African-American, basketball player build, walks in.

Glancing at Kim, he brushes past her. She follows.

GEORGE

Not now, Kim.

KIM

I need a statement.

GEORGE

I don't have one for you yet.

KIM

Well then you at least need to tell me what's going on.

George hesitates with a huge breath before answering.

GEORGE

Emmanuel Turner's lung collapsed early this morning. He was taken to South Summit Hospital but he'll be fine.

KIM

Since when is a collapsed lung fine by our standards?

GEORGE

Kim, I'm the AD. You let me do my job.

KIM

Then why have eleven reporters called me in the last three hours over a collapsed lung from a boy who's never made All-American?

They enter into a corner office with the placard that reads:
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR.

INT. GEORGE SHANNON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

George sits in his desk chair, frustrated. Kim waits for an answer.

GEORGE

Because his parents filed a lawsuit against Luther for assault and the Athletic Administration for negligence.

Kim takes in the news. It's a blow but not a surprise.

KIM

What has Luther said?

GEORGE

Luther is doing his job right now.

KIM

He's always doing his job...This is the second injured sprinter this year, and you and I both know the count is usually much higher.

GEORGE

A sprinter's lifespan is way shorter and more rigorous than any other runner out there.

KIM
Is that your statement? Really?

GEORGE
I told you we don't have a
statement at the moment.

Kim looks out the large window behind George. The track is in view.

KIM
George, how many times do you look
out this window?

GEORGE
What?

KIM
Down there. At the track. Once,
twice a day?

Turning his back to Kim, George sorts through paperwork on his desk.

KIM (CONT'D)
Exactly. I can't do my job if I
don't know what exactly is going
on. I'd suggest as the AD, you
start looking out this window a lot
more and figure out what the hell
is happening right under your nose.

Now George swivels his chair back around to face Kim.

GEORGE
I don't know what you think you're
implying, but let me assure you,
you are way over the line. Luther's
a ten time National Championship
winner, and the reason you, of all
people, get a paycheck. I'd suggest
Ms. Pak, that you watch your tone.

Kim backs away from the desk. She motions to leave.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You'll have a statement by 3pm.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

TRACK ATHLETES loosen their muscles with foam rollers, Thera-bands, electrical stimulation machines, and heating pads.

TRAINERS stretch out athletes on padded tables.

Sitting on the floor, Robyn grazes a roller stick over her calves, listening in on nearby UPPERCLASSMEN who don't invite her into the conversation.

UPPERCLASSMAN 1
You guys hear about Manny?

UPPERCLASSMAN 2
What?

UPPERCLASSMAN 1
He just stopped breathing or something. Had to be rushed to the hospital this morning.

Robyn takes in the info, now understanding the ambulance from earlier.

UPPERCLASSMAN 3
Damn. Is he okay?

A trainer walks by them. They fall quiet.

UPPERCLASSMAN 2
It's real hush-hush around here. Not even the trainers are saying anything.

UPPERCLASSMAN 3
Why do you think?

UPPERCLASSMAN 2
That makes, what? Two this year?

Upperclassman 3 glances over at Robyn, who quickly breaks eye contact.

UPPERCLASSMAN 1
Just two? This might be our best year yet, then.

Upperclassman 3 is pure muscle, a thoroughbred sprinter and carries the attitude to go with it. This is GENA, 21, African-American.

She slides a water bottle carrier across the floor towards Robyn.

GENA
Freshman, fill the water bottles and bring the blocks to the track.

With a slight roll of her eyes, Robyn grabs the carrier.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Wavy heat rays hover above the track as LONG DISTANCE RUNNERS blaze down lane one.

LONG DISTANCE RUNNER
Watch the track!

The herd doesn't slow, nearly trampling a HIGH JUMPER who scurries across the lanes.

THROWERS, SPRINTERS, and JUMPERS share in the chaos, swigging water, spitting, barfing, removing clothes. This is track town, baby.

IN THE FIELD

A trainer applies Bengay to an athlete's thigh. Another wraps an athlete's ankle with kinesiology tape in the flatbed of a John Deere utility truck.

AT THE 100 METER MARK

An ASSISTANT COACH, 30s, examines sprinters doing block starts. Sunglasses on, she holds a whistle in between her teeth as TWO SPRINTERS settle into their blocks.

ASSISTANT COACH
Set!

Second position. The sprinters raise their butts.

THE WHISTLE BLOWS. Both runners burst out of the blocks and soar for 30 meters. A SECOND WHISTLE BLOWS. They slow.

The next pair of runners get into the blocks.

AT THE BACK OF THE LINE

MALIK, 18, a scrawny but tall male sprinter, sneakily emerges a cellphone from his shoe bag.

MALIK
Yo, Robyn, check it out.

ROBYN
What the hell are you doing with that? You wan't extra practice?

Malik sucks his teeth.

MALIK

No one's giving me extra practice.

ROBYN

If Luther catches you, he will.

MALIK

Relax, he's not even out here.
Hurry up.

Robyn discreetly huddles around Malik.

MALIK (CONT'D)

My boy on the soccer team sent this to me. Guess this is why we haven't been told anything.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

A video streams of a REPORTER standing outside South Summit Hospital.

REPORTER

...Junior sprinter Emmanuel Turner was rushed here to South Summit University Hospital where he was treated for a collapsed lung early this morning. He's reported to be stable and doing well, but it's a Facebook status Emmanuel posted just 24 hours before the bizarre injury that's raising eyebrows.

A graphic of Emmanuel's Facebook post covers the screen:

'3AM Practice?? This has to be abuse!'

The video returns to the reporter.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

This raises questions, especially since NCAA rules prohibit student athletes from practicing after 11pm. This also sparks discussions of a similar incident just last year with Senior hurdler Blake Johnson. No statement has been-

ASSISTANT COACH (O.S.)

Let's go!

BACK TO SCENE

Startled, Malik throws the phone down into his shoe bag.

ROBYN
Shit, Malik look.

Robyn gestures into the bleachers. Malik looks, spotting him from a distance: A MAN too far to make out details, but close enough to realize who it is, watching them like a hawk.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
You think he saw you?

MALIK
Nah. Too far.

Malik shakes his head unconvincingly.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

A plated bar crashes onto a platform. LOUD CLANKING and BANGING from metal weights mixed with confusion of chatting.

On a long row of platforms, the sprinters bench press, squat, or power press in pairs.

ON ROBYN'S PLATFORM

Malik spots Robyn as she squats a bar with heavy weight. She lifts it effortlessly and racks it.

MALIK
Damn. 120 kilos. I'm not saying I'm
jealous that you squat more than me
but, I do feel some type of way.

Robyn and Malik laugh as they drop down a bench, remove plates from the bar, and lower the rack, set for bench press. Malik plops down, laying back.

Just as he grips the bar to lift-

The weight room doors FLY OPEN. The entire room goes quiet, stale, absolutely dead.

Robyn's head whips towards the door. She tracks the entering MAN, the same man from the bleachers. He walks down the line of platforms - slow but confident.

He wears khaki pants with a neatly tucked-in polo. He holds one limp arm close to his torso. And then he stops walking...

...in front of Malik and Robyn's platform.

This is JAMES "JIMMY" LUTHER, 40s, a clean cut white man, with an eerily calm demeanor.

Barely looking up, the sprinters tend to their platforms. Not a sound is made, with the exception of SOFT CLANKING from the weights.

ON ROBYN AND MALIK'S PLATFORM

Examining the weight on the bar, Luther takes a decisive breath. Then:

LUTHER
Add twenties to each side.

Hesitantly, Robyn does as told. Laying on the bench, Malik remains frozen.

Teammates anxiously peek over as Robyn secures the weight onto the bar with stoppers. Luther steps onto the platform.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
I'll spot...Ready?

Shyly, Malik grips the bar.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Up.

Luther helps Malik lift the bar off the rack with his functioning arm. Malik's arms quiver at the weight's heaviness.

Luther guides the bar down to Malik's chest. Sweat beads roll down Malik's temples. He drives his feet into the floor and pushes upwards with everything he has.

The bar rises an inch above his chest when Luther stops it with his hand, preventing Malik from pushing it up.

He presses the bar back down. Malik struggles to get it off his chest.

Gripping the bar tighter, Luther holds the weight down, his hand trembling to fight Malik's resistance.

Anxious, Robyn takes a step forward.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
(to Robyn)
Don't you dare.

Robyn stops in her tracks, looking down at her feet.

Tears form in Malik's eyes as Luther continues to restrain him with the weight. But it's not enough. Luther guides the weighted bar further back towards Malik's throat.

Starting to panic, Malik readjusts his footing. Shaking profusely now, Malik grimaces. Luther bends down so only Malik can hear:

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Disrespect my rules again, and you
will be done. Do you hear me?

With that, Luther lets up on the weight.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Rack it.

Jumping in, Robyn grabs the bar, guiding it up and back onto the metal rack. Malik grabs his throat, coughing.

Luther makes his way back to the door. And just like that, he leaves. Not a sound from anyone, until the doors slowly fall...shut.

Noise and chatter rebuild. This is nothing they haven't seen before. Robyn gathers herself before removing the weights.

INT. BASKETBALL GYM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Exhausted, Robyn slumps in the bleachers with her teammates. Looking at her phone, she notes three missed calls from Mom. She blacks the screen and drops her phone in her bag.

Luther and George face the group, along with a STUDENT AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVE, 20s, in professional attire.

GEORGE
Listen up. I'm sure some of you
already heard about Emmanuel. He
was taken to the hospital today
with a collapsed lung. You all
should know he's in good care.

An awkward silence and blank stares all around.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
There might be reporters who
approach you about the incident.
Let me remind you if you're
approached, you will simply say you
have no comment on the situation.

Athletes exchange looks in the stands. They've heard this before.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

In addition, the board of student affairs has decided to bring in a sports psychologist-

STUDENT AFFAIRS REP

Actually, I can explain.

The rep steps forward. George hesitates before stepping back.

STUDENT AFFAIRS REP (CONT'D)

The board is deeply saddened by the situation and we assume many of you feel the same way. So we feel it would be beneficial for you all to talk to a sports psychologist, someone who knows the exact type of pressures you're going through.

Robyn looks up, frowning, confused. A shift through the stands. Chatter begins.

STUDENT AFFAIRS REP (CONT'D)

Our department does our best to make sure your needs are being met as student athletes. Now, I've prepared a document for the psychologist to record some of the more overbearing concerns that any of you may have. Would anyone like to share?

A death gripping quiet takes over the bunch. Robyn looks at Luther as he marks everyone with his eyes.

STUDENT AFFAIRS REP (CONT'D)

No one? May I remind you, this is for your own benefit. This is a safe space.

No one says a word. The rep takes a step back.

GEORGE

Starting next week, every one of you will have mandatory one-on-one meetings. And let me remind you, you're all very fortunate to have the opportunity to compete for this institution. There's a million kids who would kill to be in your shoes. So if you're struggling with anything, it's your responsibility to handle it in the appropriate manner, not take to social media.

Students and staff file out. Robyn's eyes remain glued on Luther. He shakes hands with George before leaving the gym.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Robyn enters into a dark room when her phone vibrates. Removing her phone from her pocket, she answers and flips on the light. She takes a deep breath before speaking.

ROBYN

Hi, Ma.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. VAUGHN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SAME

Framed action shots of sprinting women, framed uniforms, and cases of large gold and silver medals decorate the walls.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Since when don't you know how to answer your phone?

ROBYN (O.S.)

I was busy.

IN THE KITCHEN

JACKIE VAUGHN, 50s, African-American, withered look with long curly black/grayish hair down her back, holds her cellphone to her ear as she sorts through groceries from a bag onto a counter.

JACKIE

What's going on with the team? I heard the news about that boy.

WITH ROBYN

She drops her backpack next to her desk, then falls on her back onto the bed, staring at the ceiling.

ROBYN

His name is Emmanuel. They're saying Coach Luther had him out there practicing and made his lung collapse.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Who's saying that?

ROBYN

People.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Anybody ask you any questions yet?

ROBYN

No. The AD told us not to say anything if any reporters ask us questions.

JACKIE (O.S.)

And that's exactly what you need to do. You don't need to be talking about something you know nothing about. Don't jeopardize your status on the team for some boy.

Robyn sits up on the side of her bed.

ROBYN

His name is Emmanuel, Ma. He's not some boy. He's my teammate.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Then he would understand the predicament he's putting you all in.

Robyn gives up. She looks ahead of her at the empty side of her room. Almost in a trance, she continues to talk, but her eyes remain glued to the empty bed.

JACKIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Is any of this going to interfere with your practice schedule?

ROBYN

No, but now they're forcing us to see some psychologist every week. I think that's dumb. We're not sick.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Well what did Luther say about it?

ROBYN

Nothing. He just agreed.

WITH JACKIE

She stops sorting through groceries.

JACKIE

Well then, stop complaining about it. They're doing this for people who can't handle their issues on their own. Just do what you have to do, Robyn. You're there to work hard and be a champion. That's what you want, right?

WITH ROBYN

Hesitating, Robyn snaps out of it and answers.

ROBYN

Right.

JACKIE (O.S.)

Okay, get some rest. I'll talk to you soon. Love you.

ROBYN

Love you, too.

The phone goes dead. Robyn tosses her phone to the side, and kicks off her shoes. She lays back, staring up at the ceiling in silence. Then she turns her head to the empty side of the room.

After a moment, Robyn gets back up. On the top shelf of her desk, she turns on her speakers which plays music from an attached iPod. Turning off the lights, she returns to her bed.

INT. ATHLETIC BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY - (TRAVELING)

George walks down a busy hallway. Behind him, is DR. BERNADETTE REESE, 40s, African-American, polished, a strong black woman, the ex-athlete type.

She holds a box of desk supplies. They pass framed action shots of track team alum decorating the walls.

GEORGE

Thanks for coming in on such short notice.

DR. REESE

I'm happy to be here.

GEORGE

Don't worry if you can't get some of these athletes to open up. I wouldn't push it.

DR. REESE

Well, that's part of my job isn't it?

George takes a moment. They turn a corner.

GEORGE

We just need someone they can, you know, vent to. They have a lot on their plates.

DR. REESE

Well, I'll be honest. That's not really how I run my sessions.

GEORGE

Let's not worry about that right now.

DR. REESE

I understand I've been assigned to just the sprinters?

GEORGE

That's right.

DR. REESE

I can take on a larger group if that's a concern.

GEORGE

No need. We just feel that given your experience, these athletes might respond to you better. Human resources will get your paperwork processed for you in the next couple of days.

DR. REESE

And what about the other runners? As I understand it, I won't have the long distance runners.

They turn another corner, passing more offices.

GEORGE

Sorry to place you all the way over here. We wanted to get you set up some place as soon as we could.

They stop in front of an office. George unlocks and pushes open the door. Dr. Reese takes a look inside.

DR. REESE

Mr. Shannon. I couldn't help but notice most of the long distance runners are white and most if not all the sprinters are black.

GEORGE

Your point, Dr. Reese?

DR. REESE

Are you assigning me to the sprinters because I'm black?

George stares at her for a moment.

GEORGE

We've assigned you to the athletes who we feel are most susceptible to inappropriate behavior without your service.

DR. REESE

Inappropriate behavior? What does that mean?

GEORGE

There's a lot going on. We don't need these athletes taking to social media and bashing the program just because they have, let's say, a bad day at practice. That's not how true athletes behave. That, I'd encourage you to tell them...Let me know if this works.

Standing in the doorway, Dr. Reese takes in the bare room. She steps inside.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

AT THE CURVE

Robyn steps onto the track wearing spikes. Gena steps into the lane beside her, spiked up as well.

Glistening sweat, wearing sports bras and shorts, they're ready to race.

100 meters behind them on the track, MAYA, 19, and SIDNEY, 20, stand next to each other in the same lanes holding batons.

Robyn counts footsteps in her lane, placing white tape on the track.

Luther approaches Gena. He spits sunflower seeds onto the track before speaking.

LUTHER

(to Gena)

You're not going to let a freshman
take your anchor spot are you?
Because there's no room for sloppy
seconds on my team.

Luther backs away as Robyn walks back towards Gena.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Let's see who's gonna anchor this
four by one! On your mark!

A high-pitched CHIRP. Luther blows his whistle.

TRAVELING

Maya and Sidney charge around the 200 meter curve with batons in hand. Gena and Robyn ready themselves in their lanes.

They crouch down, looking behind them. Maya and Sidney barrel down on them, neck and neck.

Sidney passes the tape in Gena's lane. Gena takes off.

Maya passes the tape in Robyn's lane. Robyn takes off.

SIDNEY

Stick!

Gena reaches back. Sidney slaps the baton into Gena's hand.

MAYA

Stick!

Robyn reaches back, receives the baton from Maya.

DOWN THE HOME STRETCH

Nearly neck and neck, Robyn and Gena battle it out, running full speed, tearing down the track.

Robyn digs deep. She pulls slightly ahead, more and more, until they cross the finish line, Robyn clearly in first.

Robyn's eyes widen, a glimpse of happiness. Gena throws her hands over her head, infuriated.

MOMENTS LATER

Gena passes Luther. He stops her by holding his clipboard in front of her stomach.

LUTHER

Remember when you asked why you weren't given a scholarship increase? You just let a freshman answer that for you.

Gena takes that to heart, pain and anger building.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM PARKING LOT - EVENING

Wearing sweats, Robyn holds a cellphone to her ear.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING CUBICLE - SAME

A claustrophobic, cluttered cubicle. Stacked paperwork and files consume any desk space. Jackie, wearing a skirt suit answers the ringing desk phone.

JACKIE

Hey, baby.

ROBYN (O.S.)

Ma, guess what? I got anchor! I got anchor leg!

JACKIE

You did?

A passing coworker hands Jackie a file.

ROBYN (O.S.)

Did you hear me? I got anchor!

JACKIE

Yeah. That's great, Robyn. You know that's gonna be a lot of hard work, maintaining that position right?

Jackie holds the phone with her shoulder and types on her computer as she speaks.

ROBYN (O.S.)

I know, but come on. I made anchor leg.

(MORE)

ROBYN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
This is the first time in three
years that a freshman got the
position!

JACKIE
Yeah, I hear you. I'm just saying
orders get changed up all the time.
I don't want you to get your hopes
up and lose focus.

WITH ROBYN

She exhales frustration, rubbing her hand over her eyes.

ROBYN
Yes, I get that. But that's not
gonna happen. Coach also told me my
split! He said-

WITH JACKIE

A co-worker leans into her cubicle gesturing to the
conference room.

JACKIE
Oh wait. Robyn, I'm gonna have to
call you back. I have a meeting to
catch.

ROBYN (O.S.)
I thought you weren't working
today.

JACKIE
Well I had to pick up some extra
hours. The bills won't pay
themselves. And someone's gotta pay
the rest of that tuition, Rob. I'll
call you later tonight.

WITH ROBYN

Deflated, Robyn hangs up. She heads for the locker room,
when:

REPORTER (O.S.)
Robyn Vaughn?

A REPORTER, 40s, approaches Robyn. He shakes her hand.

REPORTER (CONT'D)
Walter Marks of Track Split dot
com.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)
Can I ask you some questions about
your teammate, Emmanuel Turner?

ROBYN
Oh um...I have no comment on that.
Sorry.

Robyn moves along.

REPORTER
Just one. I promise it won't take
up too much of your time.

ROBYN
No, I can't...No comment.

REPORTER
Well, how about that record
breaking relay squad? Anything new
to look out for?

Robyn turns to him. She lightens up.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM PARKING LOT - LATER

Luther walks across the lot when he spots Robyn on the
opposite side.

He stops walking, momentarily, and watches Robyn shake hands
with the reporter and walk separate ways.

INT. TRACK & FIELD OFFICE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Robyn, now dressed in street clothes, approaches a closed
office door. She takes a breath before knocking.

LUTHER (O.S.)
Come in.

Robyn enters timidly.

INT. LUTHER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A sterile, blank room. The florescent lighting hums overhead.
The bookshelves hold few keepsakes, mainly track memorabilia,
trophies and rings. At his desk, Luther writes something on
paper. Without looking up:

LUTHER
Have a seat.

Robyn sits in front of the desk. His eyes remain on his document.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
How can I help you?

ROBYN
Um...I wanted to ask if I could add another class to my schedule.

No response.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
I'm taking a journalism class, and my professor invited me to enroll in a special topics course. It's on sports journalism, actually. It wouldn't conflict with practice or anything. But it would put me over eight credits and I know-

LUTHER
What were you talking about with that reporter?

ROBYN
What?

Finally, Luther looks up at Robyn.

LUTHER
The reporter you were talking to after practice. What were you talking about?

ROBYN
Nothing, really.

Luther stares at her. Not the answer he wanted to hear. Robyn looks down at her hands in her lap, avoiding eye contact.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
I mean, he asked if I could answer some questions about Emmanuel, but I told him I had no comment.

LUTHER
You did?

ROBYN
Yeah.

Luther's stare burns a hole through Robyn.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

He asked about how I thought the team would be this year.

LUTHER

And you said?

ROBYN

Good...I said I think it...I think it's gonna be good.

Robyn fidgets with her hands beneath the table.

LUTHER

What did you say you needed again?

ROBYN

Um...I wanted to see if I could add another course for this semester.

LUTHER

I don't agree with my runners taking over eight credits.

ROBYN

I know.

LUTHER

And yet you're asking me to bend my own rules.

ROBYN

Well, I know you want us to focus on track and not have the distractions of anything else, but-

LUTHER

Do you think that's right?

ROBYN

Um...Yeah, yeah I definitely understand that. My mother was a runner so I get what it means to sacrifice--

LUTHER

But you want to take the class.

ROBYN

Only if it's not a huge problem. I'm sure I can handle it.

LUTHER

Who'd your mom run for?

ROBYN
...Grant Thomas.

LUTHER
Your mother ran for Grant Thomas?
Really?

ROBYN
Yeah. She was on the '82 four by
four team.

LUTHER
Quarter-miler?

ROBYN
Yep.

LUTHER
The record breaking team?

ROBYN
Yeah, she ran anchor.

LUTHER
Really?

Robyn smiles, nods her head nervously.

ROBYN
She still has all the gear and
trophies in the house.

LUTHER
...You wouldn't lie to me about
that, would you?

Robyn's smile disappears.

ROBYN
Huh? No. She ran for him for like
five years before she had me.

LUTHER
Hm.

Luther lifts his desk phone to his ear and dials a number. He waits. Robyn can hear the ringing projecting through the phone. Then it stops.

LUTHER (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)
Hey, Grant! How are you?...Good.
I'm good. How's Vanessa?...That's
what I like to hear.
(MORE)

LUTHER (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)
Listen, you're not going to believe
this but you wouldn't happen to
remember an old athlete of yours--
(to Robyn)
What's your mom's name?

ROBYN
(sheepish)
Jackie Vaughn.

LUTHER (ON THE PHONE)
Jackie Vaughn?...

Robyn breathes nervously for what seems a long pause.

LUTHER (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)
Mm hm...You do?...Oh, is that so?
...No, I didn't realize she was
that good...I'm sitting here with
her daughter. She runs for me at
South Summit...Yeah that's
something...We'll talk soon. Take
it easy.

Luther hangs up the phone.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Great guy. We go way back.

Eyes down, Luther returns to his paperwork. And then:

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Take the class if you'd like.

ROBYN
Really?

He doesn't give a response. Robyn takes that as her cue to
leave. She stands and walks to the door, when:

LUTHER
I believe I just granted you a
favor out of generosity.

ROBYN
...Thank you.

LUTHER
Of course, if you do take that
class, it'll let me know you're not
as serious about track as I thought
you were...Close my door, please.

Robyn sinks out of the room.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

In the dark room, Robyn sits at her desk. Music plays from her speakers. In front of her, the computer screen lights her face.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Robyn types an email:

'Dear Professor Burke.' The curser jumps to a new line, starting a new paragraph. The curser blinks...

BACK TO SCENE

Robyn hesitates momentarily. She leans back in her chair. She glances over at the empty side of her room, then focuses back on the computer screen.

She types more words we cannot see. She closes her laptop. The room goes black.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Tapping her fingers along her desk, Dr. Reese waits in an empty room. She checks her desk clock. 1:35pm.

INT. ATHLETIC BUILDING - HALLWAY - SAME

Walking to the end of a hallway, Robyn stops in front of Dr. Reese's office door. She takes a deep breath and puts her hand on the nob, then releases, and walks away.

In the middle of the hall, she stops and returns. Deciding against it again she turns back, takes several steps, when:

The door OPENS.

DR. REESE
Robyn Vaughn?

Robyn spins around.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
Nice to meet you. I'm Dr. Reese.
Come on in.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Robyn enters a cozy room. It's a stark contrast from before - a cluttered desk, fuzzy carpet, and bookshelves with signed athletic gear. Dr. Reese closes the door behind them.

DR. REESE
Would you like to take off your shoes?

Robyn responds with a skeptical look. Not interested.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
I want people to be comfortable when they're here. You can leave them right by the door if you want.

ROBYN
No, thanks.

DR. REESE
Suit yourself. Have a seat.

Robyn stops in front of two different chairs, a skinny yellow arm chair and a wide green arm chair. She chooses the yellow chair, closest to the door.

Dr. Reese sits across from her in her own chair. Robyn looks anywhere but at Dr. Reese in the eyes.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
So, how are you?

ROBYN
Good.

DR. REESE
How are classes going?

ROBYN
Good.

DR. REESE
Practice?

ROBYN
Good.

Dr. Reese smiles, holding in a laugh.

DR. REESE
Everything's just peachy, huh?

Robyn shrugs.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
Do you know why you're here?

ROBYN
Because I have to be.

DR. REESE
Fair enough. But do you want to be here?

Robyn glances at Dr. Reese, making eye contact even if for a second.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
You can be honest.

ROBYN
No, I don't want to be here.

DR. REESE
Why not?

ROBYN
Because I don't think I need this.

DR. REESE
Have you ever been to a psychologist before?

ROBYN
No.

DR. REESE
Then how do you know this isn't something you need?

Robyn has to think about it.

ROBYN
I know I'm not weak.

DR. REESE
Is that what you think? People who see psychologists are weak?

ROBYN
Why else would they need one? They can't handle their issues.

DR. REESE
Well I'd argue that people who speak up about their feelings are people who do handle their issues.

ROBYN

I guess we can agree to disagree then.

DR. REESE

So according to you, Carmelita Jeter, Justin Gatlin, and Allyson Felix are all weak?

ROBYN

No, I didn't say that.

DR. REESE

They've all used therapy.

Robyn shuts up.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

I'm not a dictator, Robyn. I don't believe in forcing people to talk. You have to be ready to do that on your own...Between you and me, I have a lot of work that I can do. But you, as you've stated, have to be here. So, you just tell me when you're ready.

Dr. Reese sits behind her desk leaving a confused Robyn in the sitting area.

ONE HOUR LATER

Robyn slumps in the chair asleep when Dr. Reese opens the office door. Robyn startles awake.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

I'll see you next week.

Gathering her things, Robyn makes her way to the door as Dr. Reese returns to her desk.

ROBYN

That's it?

DR. REESE

You get from these sessions what you put in...But just one thing. Do you know why I have so much respect for athletes?

Robyn shrugs.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
All humans feel pain. But athletes
are taught to suppress it. While
something tells me you're very good
at it, just remember even greater
strength comes from allowing
yourself to release it.

Robyn takes in her words before leaving the office.

EXT. TRACK - DAY - (TRAVELING)

Gena darts around the curve, handing off to Sidney who sprints a couple meters before slowing down.

LUTHER
Maya and Robyn, you're up!

Breathing hard, hands on hips, Gena and Sidney walk off the track.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Ready!

Luther chirps his whistle.

Watching like a hawk, Luther glares down Maya as she barrels around the 200 meter curve. Robyn takes off as she approaches.

MAYA
Stick!

Robyn throws her hand back. Maya reaches for her hand, releases the baton. It's unsteady. It falls to the ground.

A WHISTLE BLOWS. Luther slams his clipboard on the ground.

ROBYN
What are you doing?

MAYA
Me? You had the stick! You didn't grip it!

ROBYN
You barely put it in my hand!

Suddenly, Maya backs off, looking behind Robyn. Robyn turns. In a flash, Luther grabs Robyn by the collar of her shirt, bringing her close to his face. She's stunned.

The guy sprinters perk up from their ab workout in the middle of the field.

LUTHER
Did you really drop my fucking
baton, you worthless piece of shit!

ROBYN
I-

LUTHER
I put you on the anchor of this
team and you can't even do your
fucking job, is that what you're
telling me?

ROBYN
No-

LUTHER
No, you can't do your job?

ROBYN
Yes, I-

LUTHER
Yes? Now it's a yes? Are you
fucking retarded?

Robyn flinches as spit sprays in her face.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Did your pathetic has-been mother
never teach you to hold on to the
fucking baton? No wonder she's a no
name failure.

Luther releases Robyn. He picks up the baton from the track and forces it into her hands.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Get on the line and run a goddamn
100 meters. I swear on my mother's
grave if you don't beat Maya down
this 100, I will kick you off this
team.

Robyn and Maya line up on the track. Luther blows his whistle in Robyn's ear.

They sprint down the track. Robyn finishes first.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Gena! Go get on the line!

Robyn walks back to the start of the straight away where Gena rushes towards the line. They crunch over, ready to run.

The WHISTLE BLOWS. Robyn and Gena take off again. Robyn crosses first at the other end.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Sidney, on the line!

Sidney lines up next to Robyn. The whistle blows.

EXT. TRACK - NIGHT - (HOURS LATER)

The sun is gone. The stadium lights illuminate the track. Gena, Maya, and Sidney lay in the grass, exhausted.

Still gripping the baton, Robyn hunches over, her shirt drenched, her cheeks flushed. She's completely depleted. Wobbling, she readies herself on the line, but heaves over and throws up.

Luther grabs Robyn from the back of her shirt, pulling her up and back onto the line.

LUTHER
You're pathetic. Gena, get your ass
on the line.

Slowly, Gena steps up.

The whistle SCREECHES. Gena and Robyn take off. Robyn stumbles forward, then collapses across the track. Gena doesn't stop. She jogs across the finish line at the other end.

Breathing hard, Robyn stares up at the bright lights, grimacing as Luther steps into view, looking down at her.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Don't ever drop my baton.

He snatches the baton from her hand. He bends down on one knee beside her.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
And don't you ever, ever feel that
you can undermine my rules on
taking another class.

Robyn's grimacing turns into shock as his words sink in.

ROBYN
(out of breath)
I didn't enroll in the class.

Luther leans in.

LUTHER
But you thought you could. Now get
the fuck off my track.

Luther stands and steps over Robyn, leaving her breathless, panting, and profusely drenched in sweat.

INT. TRAINING ROOM ICE BATH - LATER

Lights remain off in the rest of the empty training room. Robyn is the only one left. Wearing a bra and spandex shorts, Robyn lowers herself into a tub filled with water and ice.

She closes her eyes and sinks entirely under the ice water, holding her breath for what seems to be a very long time.

INT. DORM ROOM - EVEN LATER

In her dark room, Robyn stands in front of the wall. She pumps her arms, then reaches back as if to receive a baton.

Turning around to check that her hand is properly hitting the tape marked on the wall, she repeats the drill.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Reese flips through folders at her desk. Someone CLEARS THEIR THROAT off screen. Dr. Reese looks up at Robyn sitting in the same chair as before.

DR. REESE
Sorry?

ROBYN
I didn't say anything.

DR. REESE
Oh, I thought you did.

Robyn, still wearing her shoes, adjusts her position in her chair.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
All right! Let's go.

ROBYN

Go where?

DR. REESE

If you're gonna leave your shoes
on, we might as well take a walk.
Come on.

Hesitantly, Robyn lifts herself from the chair.

EXT. TRACK - MOMENTS LATER

An empty track. It looks peaceful, almost serene compared to when we've last seen it. Dr. Reese and Robyn walk in the middle lanes.

DR. REESE

So?

Robyn looks around, not understanding why they're at the track.

ROBYN

So...

DR. REESE

This is your world. Tell me
something about it.

Dr. Reese waits for Robyn to make a move.

ROBYN

Okay.

ON THE CURVE

Robyn and Dr. Reese walk side by side.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Let's say you're running the 200,
right?...Stand here.

Dr. Reese stops walking. Robyn continues ahead of her about ten more meters.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

You see where I'm standing?

DR. REESE

Yeah.

ROBYN

In a race we call this spot the wall because this is where you start feeling like you ran into a wall. Feels like you're hit with 100 pounds of brick on your chest. You start thinking how much your legs hurt, your arms hurt, your chest feels like it's gonna explode. You see where you're standing, though?

DR. REESE

Yeah.

Robyn walks back to Dr. Reese.

ROBYN

This is where your body actually starts shutting down. This is where your lungs start to collapse, your muscles start cramping because they aren't getting any oxygen. You're brain slows down. But because you're running, your brain doesn't even receive the signal that your body is in distress until ten meters later.

DR. REESE

That's interesting.

ROBYN

Yeah, people don't ever explain track like that. It's not just running around in a big circle.

DR. REESE

So I guess you get this question a lot. Why do you run then?

Robyn thinks about it.

ROBYN

It's just what I know how to do best I guess.

DR. REESE

Nah. Come on. I'm sure you can do a ton of things well. What's so special about track?

ROBYN

Maybe I'm addicted to it.

DR. REESE
To what? Winning?

ROBYN
...Flying. Feeling weightless. Like
the weight of the world isn't
really on my shoulders.

Dr. Reese meditates on that before they both start walking
back towards the athletic building.

A HORN BLARE AND EXPLOSIVE CHEERS draw Robyn and Dr. Reese's
attention to an adjacent field.

On the soccer field, the South Summit players jump in
excitement, having just scored a goal. In unison, they kneel
to the turf, reminiscent of the warrior statue.

Following suit, the spectators and fans all kneel while the
school anthem plays.

DR. REESE
What is that? I see athletes doing
that all the time.

ROBYN
It's called the Summit kneel. It's
a school pride thing. The teams
usually do it when they win a game.
The track team, though...we do it
when someone becomes a champion.

Robyn stops walking. She looks back to the track stadium.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
The whole stadium on bended knee.
They're gonna do that for me this
year. I promise it.

Dr. Reese turns and gazes at the track stadium with Robyn.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

George, Kim, and Luther sit around a conference table. A
LAWYER, 50s, sits across from them.

GEORGE
So what exactly does this mean?

LAWYER

Well, the good news is that the case can't be discussed with outside parties. That obviously includes the media.

LUTHER

And what about me and my staff?

LAWYER

Well right now, it's a matter of he said she said type of scenario.

GEORGE

Meaning what, exactly?

LAWYER

All Emmanuel did was put out a social media status. There's no concrete proof that Luther or the staff are responsible for the injury. They're going to have a tough time proving otherwise, unless something further becomes exposed.

KIM

Well we're all represented by counsel so whatever is said in here is confidential, correct?

LAWYER

That's right.

KIM

Then I think if there's a possibility for something else to become exposed, that should be said now.

George gives Kim a dirty look. The room falls silent.

LUTHER

Not that I know of. I treat these athletes like they're my own kids.

Kim glares at Luther.

LAWYER

Then, we're all set. I'll have the rest of the memos sent over as soon as I get back into the office.

Everyone stands from their seats. George leads the lawyer out of the room and down the hall. Kim and Luther lag behind.

LUTHER

Whose side are you on?

KIM

My job is to know all the information in order to prevent it from becoming a wildfire.

LUTHER

And so now you have it.

KIM

Do I? There's more to this than saving face.

LUTHER

Like what?

KIM

Like being morally right. Are you responsible for hurting Emmanuel?

Luther steps uncomfortably close to Kim. His glare shoots daggers through her eyes. He slowly brings his hand up and places it on her arm, gripping it.

LUTHER

Don't ever ask me that again.

Brushing past Kim, Luther exits the board room.

EXT. ATHLETIC BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

George waves the lawyer off as he drives past in his car. Dr. Reese exits the building with her office bag hanging over her shoulder.

DR. REESE

Just the man I was looking for.

GEORGE

Not sure if that's a good or bad thing.

DR. REESE

Walk me to my car?

George joins her. They head into:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY - (TRAVELING)

DR. REESE

Never in my years of working with athletes have I run into a group more closed off than your sprinters.

GEORGE

Well, that's what you specialize in, isn't it? Athletes aren't known to be expressive people, Dr. Reese.

DR. REESE

George, I'm well aware of how athletes act. It's why you hired me.

GEORGE

Actually, the board of student affairs hired you.

DR. REESE

Either way, you'd be surprised, athletes, as it turns out, act very much like regular humans.

GEORGE

Meaning?

Dr. Reese stops walking and faces George.

DR. REESE

You can stop referring to them as if they're emotionless machines. And I think it's odd that with the circumstance of their injured teammate, it hasn't warranted any discussion.

GEORGE

Maybe they just have nothing to say.

DR. REESE

Or maybe they've been encouraged not to say anything at all.

A moment. George starts walking. Dr. Reese continues with him.

GEORGE

What exactly are you getting at?

DR. REESE

I've worked with countless number of athletes. You can't possibly think I can't tell when a patient is holding back out of, I don't know, fear?

GEORGE

(scoffing)

Dr. Reese, I'm being pulled in every direction. I'm looking out for the best interest of the students and my staff. I'm trying to put out a fire here.

DR. REESE

Put out the fire or contain it? Because there's a difference. There's not a single patient that I let slide under the rug. I'm gathering that's something this school lives by, but that's not me, Mr. Shannon.

GEORGE

Please, Dr. Reese. Spare me. What is it that you want?

Dr. Reese stops beside a shiny grey Mercedes Benz.

DR. REESE

I want you to answer me. You have an injured student with a collapsed lung, a lawsuit against the coach and administration for that collapsed lung, and not a single student has anything to say about it. Don't you think that's odd?

GEORGE

...This your car?

Dr. Reese unlocks the car door and gets inside the driver seat. George closes the door behind her and returns to the building.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Dismissed students pack their belongings and file out the classroom, accepting graded paperwork from Professor Burke.

In the back, Robyn gathers her materials and flings her backpack over her shoulder.

Making her way towards the door, Robyn accepts paperwork from Professor Burke. It's graded with a 'B-.'

Beside the grade, another message:

'Still looking for your point of view! More of your voice.'

Reading the message, Robyn sulks. She slips the paper into her backpack.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Good luck on your upcoming meet.

ROBYN

Thanks.

PROFESSOR BURKE

I'm disappointed that you decided not to take the Sports Journalism class. I went out on a limb for you.

Robyn looks down at her feet.

ROBYN

I'm sorry.

PROFESSOR BURKE

I just think you're giving up a huge opportunity.

ROBYN

Yeah, well, I can't even find my point of view so maybe it's for the best.

PROFESSOR BURKE

You're a strong writer, Robyn. But even the strongest writers go unheard unless they find their own unique voice...Good luck this weekend.

Robyn takes in those words before turning to leave.

INT/EXT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Unlocking the door, Robyn steps inside. As if stunned, she stops dead in her tracks.

On the side of the room that was once empty, is now a completely made-up bed and desk.

ROBYN

Who the hell are you?

JULIA, 19, studious look, definitely a non-athlete, turns around. She offers her hand to Robyn.

JULIA

Hey! I'm Julia. I just transferred.
Looks like I'm your new roommate.

Neglecting her handshake, Robyn looks behind Julia at the newly occupied side of the room. Bedsheets, books, posters, clothes.

Shaking her head, Robyn backs away and darts out the room.

INT. STUDENT HOUSING DEPARTMENT - LATER

A STUDENT WORKER stands behind a counter amidst a congested workspace.

STUDENT WORKER

She's a transfer. We had to fill
beds. There's nothing we can do.

Standing on the other side of the counter is Robyn,
completely flustered.

ROBYN

What do you mean there's nothing
you can do? You can't throw that
girl in my room. You guys didn't
even tell me!

STUDENT WORKER

Yeah we did. We sent two notices at
the beginning of the month.

The student worker swivels his computer screen around to
reveal records indicating the sent emails.

ROBYN

I never received those.

STUDENT WORKER

(shrugging)
You check your spam?

ROBYN

Are you kidding? Look, I don't care
what you have to do. I can't live
with her. I can't have her in
there.

STUDENT WORKER

Consider yourself lucky you had the room to yourself for this long. That rarely happens. If you want, you can file an appeal but there's no guarantee they'll find you a different dorm-

ROBYN

No! Listen to me. I don't want to move. That's my room. I don't want her there.

STUDENT WORKER

Calm down. Like I said, once rooms are assigned that's it. Should've applied for a single unit.

Robyn closes her eyes, inhaling and exhaling. She turns around, nearly being shoved out of line. Taking a look at her watch, she hurries out the door.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Reese enters the office, closing the door behind her. She instinctively removes her shoes.

DR. REESE

Found it.

She holds up an autographed photo and sits across from Robyn, still sulking with attitude. Looking at the photo, Robyn's aggravation subsides.

Carmelita Jeter crosses the 2012 Olympic finish line in first place, extending her pointer finger towards the time clock.

ROBYN

I have this photo in a newspaper clipping.

DR. REESE

Last time we spoke, you said something pretty interesting. You said you run because you like the feeling of not having the weight of the world on your shoulders. Do you normally feel like you have the weight of the world on your shoulders, then?

ROBYN

I don't know.

DR. REESE

A lot of people do. Even I do sometimes. It feels awful, especially when you're constantly feeling that way. There's actually another word for it...pressure. Maybe you're feeling pressure.

ROBYN

Who isn't? Everybody needs some pressure. It makes you a stronger person. Luther says pressure is what makes a champion.

DR. REESE

Do you believe that?

ROBYN

He must be right 'cause he makes plenty of champions.

DR. REESE

Well that all depends on what your definition of a champion is.

ROBYN

A champion is someone who puts in the work, doesn't complain about it, and makes it happen for themselves.

DR. REESE

Well, I think it's more subjective than that. I think a champion is someone who is true to themselves. Look at the picture. How much pressure do you think Carmelita Jeter was under to race on that anchor leg?

Robyn does as told.

ROBYN

I don't know. A lot.

DR. REESE

Just a lot? The whole world is watching. One false move would cost the entire team the win.

ROBYN

Okay a whole lot. A ton.

DR. REESE

If you had to guess how good she was feeling that day, what would you say? One hundred percent? Fifty percent?

ROBYN

I guess one hundred percent.

DR. REESE

What makes you guess that?

ROBYN

Because it's Carmelita Jeter. She trained her life for that moment. You don't train your whole life not to be at your best when it matters.

DR. REESE

Would you believe me if I said she was actually feeling only sixty percent that day? She said it in an interview.

ROBYN

She's just that good I guess.

DR. REESE

She's human just like you and me. Think about it. Sprinters have to run prelims, then semi's, then finals for all of your races. And at the Olympics? She probably had to run them full out every time. How could she possibly feel one hundred percent up to par by the time finals came around?

Robyn remains quiet, but intrigued.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

It's really hard to try and force yourself to give one hundred percent if you don't have one hundred percent to give. Wouldn't you agree?

ROBYN

I guess.

DR. REESE

Actually, it's impossible. And what I've found over the years is that athletes who feel the pressure to do so, end up crumbling, underperforming. So let's say, on any given day, you had to run a meet. And Luther is telling you, I need you to give me one hundred percent. But if you only feel like ninety percent, how can you expect yourself to give any more than that?

ROBYN

It's not that simple with Luther.

DR. REESE

Why isn't it? You can't give what you don't have. When you start focusing on what you do have, things become a lot easier to accomplish.

She looks at the clock.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

We're almost out of time but the last thing I wanted to ask you was what else makes you feel the way running makes you feel?

ROBYN

What do you mean?

DR. REESE

I believe there are two types of runners. People who chase after something and those who run from something. You said running makes you feel weightless. What else makes you feel that way?

Robyn stares down at the floor, silently asking herself.

ROBYN

Writing.

DR. REESE

I think that's great. I'd love to read some of your writing if that's okay with you. Maybe next session?

Robyn nods. Dr. Reese looks at Robyn as if they're breaking ground.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM - NIGHT

CARD: REGIONAL QUALIFIER MEET

Stadium lights highlight the track.

TEAMS in their various school colors sit in the stands.
ATHLETES warm up everywhere in a frenzy of organized chaos.

EXT. BLEACHERS - SAME

The HOME TEAM IN GREY WARMUPS chant school pride anthems.

COMPETITOR TEAMS wearing their respective school colors do the same.

Climbing the steps and claiming her seat is Jackie. Wearing an official Team USA Track & Field sweatshirt, she adjusts two stop watches around her neck.

She marks results on a meet program booklet.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM FIELD - SAME

Sitting beside Maya, Gena, and Sidney, Robyn stretches as she watches her mother in the stands. They all wear matching black and white uniforms.

Ten feet away, Luther shakes hands with other coaches, smiling, laughing, and patting them on the backs.

She breaks her glance as Luther parts from the coaches, his smile dropping into a callous stare.

LUTHER

Get up.

The girls hop to their feet. Behind them, a MEET OFFICIAL circulates the field and announces.

MEET OFFICIAL

Four by one, ladies! To your zones!

Taking off in four different directions, Luther discreetly grabs Robyn by the arm. He brings her in close.

LUTHER
Drop my fucking baton and I swear
you'll walk back to Virginia.

EXT. TRACK - MOMENTS LATER

AT THE STARTING LINE

Gena stands in front of the blocks. The competition does the same in their respective lanes.

A STARTER adjusts noise cancelling headphones on his head.

STARTER
On your mark!

Gena and the other athletes shake their legs before crouching and adjusting their feet into the blocks. Everything goes still. Quiet.

STARTER (CONT'D)
Set!

He raises the starter gun into the air.

POW! The runners spring out of the blocks and storm around the curve, faster and faster. Gena races towards Sidney.

TRAVELING

Sidney puts her arm back with an opened hand. Gena pushes the baton to her. A clean exchange.

In third place, Sidney sprints after the competition, making up ground as she brings it in to Maya. Reaching back, Maya receives the baton. Another clean exchange.

Tied for first, it's neck and neck. The crowd grows louder.

Maya comes in hot on Robyn's heels. Robyn fidgets her leg with nervous energy, concentrating hard before springing from her crouched position.

MAYA
Stick!

Robyn reaches back with a strong, sturdy hand. Maya reaches for her hand, the baton grazing it. The crowd gasps. Maya readjusts and Robyn snatches the baton.

The crowd ROARS, back into the action. Robyn soars towards the finish line, battling for first position with a competitor.

The line approaches. Both athletes grimace and lean. Robyn hurls herself over the line, tumbling onto the hard track.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
It's gonna be a close one folks!

All eyes on the score board...

...as South Summit comes up first.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
By two tenths of a second, it's
South Summit for the win! And that
time will automatically qualify
South Summit for a Regional slot!

Robyn lifts herself up, immediately crippling under her weight on her left foot.

She toughens as she puts pressure on her foot and slowly walks towards the field.

She walks past a MEDIC handing out water to the athletes.

MEDIC
(to Robyn)
You good?

Robyn looks up, spotting an approaching Luther.

ROBYN
Yeah.

LUTHER
That's what I'm talking about!

With a smile from ear to ear, Luther greets Robyn, placing his arm around her shoulder. This is a Luther we haven't seen before.

EXT. STANDS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Robyn rubs the top of her foot before sliding it into her tennis shoe.

JACKIE (O.S.)
Not a terrible start to the season.

Looking up, Robyn sees Jackie approaching. She stops consoling her foot, putting on a smile.

ROBYN
Could've been faster.

They embrace, awkwardly.

JACKIE

Well, what do I always tell you.
You have to work at it. It's not
going to come overnight.

ROBYN

My split was 11.6. That's my
fastest.

Looking at one of her stop watches:

JACKIE

Hm, I got 11.9. You kind of lost
control at the end.

ROBYN

Well it was 11.6. The assistant
coach clocked it for me.

JACKIE

Well there's always more work to be
done, right?

ROBYN

We qualified for Regionals you
know.

JACKIE

I know. That's good. But don't
forget regionals isn't the end
game. Plus, you still have
conference champs and a ton of
invitationals before then. And that
handoff was a little shaky. Since
when are you shaky on handoffs?

ROBYN

Last time I checked, I'm not the
only one on the track. Maya's bad
with the stick.

JACKIE

But you're the one who needs to
deliver it across the line.

ROBYN

Okay, okay. You're not my coach,
remember? A simple congrats would
be nice.

Robyn lifts her bag over her shoulder.

JACKIE

Well I wouldn't have driven three hours to another state just for a congratulations. You can't be so sensitive. These are just critiques.

ROBYN

I'm not sensitive.

JACKIE

Track's not all congratulations and medals. You have to want to get better.

ROBYN

Forget it.

POW. The starting gun goes off.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Underway with the final event of the night!

ROBYN

I should really just get to the bus.

JACKIE

Yeah, maybe so. It's starting to cool off so make sure you bundle up.

ROBYN

I know.

JACKIE

And put your feet up in the bus. You don't want that lactic acid to build.

ROBYN

I know.

They give each other another unfulfilling hug before parting ways.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Leaned forward in her chair, Dr. Reese silently reads a document with a grin on her face.

She finishes the last page and returns the document to Robyn sitting in front of her.

DR. REESE
That's really amazing talent you
have there.

ROBYN
You think so?

DR. REESE
Are you kidding? Robyn, not anyone
can just write like that.

Beaming with pride, Robyn looks Dr. Reese in the eye now. She slides the essay into her backpack.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
You know, you could make a career
out of that. Have you ever thought
about that before?

ROBYN
Being a writer? I guess I've
thought about it, but...

DR. REESE
But what?

ROBYN
Track is my priority, you know?

DR. REESE
I get that. All I'm saying is, it's
okay to allow yourself to think
about other possibilities. Think
about yourself as Robyn the writer,
and not just Robyn the sprinter.

Instinctively, Robyn smiles at the sound of it.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
You see that smile you have on your
face? That's what you should feel
when you think about your
future...There's a really good book
I want you to check out.

Dr. Reese gets up and heads behind her desk, searching for a book on her bookshelf. She pulls a book from its spot and turns.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
It's about finding your voice as a
writer. It's one of my fav-

Stopping in her place, Dr. Reese looks at Robyn who removes
her shoes and places them next to Dr. Reese's by the door.

Turning back, Robyn notices Dr. Reese staring.

ROBYN
You said I can take them off,
right?

DR. REESE
Of course.

They both return to the sofa chairs in the sitting area to
continue their discussion.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM BLEACHERS - DAY

The metal stands glisten under the beaming sunlight. Both men
and women sprinters hunch over at the bottom, dripping sweat
from their chins.

Luther blows his whistle. The athletes sprint up the bleacher
stairs towards him at the top.

Robyn remains at the bottom, grimacing as she rotates her
foot inside her shoe.

LUTHER
Let's go, Vaughn!

The athletes return to the bottom.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Suck it up! I don't have room for
weak athletes, you piece of shit!
If you don't get your ass up here,
Gena's the new anchor.

Stepping back down at the bottom, Gena lines up next to
Robyn.

GENA
I knew you wouldn't last.

ROBYN
Fuck you.

The whistle CHIRPS. Robyn sprints up the stairs. Gena takes
off as well.

Each planting of her foot on the stairs seems to echo with a harsh thump.

LUTHER

Faster!

Her footsteps pound up the bleachers.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

FASTER!

More pounding. Suddenly:

Robyn's foot slips from a step. Her knee crashes into the stair and her foot crumbles underneath her.

Grinding her teeth to suppress the pain, Robyn holds her foot. Slowly, she stands to her feet. Limping as she trots, Robyn makes her way to the top.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

What the fuck is wrong with you?
Get your act together or get off my
team. You understand me?

Robyn purses her lips and nods in understanding as Luther blows the whistle.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - HOURS LATER

Runners clear out of the dimly lit room as trainers sterilize and wipe down empty tables.

Still remaining, Robyn sits on a bench. She stretches her foot with a Thera-band. With each dorsiflex motion back and forth, Robyn grimaces.

LUTHER (O.S.)

Robyn.

Startled, Robyn turns to find Luther. She stops stretching as he takes a seat on the bench in front of her.

She looks around the room, now noticing it's empty.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

It's okay. You're not in trouble.
Tell me what's going on.

Robyn raises her eyebrows, unsure of how to react to Luther this way.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Come on, I saw you limping outside. I know I can be a hard ass, but that's my job. I care about all you like my own sons and daughters. But I need to make sure everyone's healthy. Now, what's going on? Is it your foot?

ROBYN

Yeah. I think I might have tweaked it or something during the qualifier meet.

LUTHER

How bad is it?

ROBYN

I thought it could've been a cramp or something but I might've strained it maybe.

LUTHER

Scale from one to ten, ten being the worst fucking thing you've ever felt, where's it at? Honestly.

Robyn exhales.

ROBYN

Like a six.

Luther nods his head as if thinking up a solution. He stands to his feet.

LUTHER

But not a ten. What do you think? Can you be a champ and make it through the Conference meet?

ROBYN

I honestly don't know. Maybe I should sit out?

LUTHER

So you wanna quit?

ROBYN

No. I just mean, take a break or something.

LUTHER

Robyn, Robyn...I brought you on this team for a reason and that's because I saw a champion in you. Sometimes athletes get hurt, but what makes a champion is your ability to suck it up and get the job done. Now I hope you're not telling me that you're unable to do that because that would mean I made a mistake and I don't make mistakes. That's why you're on scholarship but staying on scholarship depends on you bringing in points for this team and I would hate to be put in a position where I have to re-evaluate that. Now I'm not forcing you to run, but I think you're a winner. Now what do you say? Are you my champion?

Robyn looks up at Luther. She subtly nods her head.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Robyn massages a cup with a block of ice in small circles on the top of her foot while intensely watching a slow motion video of herself running on the computer screen.

She stops the footage, scrutinizing her form. Then, she takes a notepad, adding to a list of corrections.

Behind her, Julia tends to a mini 3D architect model while talking a mile a minute. Robyn pays no attention.

JULIA

How tough are your practices? I mean, I can't imagine having to run as much as you guys do.

Robyn's cellphone vibrates. A text from 'Mom:'

'Hope you're watching the videos I sent. Were you limping at the end of your race??'

JULIA (CONT'D)

I tried to play soccer in high school and we use to freak at the fact that track is literally a sport based on what other teams do as punishment.

Robyn begins to type a response when the three bubbles linger on the phone screen.

Another message: 'You can't afford any injuries.'

JULIA (CONT'D)
To me, it just like running around
this large oval over and over.

Robyn places her phone down without responding.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Do the athletes get special
treatment? Like do you guys have a
special dining hall that serves
nutritious food? At my old school-

ROBYN
Do you ever stop talking?

Finally, silence. Robyn closes her laptop. She zips the ice into a baggie and chucks it into her trashcan.

HOURS LATER

The room is dark. All is quiet. Robyn, however, is wide awake.

In her bed, she stares up at the ceiling. She turns her head to Julia's side of the room. Julia's fast asleep.

Robyn shuts her eyes tight. She turns over. Then, she gets out of bed, retrieving her earbuds from her desk.

Back in bed, Robyn plugs them into her phone and plays music. She turns onto her side and closes her eyes.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. A blaring, electrical alarm clock sounds. Robyn springs awake, jumping into a seated position. She breathes heavily, panting, in a state of surprise.

Julia rushes into the room.

JULIA
Sorry! I hit snooze on my alarm
clock and forgot to turn it off.
(Noticing Robyn)
Are you okay? It's just the alarm.

Robyn doesn't respond. Slowing her breath, she lays back down in her bed.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Alone, Robyn stands in the middle of the room.

Slowly, she raises onto her toes. Then back down. Slightly faster, she does another calf raise, then another.

Even faster now, Robyn runs in place, pumping her arms. Finally, she rests, nodding to herself.

ROBYN

I got this.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM - NIGHT**CARD: CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP MEET**

The stadium lights radiate pouring rain against the backdrop of the night. The rain, blowing sideways, beats onto the CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP MEET posters aligning the stands.

Fans, athletes, and coaches take cover under tarp, tents, and umbrellas. Except for the runners.

IN THE FIELD

A TRAINER stands under an umbrella, holding a medical bag close beside Luther.

TRAINER

You sure you want them to run in this? They already qualified for Regionals.

Getting soaked beside him, Luther stands without an umbrella, just a baseball cap and windbreaker.

LUTHER

Track isn't made for the weak. If they can't handle a little rain, they don't deserve to be champions.

ON THE CURVE

Drenched in pouring rain, Robyn and the other four by one runners jump and slap their muscles.

POW! The gun goes off from the starting line. Robyn squints her eyes to make out Gena's position across the track.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

And the fight for the conference championship is underway!

Robyn continues to slap her muscles. She shakes her legs and bounces her foot on the ground.

A collective GASP from the crowd.

Robyn squints at the track. A different team fumbles for their dropped baton. Sidney races towards Maya.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Here comes South Summit, into third
place!

Robyn rotates her foot, bobbing it up and down.

Getting into position, Robyn looks down the track behind her.

Maya approaches fast. Watching intensely as Maya gets closer, Robyn takes off.

The rain comes down hard on her face. She squints, blinks -

MAYA
STICK!

Robyn reaches back as Maya slaps the baton square into the palm of Robyn's hand.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
An even exchange. This will be a
fight to the finish!

Determined, Robyn shifts into another gear. The horns and applause of the crowd turn into white noise.

All is quiet, except her STEADY FOOTSTEPS pounding the track. They grow faster, faster, faster, until:

CRACK.

The noise comes rushing back in. Robyn collapses and tumbles onto the track. The competition leaves her behind and she reaches for her foot in agony. Medics rush to her side.

The baton rolls across the track, finally coming to a rest.

INT. MRI MACHINE - DAY

Feet first, the machine motions Robyn's body into the console. A despondent look covers Robyn's face.

INT. EXAM ROOM - LATER

A DOCTOR points to Robyn's MRI scans on a computer screen. Robyn drifts, not hearing a word. An ATHLETIC TRAINER takes notes.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Pushing open the door, Robyn enters, wearing a black medical boot.

She tosses her keys onto the desk.

Glancing along her desk and wall, Robyn takes in:

The Carmelita Jeter newspaper clipping. John Carlos and Tommie Smith on the podium, her batons and medals.

She takes a step back, in a depressive daze, when:

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. Julia's alarm clock blares, startling Robyn who turns around sharply. Fury builds inside Robyn.

In a rage, Robyn grips Julia's comforter with both hands, ripping it from the bed.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. Robyn grabs Julia's text books and slams them on the floor.

She kicks over Julia's trash can, wipes the paperwork from her desk, throws Julia's chair back, then smashes her miniature 3D architecture model on the floor.

BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. The high-pitched alarm persists.

Robyn rips Julia's clock from the outlet and shatters it against the wall. The beeping dies. The silence takes over.

Finally, Robyn stops, realizing the damage she's done.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Head down, eyes low, Robyn sits at a conference table.

Beside her, Julia sits with her arms crossed. Her broken architect model is placed on the table before them.

At the opposite end of the table, TWO STUDENT DISCIPLINARY COUNCIL MEMBERS whisper to themselves.

COUNCIL MEMBER 1

Okay. Well it's too late in the school year to reassign you both different rooms.

(to Robyn)

Julia is okay with staying in the dorm as long as you agree to pay for the damages and nothing like this ever happens again.

COUNCIL MEMBER 2

We understand this has been an incredibly tough year for you. But the next time something like this happens, we'll have to kick you out the dorm. Understand?

ROBYN

It won't happen again.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Shoes off, with the exception of the medical boot, Robyn paces around the room as Dr. Reese sits in a sofa chair.

DR. REESE

Well at least they didn't kick you out of the dorm.

ROBYN

I guess.

DR. REESE

You did apologize to her, right?

(no response)

Come on, that's the least you can do for ruining her property...How about we talk about why you decided to do that.

ROBYN

I told you. I just snapped.

DR. REESE

That doesn't tell me anything. Come on. You could've ripped your own side to shreds, but you had to pick on poor Julia.

ROBYN

What are you, her lawyer?

DR. REESE

So what if I was? You're lucky they didn't suspend you from the track team or worse for what you did.

ROBYN

Well fuck Julia.

DR. REESE

Why? What did she ever do to you?

Robyn shakes her head.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

Come on. What?

ROBYN

She's just so...

DR. REESE

What?

ROBYN

There! In the way. She's always talking and changing things. I had a way of doing things. I had a way of...(coping).

DR. REESE

So because she changes things you destroyed her property?

ROBYN

It's not about that.

DR. REESE

Then what?

Robyn holds back. She looks down at her foot.

ROBYN

I was just pissed off about my foot.

DR. REESE

I get being injured isn't ideal but like you said, it could be worse. A level one fracture is better than three or four.

ROBYN

Still puts me out for a month. And Luther's never gonna' let me anchor.

DR. REESE
You don't know that for sure.

Robyn takes a seat across from Dr. Reese in a sofa chair.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
Are you going home for spring
break?

ROBYN
Yeah.

DR. REESE
I think it would be good to get
away. Give yourself some space,
some time to relax.

ROBYN
(sarcastic)
Right.

DR. REESE
You don't like going home?

ROBYN
I just don't see eye to eye with my
mom.

DR. REESE
Why not? You said she also used to
run. Seems like you'd have lots to
talk about.

ROBYN
We just don't...It's just always
about track with her.

DR. REESE
Well, have you tried making it
about something else?

ROBYN
I don't even know what that would
look like. Our whole relationship
is based on track.

DR. REESE
Well, it doesn't have to be that
way, you know. Maybe your mom
doesn't even realize it...Let's try
something. Just pretend I'm your
mom.

ROBYN
Role playing? No.

DR. REESE
Seriously. Just try it once.
Pretend I'm your mom and ask me to
read your writing.

Robyn fidgets in her seat, masking her insecurity behind a smile. Noticing Dr. Reese already in character, Robyn complies.

ROBYN
Fine...Alright...Ma, I want you to
read my writing.

DR. REESE
Okay, sure. When I get a second.

ROBYN
I want you to read it now.

DR. REESE
Why?

ROBYN
Because...because I think I'm good
at it.

DR. REESE
But you're also good at track. Why
spend time writing when you can
spend that time on track?

Robyn thinks long and hard. She seems stumped.

ROBYN
Because it's something that makes
me happy.

Dr. Reese smiles at Robyn, as if to say, there's the answer.

LATER

Robyn heads out the door when Dr. Reese hands her a sticky note.

DR. REESE
This is my cell. Call me if you
need anything.

Robyn accepts and leaves Dr. Reese's office.

INT. VAUGHN HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Robyn and Jackie sit across from each other at a small table. On the counter, a small TV plays the news softly. The silverware clinks against their plates.

JACKIE

Injuries happen. That's part of the sport. I got injured plenty of times. It's just about sucking it up, rehabbing, and getting back on that horse.

A pause. Robyn glances at a folder tucked under her bottom in her chair. She gathers herself to speak.

ROBYN

Maybe now I'll have more time for other things, you know? Like something other than track.

JACKIE

Like what?

ROBYN

Like...writing. I've been writing a lot for my journalism professor I told you about.

Robyn intently watches Jackie's reaction. Jackie raises her eyebrows, nodding her head.

JACKIE

Yeah?

(And then)

As long as it doesn't conflict with your rehab. If track's your main focus, healing that foot is what needs to take priority. We're lucky Luther isn't reducing your scholarship, because Lord knows I can hardly cover the extra cost of your tuition now.

ROBYN

Forget it. This is why I didn't want to bring it up.

JACKIE

Bring what up?

ROBYN

Nothing. It's fine.

JACKIE

What's the problem, Robyn?

ROBYN

I always have to walk on egg shells with you. I can't ever talk about anything or you always turn it into how much money we don't have, how much sleep you don't get. That's why I don't say anything.

JACKIE

Well I'm not a miracle maker, Robyn. We *don't* have much money and I don't get much sleep. But that's because I'm working to put a roof over your head and food on your plate. Someone has to do it. And I've been doing it by myself since you were nine.

ROBYN

And whose fault is that? No one told you to marry a deadbeat who'd up and leave us with nothing!

Jackie slams her fork down on her plate.

JACKIE

If it weren't for that deadbeat, you wouldn't even be here. I don't have control over anybody's actions except my own. But you being mad at the one person who does everything for you isn't going to get you anywhere.

Put in her place, Robyn removes herself from the table and leaves the kitchen. Moments later a door slams.

LATER

Jackie lifts Robyn's half-eaten plate, scraping the food into a plastic container when she spots the folder in the chair.

She sets down the plate, exchanging it for the folder and flips it open to reveal the essay from Robyn's journalism class.

The title reads: 'Growing Up A Track Legacy.'

Curious, Jackie sits down and begins to read.

INT. VAUGHN HOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

A bedroom door opens. Robyn sticks her head out and leans down the hall.

Spotting another bedroom with light shining at the base of the door, Robyn moves towards it.

Just as she does, the light in the bedroom goes out. Robyn stops and returns to her room.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK - DAY

A dingy track with rusting bleachers. Its chipped paint reveals the school's age.

Jackie and Robyn sit in the bleachers together on a blanket. They stare out at the track.

JACKIE

Do you remember coming here?

ROBYN

Barely.

JACKIE

This is where I used to train. I'd bring you with me and you'd run behind me on the track...You never cut across the field. I'd run and you would stay steady chasing after me. No matter how far I was, you just kept on running and running.

Robyn looks up at her mom, showing a side of herself she's never seen before.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Any other kid would've cut across the field. But not you. You weren't running for medals or trophies. I could always tell you were running for something much more than that. I just didn't realize it wasn't for yourself.

ROBYN

I'm sorry about last night-

JACKIE

No, you don't need to be apologizing. I'm the one who's sorry.

Robyn looks at her mother in shock.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Growing up, I was never handed anything. I had to work for everything I got. But track, it wasn't like that for me. It wasn't work. It just came easy and it made me happy. But I always promised myself that my child would never have to feel like she couldn't do what she wanted because of money problems. And somewhere along the way, I failed you on that.

ROBYN

No, you didn't.

JACKIE

Yeah, I did, Robyn. I made a good life for myself. And then I met your dad. He wasn't perfect but he gave me you. After he left I felt like someone had to be strong, someone had to just suck it up and put in the work so that eventually things would all be okay for the both of us. I never, ever meant for that to pressure you.

Speechless, Robyn can only look at her mom. Tears build in both of their eyes.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

You said being a track legacy is both the greatest feeling in the world but the most burdensome.

Robyn perks.

ROBYN

You read my essay?

JACKIE

I did. And you know what? It was damn good. You know you get those writing skills from me, right?

Both Robyn and Jackie break a smile and a soft laugh.

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Robyn, all I've ever wanted for you is to be happy.

(MORE)

JACKIE (CONT'D)
Whether you decide to run track or
not. I will be here for you, no
matter what.

ROBYN
I love you, Ma.

Robyn and Jackie embrace in a long warm hug. It's not awkward
this time, it's just right.

INT. BOARD ROOM - DAY

Luther, George, Kim and their lawyer sit on one side of a
table. On the other side, Emmanuel's ATTORNEY sits. She
slides a document across the table.

ATTORNEY
The settlement.

The lawyer accepts and reads.

ATTORNEY (CONT'D)
My clients are ready to move past
this and put this to rest.

The lawyer slides the paperwork to Luther who skims quickly,
then slides the paper back.

LUTHER
He's not coming back on my team.

ATTORNEY
That's what Emmanuel wants. That,
and the payment. Take it or leave
it. But we both know, the longer
this goes, the more of a financial
hole you dig yourselves.
(aimed at Kim)
And the worse it looks on the
school.

A long silence as George shares a look amongst his side of
the table.

GEORGE
All of this goes away?

ATTORNEY
Both parties will sign an NDA.

GEORGE
(to Luther)
We need this to disappear.

The attorney places a pen in the center of the table.

ATTORNEY

That's what settlements are for.

Kim purses her lips, staring at the pen and settlement papers, knowing the gravity of what they represent. And she too remains quiet, saying nothing.

INT. BOARD ROOM - LATER

Only George and Luther remain in the room. They face off.

LUTHER

Like hell it's coming out of my salary!

GEORGE

That's University policy! And I've already done what I can for your ass. This is over.

George gets in Luther's face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Emmanuel is back on the team. And that settlement is coming out of your salary whether you like it or not.

George storms out. Luther violently shoves a chair into the table.

EXT. TRACK - DAY

ON THE CURVE

Robyn rides a stationary bike positioned in an outside lane. Her boot rests nearby on the ground.

TRAVELING

On the inside lanes, Maya runs with the baton towards Gena, who takes off.

Maya struggles to reach Gena. They both run out of the exchange zone, Maya reaching the baton outwards.

Luther throws his hands in the air, fed up.

LUTHER

What good is competing a four by one if you can't make the final exchange? Do it again!

Annoyed and tired, Gena and Maya walk back to their marks.

Robyn gets off the stationary bike.

ROBYN

Maya, try not to slow down when you get to Gena.

With a disdainful look, Maya turns to Robyn.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

It's just slightly, but you do slow down. If you try picking up the speed, she won't keep getting away from you. And don't put up the stick until after she puts her hand back. It's a trick my mom taught me.

MAYA

Are you done?

ROBYN

Just try it out.

Maya rolls her eyes and trots back to her starting point.

Allowing Gena to get back in her stance, Maya skips into a run and builds to a sprint towards Gena.

Building faster, this time Maya doesn't let up. She flies around the curve, approaching fast.

Gena springs hard from her position.

MAYA

Stick!

Gena throws her hand back. Maya finds her target and slaps the baton into Gena's hand - it's clean, quick and precise.

ROBYN

Yeah! That's it!

Beaming with satisfaction, Gena and Maya walk back. As they pass Robyn, Maya gives her a slight nod.

INT. TEAM MEETING ROOM - LATER

Luther stands at the front of the room. The sprinters sit in chairs in front of him.

Robyn sits near the back, wearing her boot. In front of her, WHISPERS circulate the room.

GENA

I saw him. He's back on the team.

SIDNEY

No he's not. Why would Luther do that?

MAYA

Even if Luther allowed it, how is that even possible? What about the lawsuit?

GENA

He dropped it.

SIDNEY

No way. Why would his family let Luther off the hook like that?

GENA

Not the family. Emmanuel. It was his choice apparently.

MAYA

Even still, that's just--

GENA

Shh.

The room falls quiet when EMMANUEL, 21, somber looking, thin and fragile build, walks inside. Luther places his hands on Emmanuel's shoulders and grips him firmly.

LUTHER

Listen up. I have some important news. First of all, let's all welcome Emmanuel back.

The team claps lightly. Emmanuel looks downward, unable to look his teammates in the eyes. He gestures towards the chairs, but Luther tightens his grip and holds him up front.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Emmanuel's been through a tough few weeks. But he's a trooper.

(MORE)

LUTHER (CONT'D)
He's a South Summit warrior. And I,
for one, am proud to have him back.

Luther pats Emmanuel's chest. A collective cringe amongst the team. Finally, Luther releases Emmanuel, who finds a seat in the back.

Sitting a few seats away, Robyn stares for another moment longer before Luther closes the door.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Now, everything I say in here is
confidential...I've had to make
some budget adjustments and
unfortunately, it's going to impact
your scholarships.

Worry begins to cover the runners' faces. They sit up straight, on edge.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Now all of you in here are the
lucky few who we've been so
generous as to grant you
scholarships in the first place.
But now I'm in a position where I
need your help. So I'm asking
for...donations.

Confused faces all around. Emmanuel can't stand to look at Luther.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
I'm asking you to give back to the
program that's been so generous and
good to you by donating as little
or as much of your scholarship back
to the program.

Confusion and murmuring set in amongst the group.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Now, I want you to keep in mind, I
always take care of my own. So
think about it long and hard. I
trust you'll make the right
decision.

Luther walks out of the room followed by an outburst of arguing and cursing.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

At the front of the room, the word 'Ethics' is written on the whiteboard. Professor Burke leans against his desk as he concludes his lesson.

PROFESSOR BURKE

People have no clue what true ethics mean. But as journalists, you have to know...Any questions about what we covered today?

Professor Burke stares at the blank faces of the class. He turns his back, just as Robyn meekly raises her hand.

ROBYN

I have a question.

Professor Burke turns around. Surprised to see Robyn's hand raised:

PROFESSOR BURKE

Please.

ROBYN

What if doing what's right isn't actually right?

The class turns to look at her.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Care to elaborate?

ROBYN

I just mean, what if the right thing for one person doesn't mean it's the right thing for someone else?

The class turns back to Professor Burke. He takes to the whiteboard. Next to 'Ethics', he writes: 'Truth.'

PROFESSOR BURKE

I guarantee there will come a time when you will not be able to discern what is right or wrong. But what you all need to remember, is truth is the only ethics you need.

Robyn thinks about that. In her notebook, she writes 'Truth' above the word 'Ethics.'

PROFESSOR BURKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
That's all for today. Be on time
next class. Everyone will present
their oral reports. Don't forget,
build your topic and argue your
point.

The classroom empties out. Robyn is slow to follow.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
That was an interesting question.

ROBYN
Was just curious I guess.

Professor Burke flips through his workbag. He removes a flyer
and hands it to Robyn.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
What's this?

PROFESSOR BURKE
That is a writing contest given by
the National Journalist Society.
The writer of the winning essay
gets a year-long internship to
shadow sports journalists.

Robyn's eyes widen. She looks from the flyer to Professor
Burke.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
You know, originally, I was only
going to offer the contest to those
in the sports journalism class. But
a little birdie by the name of Dr.
Reese heard about the contest and
put in a pretty convincing argument
this afternoon. She's a real fan of
your writing. So you should thank
her for this...Track isn't
everything. Remember that.

ROBYN
Thank you.

Robyn takes the flyer and leaves the classroom.

INT. GEORGE SHANNON'S OFFICE - EVENING

Sitting at his desk, George signs paperwork. An envelope is
placed on the desk in front of him.

Looking up, he finds Kim standing before him.

KIM

More settlements to sign off on?

GEORGE

Ah, you know. Boosters, sponsors, it all gets redundant. I've been meaning to tell you how good of a job you did on Emmanuel's case. I know it was a whirlwind but the way you handled the media - you really did a great job making sure we weren't dragged through the dirt.

KIM

That's actually what this letter is for.

Finally acknowledging the sealed letter, George opens it.

GEORGE

What is it?

KIM

It's my formal two weeks notice.

George stops opening the envelope.

KIM (CONT'D)

I take pride in what I do. But I can't take pride in what's happening here.

GEORGE

The pride is in the legacy of this institution-

KIM

George, you don't have to sell it to me. I already bought into it once. But now I know better. Regardless of the settlement, you have to know deep down that Luther is getting away with abuse, whether you're willing to admit it to yourself or not.

GEORGE

You understand the type of prestige you're walking away from?

Kim looks on at George, shaking her head at his pathetic counter.

KIM
Yeah. I do.

Confidently, Kim leaves his office for the last time.

INT. STUDENT ATHLETE DINING HALL - NIGHT

Robyn sits alone at the end of a table. A group of athletes get up from the middle of the table, exposing Emmanuel sitting on the opposite end.

Lifting her tray, Robyn moves to the opposite end of the table and takes a seat in front of Emmanuel.

EMMANUEL
What's up?

ROBYN
Not much.

It's quiet between them. But not for long.

EMMANUEL
I'm guessing you want to know, too?

ROBYN
Kind of, yeah. I mean, you know how crazy Luther is and you could've transferred anywhere. Why did you come back?

EMMANUEL
Because I came here to be a champion. Same as you. You know if I tried to transfer anywhere else, Luther would've sabotaged my chances of any other team accepting me, the same way he did the others who tried to transfer out. He's an asshole, but he makes champions. You would've done the same thing.

Robyn contemplates to herself whether that's true.

Emmanuel momentarily stops eating as he looks at other STUDENT ATHLETES sitting at a table across the room.

Noticing, Robyn turns to take a look. The athletes breaks their stare and turn away.

EMMANUEL (CONT'D)
Don't worry, they're talking about me.

ROBYN

Nah, I'm pretty sure it's still me
they're talking about.

Together, Emmanuel and Robyn continue eating.

INT. FACULTY BREAK ROOM - DAY

Dr. Reese marches into the room. She takes a seat in front of George.

DR. REESE

I'm curious as to why all ten of my
requests for a meeting with you and
the athletic board have gone
unanswered.

GEORGE

Because we are not here to be at
your beck and call whenever you
have another critique of my
athletic department.

DR. REESE

This school hired me to be here and
talk to these students. That's what
I'm doing - my job. I'm trying to
figure out why you aren't doing
yours.

She leans forward, drilling him now.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

Every single one of those emails
express reports of these students
being abused by Coach Luther.

GEORGE

And so you understand why I can't
possibly take those seriously.
Those are hearsay stories-

DR. REESE

They are children! Eighteen,
nineteen, twenty year old kids!

GEORGE

Not to mention you are breaking
confidentiality.

DR. REESE

Forget confidentiality! Forget all the sweeping under the rug and keeping secrets. If I lose my job for saving lives, so be it.

GEORGE

Where's your proof, Dr. Reese?

DR. REESE

The proof is in the multiple athletes that've finally opened up even a fraction of an inch to admit they've been slapped, or grabbed, or retaliated against! And what's even scarier is that they don't complain about it. Like it's just some normal rite of passage that happens when you go to school to play a sport.

GEORGE

Accusations, Dr. Reese. The real proof is that this team is five meets, *five meets* away from another National meet appearance. Luther is responsible for that success.

DR. REESE

You are blatantly turning a blind eye to what's really happening-

GEORGE

And you're blind not to see the type of accolades Luther brings into this program. Do you think when I was playing ball someone asked about my feelings when coach slapped me around a bit? Of course not! Because he got the best out of me. And I was better for it.

DR. REESE

That old school mentality is wrong and played out.

GEORGE

No, this is the tough mentality that makes athletes elites. And frankly, I'm sick and tired of you not being able to catch up with the program here. Nothing is going to change, do you hear me?

This strikes Dr. Reese, the words hitting like a slap to the face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
So either you get on board, or
leave.

Dr. Reese lets up, saying nothing more. This is a match she will not win. She shows herself out.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - SAME

Partnered up on platforms, the athletes power clean and squat in silence.

Maya spots Robyn as she squats and racks a bar with multiple twenty kilo plates on each side.

In the corner, Luther glares at Emmanuel who uses both hands to stretch a Thera-band across his chest.

Finally, Luther makes a move. He heads straight for Emmanuel, grabs him by the arm, and pulls him to a platform.

LUTHER
Squat this.

In front of them a bar is racked with two 20 kilo plates on each side, a total of 100 kilos including the bar.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
I won't carry deadweight on my
team. If you want to be on this
team, you better prove it.

Looking across the platform, Robyn is caught in his line of sight.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
You. Spot him.

Robyn begrudgingly walks over as Emmanuel steps up to the bar. He positions the bar against his upper back, lifts, and takes two slow steps backwards. He wobbles the weight.

Teammates around the room tense up with nervous energy.

Robyn wraps her arms underneath his armpits from behind him. Taking a deep breath, Emmanuel lowers into a squat. Everyone watches, silently cheering him on with their eyes.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Up!

Emmanuel tenses. His body shakes, straining under the weight. The veins swell from his neck. He makes a little ground as he lifts his chest up.

Luther marches to the front of Emmanuel, bending down to be eye level with him.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

(whispering to Emmanuel)

You fucking ingrate. That bullshit settlement might say you get to be on the team, but that doesn't mean you won't want to quit after I get through with you. I'm going to break you like the worthless trash you are.

Emmanuel's legs buckle. He crumbles under the weight. Robyn catches him under the arms, struggling to pull him upwards.

ROBYN

(whispering to Emmanuel)

Come on. You can do this.

But Emmanuel collapses onto one knee, the bar nearly rolling onto his neck. Robyn grabs it as two other teammates rush in and lift the bar from each side. They rack it.

Emmanuel slowly picks himself off the platform, rubbing his chest and coughing.

LUTHER

You're only as good as your weakest member.

The team remains quiet, until:

ROBYN

Then I'll lift it for him.

Heads turn to Robyn. Luther approaches her with a scornful look.

LUTHER

What did you just say?

ROBYN

I'll lift it for Manny.

He gets close to her face.

LUTHER

Drop that weight, and you're off my team.

Robyn marches up to the bar. She wraps her hands around, then lowers her head underneath.

Right before she lifts, her concentration is broken by shifting of the bar. Luther slides twenty pound plates to one side, then to the other. A total of 140 kilos.

Robyn tightens her jaw and refocuses. She lifts the bar off the rack, wobbly and slow. Already, Robyn breathes heavily.

Taking two small steps backwards, she plants her feet firmly.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Down!

Robyn takes a breath before squatting. Her legs begin to quiver under the weight.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Up!

Another breath. Robyn pushes with all her strength, but goes nowhere. She closes her eyes, clenching her teeth. Her knees begin to buckle inwards.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

You're played. You're an
embarrassment. You're a fucking has-
been, just like your mother!

The words hit Robyn like a punch to the gut. She opens her eyes. A moment of doubt. Then:

GENA (O.S.)

Come on, freshman! Get it up!

MAYA (O.S.)

Let's go! You got this!

SIDNEY (O.S.)

Yeah! Come on, Robyn!

Collective cheering builds and builds from her teammates.

Gathering herself, Robyn pushes upwards, this time moving slowly. Veins and muscles bulge. She rises with the weight.

Suddenly, Robyn's left foot turns out of position. She buckles slightly. The entire bar slants downward to the left.

Her teammates cheer louder. Robyn regains control.

Almost standing, Robyn breathes heavier. Sweat beads roll down both sides of her face. She lets out a victorious YELL.

Finally, she stands tall, planting her feet firmly in place. The team lets out a boisterous cheer. Robyn lets the weight roll off of her back. It slams onto the platform behind her.

Her teammates crowd around her, patting her on the back.

Face flushed with anger, Luther backs away from the mob, scowling at the athletes as they clap and cheer.

And then, Luther begins to clap as well.

Slowly, then faster, until the athletes subside. Their own claps and cheers dwindle until finally, Luther stops.

The room is quiet, filled with stiff tension. Then:

LUTHER
Everyone leave the room, except for
Robyn.

There's no movement.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Everyone leave the goddamn room!

Slowly, the athletes file out. Alone in the weight room, Luther calmly approaches Robyn. Close to her face, he looks down on her like a bug to be squashed.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
You think you're being a hero?

Robyn says nothing. Suddenly, Luther swipes his hand up, as if to swipe down with the back of his hand across her cheek.

Robyn cowers to the side, throwing up her hands to receive the impact. She flinches back.

But there's no strike. Opening her eyes, Robyn sees Luther holding his pose, his arm in it's striking position.

LUTHER (CONT'D)
I'm always in control.

Luther leaves the room.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

Julia reads from a textbook at her desk when Robyn enters.

JULIA
What's this? It was on my bed.

Julia holds up a brand new digital clock in a package.

ROBYN
A peace offering.

JULIA
You're required to pay for a new one. That hardly counts as a peace offering.

ROBYN
Yeah, but this one is better than the one you had. It has more options or something.

Julia tosses the package to the side.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
I know replacing your clock isn't enough for an apology. But I'm trying. We don't have to be friends, but I thought we could maybe start over.

Julia ignores. Robyn gives up. She slings her backpack on the bed and sits at her desk. Then:

JULIA
What did student council mean when they said this was a difficult year for you?

Robyn thinks about it before she answers. Building the courage to say something, Robyn opens her mouth, then decides against it.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Cool. Good talk.

ROBYN
I don't like the quiet.

This grabs Julia's attention. She stops working and turns around in her chair, an invitation for Robyn to continue.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
That's why I sleep with my headphones. Or play music on my speakers. I don't like when it gets too quiet.

JULIA
Why?

ROBYN

It's like...Have you ever been in a place where it's so quiet that it almost seems too loud? Like the silence just eats at you?

JULIA

Not really.

ROBYN

I know it's weird. It's just-

JULIA

Something about you. That's the first time you even bothered to tell me anything about you.

Robyn turns back around. They sit in silence for a moment.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Why don't you play some music then?

Robyn reaches onto the top shelf of her desk and turns on her speakers. Music plays as Robyn and Julia work at their desks.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Gena walks into an empty locker room. She opens her locker and begins to change clothes when Robyn steps into the locker room from the showers.

An awkward silence fills the space. Robyn opens her locker across the carpet. They stand with their backs to each other.

GENA

That was cool, what you did for Manny.

The sudden talking makes Robyn jump.

ROBYN

Someone had to.

GENA

I heard you were cleared to run again.

ROBYN

Yeah. It's my last week wearing the boot. Doc said I should be good to race.

GENA

Cool.

ROBYN

Luther's not giving me anchor. He already told me I'll be third leg.

GENA

I wouldn't let you have it back anyways.

Gena smirks to herself. Robyn does the same.

ROBYN

Of course you wouldn't. I'd race you for it.

GENA

You'd still lose.

Now dressed, Gena closes her locker.

ROBYN

I think you're good on anchor. Really good. I just want you to know that.

GENA

Thanks.

Gena heaves her bag over her shoulder and leaves the locker room.

MONTAGE

At a daytime track meet, the South Summit four by one team prepares to race. Sidney gets in the blocks. The starter shoots the gun and Sidney takes off around the first curve.

Under the stadium lights at a different meet, Maya races the back stretch at night. She passes competition around her as she heads for Robyn waiting on the curve.

Concentrating hard, Robyn leans into the curve holding the baton at another daytime meet. She keeps the competition even. She approaches Gena and hands off.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. TRACK STADIUM - DAY - (TRAVELING)

CARD: REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP MEET

The crowd in the stands stomp and applaud at the ongoing race before them.

Gena receives the baton from Robyn. It's a clean exchange. Running like a madwoman, Gena blares down the home stretch.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
The final exchange! Can South
Summit take Regionals?!

Gena leans for the line against her competition.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
They've done it! South Summit takes
Regionals, securing their National
seed!

LATER

Sidney, Maya, Gena, and Robyn step onto the first place podium with medals around their necks.

EXT. COACH LUTHER'S OFFICE - EVENING

Standing in the hallway, Robyn nervously takes a deep breath before KNOCKING on the door.

LUTHER (O.S.)
Come in.

INT. COACH LUTHER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Robyn steps inside, closing the door behind her. She takes a seat at the desk across from Luther.

He removes a hefty ring from his finger and places it on the desk in front of her.

LUTHER
You know what that is?

ROBYN
A championship ring.

LUTHER
A *National* championship ring.
That's where you're headed.

Robyn nods, relaxing a little bit.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Do you see why I push you guys so hard? That's what brings out the best in people. You believe that, right?

Nodding her head meekly,

ROBYN

Sure. Yeah.

LUTHER

It's about respect for your trainer and trusting the system. A month ago you were in a boot, almost a redshirt. Now look at you. Soon to be All-American. That's what you came here to be isn't it?

Cracking a smile now, Robyn nods in agreement.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

See, not everyone gets it. That's why not everyone makes the cut. They'd rather complain about how hard it is, how much it hurts. Those are the people who quit when the going gets tough.

ROBYN

Yeah.

Still nodding and smiling, Robyn leans back in her chair for the first time, comfortable in Luther's presence.

Luther removes a file from his drawer, then tosses it on the desk in front of Robyn. Luther leans back in his chair.

She opens the file and reads the document. The smirk disappears as her face turns cold.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

What is this?

LUTHER

Your scholarship renewal.

ON THE DOCUMENT

Robyn's finger traces underneath the words:

'Athletic scholarship reduction from 75% to 25%.'

BACK TO SCENE

Robyn scrunches her face in confusion, pulling the document away.

ROBYN
No...No, this isn't right.

LUTHER
How do you figure that?

ROBYN
This says...this says twenty five percent. This is a major decrease. You can't do this! You can't take my money from me-

LUTHER
Your money?

ROBYN
I had seventy-five percent. I can't afford school without that money! You said I would get a full ride if I-

LUTHER
If you what?!

Robyn's eyes remain wide. She breathes faster and stands to her feet. Tears automatically fill her eyes.

ROBYN
If I win!

LUTHER
That's the thing about verbal agreements. They change.

ROBYN
I'm not signing this.

LUTHER
(shrugging)
Then you would become a walk-on and I'm not required to accept walk-ons to this team.

Tears start to fall. Panic sets in.

ROBYN
You can't do this.

LUTHER
Everyone is responsible for their choices.

(MORE)

LUTHER (CONT'D)
Just like the choice you made to
stick up for Emmanuel who's weak,
too weak to handle my program, just
like Dakota was.

Eyes wide, Robyn backs away from Luther. She barely gathers the breath to respond.

ROBYN
What did you say?

LUTHER
Get the fuck out of my office.

Robyn drops the document onto the floor and rushes out.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Reese places desk items in a box when her cellphone vibrates on the table. She answers.

DR. REESE
Robyn?

Indistinct, muffled talking comes from the other end.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
What's wrong?...I'm in my office.
Come now.

EXT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - LATER

Standing at her doorway, Dr. Reese awaits Robyn, walking towards her. Dr. Reese grows worried, seeing Robyn's face, wet from crying.

DR. REESE
What's going on?

Robyn rushes past Dr. Reese and inside the office.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Reese quickly closes the door behind them.

DR. REESE
Tell me what's happening.

Robyn stops. She takes in the room, cluttered with packed moving boxes. For a moment, her mind is distracted, confused.

ROBYN
Why are all these boxes here?

DR. REESE
Why don't you tell me what's going on?

The flood of emotion rushes back to Robyn.

ROBYN
What are these boxes?

Studying the desperation on Robyn's face, Dr. Reese gives in.

DR. REESE
I'm leaving...At the end of this week. I was going to tell you in our last session. It has nothing to do with the team. It has nothing to do with you. The athletic administration and I just don't see eye to eye on some things...

Robyn withdraws, starting to break down. She backs away from Dr. Reese who approaches calmly, reaching for her shoulder.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
Robyn, sit down. Talk to me.

Robyn backs away from the contact. She rubs her face and paces in the corner like a trapped animal.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)
Talk to me, Robyn.

Robyn cries so hard, she bends over, struggling to stand up straight.

ROBYN
I hate this...I hate this.

DR. REESE
What do you hate?

ROBYN
Everything.

DR. REESE
Okay, what's everything?

ROBYN
Everything! This school! This team! These fucking coaches. Luther!

Dr. Reese calmly steps closer.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
I hate him! I hate him! I hate him!

DR. REESE
You have to talk to me...Why do you
hate him?

Robyn paces faster. She unleashes her words like a madwoman,
all at once.

ROBYN
He promised me a full ride! He
promised! He put the pen in my hand
and said I would get it if I won. I
gave up full rides to come here
because they said he was the best.
All he does is hit us and hurt us
(pounding her fist in her
hand)
Over and over and over!

Alarmed, Dr. Reese tries to console Robyn, but Robyn yanks
away, still pacing uncontrollably. She wraps her arms around
her head, covering her ears.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
I hate myself for being here. I
hate myself for signing those
papers. But I didn't know. I didn't
know any of this would happen!

DR. REESE
Robyn...Robyn, please!

Robyn doesn't stop. She sinks to the floor in the corner of
the room. Dr. Reese hovers, not knowing what to do for the
first time. Robyn slaps the side of her head over her ears.

ROBYN
I hate my stupid roommate. It's so
fucking quiet all the time. It's
always so fucking quiet. I can't
take it. It's so quiet!

Dr. Reese crouches to her level. She grabs Robyn's arms,
restraining her.

DR. REESE
What do you mean? Why can't you
take the quiet, Robyn?

Breaking her hands free from Dr. Reese, Robyn wraps them around her head again, as if to hold it still. Robyn sobs uncontrollably.

ROBYN

Because!

DR. REESE

Because what?...Because what?!

ROBYN

I can't.

DR. REESE

Yes, you can. Look at me! Say it.
Because what?

ROBYN

Because it's too loud inside!

DR. REESE

What's too loud?

ROBYN

The noise inside my head! It won't
stop! The fucking alarm clock!

Confused but horrified of what's next, Dr. Reese eggs her on.

DR. REESE

What alarm clock?

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

A dark room. Robyn jumps awake in her bed. A BLARING ALARM CLOCK repeatedly buzzes, similar to Julia's clock.

DR. REESE (V.O.)

Where was the alarm clock?

Robyn gets out of bed. She walks to the opposite side of the room, which is made in a way we haven't seen before.

It's filled with similar track memorabilia, posters, hanging medals, and batons. Spikes hang around the bed post.

Robyn silences the alarm clock.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - NIGHT - (PRESENT)

Dr. Reese has her arms on Robyn's shoulders now, both still huddled tightly in the corner.

Robyn stares off somewhere past Dr. Reese, in a trance.

DR. REESE
What happened after you turned off
the alarm clock?

Robyn pants heavy and fast. It matches:

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT - (FLASHBACK)

Robyn hyperventilates as she shakes a body laying under covers in the bed on the opposite side of the room. There's no stirring. Just stillness.

ROBYN (V.O.)
She didn't move. She wouldn't move.
She was so quiet. She was so quiet.

DR. REESE (V.O.)
Why?

She rolls over the body, pulling back the covers. A YOUNG WOMAN, 19, African-American, lays in the bed, peaceful, still.

Robyn jumps back, breathing even quicker. She stumbles backwards into her own bed. She shuts her eyes tight.

INT. DR. REESE'S OFFICE - NIGHT - (PRESENT)

Robyn opens her eyes. She's all cried out. Dr. Reese releases her grip around Robyn's shoulders, devastated.

DR. REESE
What was her name?

ROBYN
(whispering)
...Dakota.

Finally, Robyn looks into Dr. Reese's eyes.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
I knew she had heart problems. She
told me not to say anything-

DR. REESE
No, don't do that. You can't blame
yourself. Of course you didn't
know. Robyn listen to me-

ROBYN

I didn't know he would kill her.
But I should have. The way he
treats us in practice. I should've
known! I should have said
something!

DR. REESE

Robyn, listen!

ROBYN

I was the only one who knew she had
a heart condition and I didn't say
anything. It's my fault. I should
have said something. I should have
stood up for her-

DR. REESE

I'M SORRY!

The words take the breath from Robyn. She freezes and stares
at Dr. Reese.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

Did you hear what I just said? I'm
sorry.

Robyn starts to breathe. Dr. Reese cradles the bottom of
Robyn's chin, the way a consoling mother would. She speaks
direct and slow.

DR. REESE (CONT'D)

You do not deserve this. You never
did...I hear you. I am here and I
hear you. You are not to blame. I
am on your side, and it's time for
them to hear you too. It's time to
make this right. But now you have
to fight. You have to stand up, and
you have to fight.

Both women sit in silence, completely worn out. And then:

Robyn wipes her eyes. She slowly picks herself up. Dr. Reese
does the same. They embrace in a tight hug that lasts.

INT. DORM ROOM - LATER

All is quiet. Julia is fast asleep on her side of the room.
Robyn lays wide awake in her bed.

She looks at the time on Julia's digital clock. 1:40AM. She
pulls back her covers and gets up.

LATER

The time reads 3:35AM on the digital clock.

At her desk, Robyn types incessantly on her computer. Beside it is the journalist essay competition flyer.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

A multi-paged document scrolls to the very top. At the header, Robyn types in bold:

'Fracture by Robyn Vaughn.'

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Professor Burke sits at a desk amongst the other students. All eyes peer at Robyn who shares her presentation at the front of the room.

She periodically glances up and down from her notecards.

ROBYN

Basically, it's inevitable that some listeners and viewers will be influenced in unforeseen negative ways, but at the end of the day, what journalists say is about informing and educating the public. So to censor things that should otherwise be public knowledge could be seen as a restriction of our duties.

She looks up at her class.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

And that's...that's it.

Her classmates clap.

PROFESSOR BURKE

That was good.

Robyn moves toward her seat, when:

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)

But I'm not convinced.

She turns back to Professor Burke who gestures her to return to the front of the room.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
I like your point of view on this
issue of censorship. It's
controversial as well. But I want
to know, how so?

ROBYN
How so what?

PROFESSOR BURKE
How would censorship restrict our
rights? I want to know your
thoughts. Forget the research. Just
give me your argument.

Agitated, Robyn shakes her head.

ROBYN
Freedom of speech.

PROFESSOR BURKE
Bullshit.

Professor Burke stands to his feet and approaches Robyn.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
You're better than that. Now get
out of your head and tell me how.

ROBYN
It just would.

PROFESSOR BURKE
No! Don't give me that crap. Now
come on. This is your one
assignment to pick any topic on
journalism and say what you want
about it. You picked censorship, so
let's here it-

ROBYN
Because it wouldn't be fair.

PROFESSOR BURKE
To who?

Pausing, Robyn thinks as Professor Burke circles her now.

PROFESSOR BURKE (CONT'D)
Don't think. It's there!

ROBYN
To...writers, whistleblowers,
anyone who wants to say something.

PROFESSOR BURKE

And why wouldn't it be fair to these people?

ROBYN

Because...Because they wouldn't be able to say what they wanted.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Yes. And what do they want to say?

ROBYN

They want to tell people the facts.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Oh hell! Go deeper. What is it they want to do?

ROBYN

I don't know! They want to educate their readers!

PROFESSOR BURKE

Oh come on! You're putting me to sleep, Miss Vaughn-

ROBYN

Because maybe they want to raise hell!

Professor Burke stops circling. Robyn doesn't notice. She keeps going.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

Maybe they want people to react in a negative way. Maybe the people deserve to have the choice to say fuck it, let's be violent if we want! We deserve to be heard.

The room remains quiet. A few nod their head in agreement. Professor Burke looks at Robyn like she's finally arrived.

PROFESSOR BURKE

Yes.

The class applauds again, this time, louder. Released from the hot seat, Robyn returns to her desk.

Professor Burke pats her on the back. Robyn inhales and exhales, and after that, a self-appreciating smile.

INT. DORM MAIL ROOM - DAY

Dressed in track gear, Robyn signs for a delivery box.

She opens it, revealing a shoe box. Inside, are semi-worn spikes. On the side of the shoes, Jackie's name is autographed.

Opening an attached letter, Robyn reads it.

ROBYN

If you're going to follow in my
footsteps, you might as well look
the part. Love you.

Robyn beams with a wide smile, as she removes the spikes from the shoe box.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM - DAY**CARD: NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP MEET**

The stadium is a mad house. The stands are filled with thousands of spectators in every seat.

There's a loud buzz of cheers and stomping.

Luther fraternizes with other head coaches.

IN THE ANNOUNCER BOOTH

ESPN COMMENTATOR 1

Well, this has turned out to be
what looks like a fantastic day for
the D1 NCAA Track and Field
National Championships.

ESPN COMMENTATOR 2

It sure does. This is going to be a
very interesting meet. The
competition has never been so
intense.

IN THE STADIUM

Different teams, representing high ranked schools sit around in groups throughout the stands and the track perimeter.

ESPN COMMENTATOR 1 (V.O.)

On the women's side, we have all
eight finalist four by one teams
running in the low 43's. That's
just unheard of.

Robyn, Gena, Sidney, and Maya walk around the perimeter of the track with their back packs.

ESPN COMMENTATOR 2 (V.O.)

And of course, one of those teams
is none other than our host team
this year, South Summit, qualifying
with the third fastest time of the
bunch.

They pass newscasters and other sports channels setting up cameras around the entire track.

In the stands, SPORTS AGENTS wearing Nike, Adidas, Under Armor, and Puma stand around greeting one another.

AT THE STARTING LINE

A starter shoots the starting gun. A group of women take off.

ESPN COMMENTATOR 1 (V.O.)

And we are underway with the first
event of the National meet.

MONTAGE

The crowd stands to their feet, clapping and yelling at the runners on the track.

On the track, two South Summit long distance runners cross the line in first and second, followed by competitors.

Luther bloats in front of other coaches.

Men sprinters race 100 meters. A South Summit sprinter surfaces to the front of the pack. At the finish line, a competitor dips across the line before South Summit.

In the middle of the back stretch, long distance runners battle it out in the inside lane. They elbow one another. A runner nearly trips on the rail.

High jumpers compete in the field. A South Summit jumper clears the bar.

BACK TO SCENE

BEHIND THE BLEACHERS

The sun lowers. Robyn stands alone, stretching.

Jackie walks down the bleacher steps and into the back where Robyn waits.

JACKIE

Those are some nice spikes, girl.

Robyn turns and faces Jackie with a smile.

ROBYN

Thanks for these.

JACKIE

I thought you might enjoy them. You ready?

ROBYN

I'm nervous.

(ref. her spikes)

I just don't want to disappoint you.

Jackie lifts her chin and shakes her head.

JACKIE

Who are you trying to impress?
'Cause if it's me, you can already check that off your list. I'm your biggest fan. And the best part about it is that you can never let me down. Even if you tried.

ROBYN

Even if we don't win?

JACKIE

I came here to support the one person I love most in this world. This is your moment, and no one can take that away from you. I didn't come here to see you win. You're a champ no matter what. You're my champ. Ain't no way you could lose.

Robyn smiles. She rushes into Jackie's arms. They embrace in a tight hug. Finally separating:

JACKIE (CONT'D)

Now, please go show them how the Vaughn's get down.

EXT. TRACK STADIUM FIELD - NIGHT

Gena, Sidney, Maya, and Robyn huddle together.

INSIDE THEIR HUDDLE

GENA

Look, this season hasn't been easy. But we made it here. We deserve to be here. We've been through so much to get to this point. Now we have to prove to everyone else that we deserve to be National champions.

The girls nod their heads in approval.

GENA (CONT'D)

It's up to us to bring it home for the team. Not for Luther, for us, and for everyone who he's fucked with. This is our time, right here. Right now.

SIDNEY

This is for the sprint squad.

MEET OFFICIAL (O.S.)

Four by one finalists! To your zones.

The girls separate. Sidney and Maya take off in their separate directions.

Robyn heads for the third zone, and Gena for the anchor zone.

GENA (O.S.)

Yo, freshman!

Robyn turns as Gena runs back to her.

GENA (CONT'D)

You ready for this?

ROBYN

Yeah.

GENA

Good. Because you're running anchor.

ROBYN

What?

GENA

You need to run anchor.

ROBYN

What are you talking about? It's yours. You're beast on anchor. Don't be nervous.

GENA

Do I look nervous? I was made for this moment...But you were born for it. So get over there, and bring it in for the team.

ROBYN

What about the-

GENA

Don't worry about the steps. Just run. And I'll get it to you.

MEET OFFICIAL (O.S.)

Four by one! Let's go!

GENA

We got this.

Gena holds out her fist. Robyn bumps it with hers. She starts jogging towards the anchor leg position.

GENA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Robyn!

Robyn looks back.

GENA (CONT'D)

Let's get that Summit kneel!

Robyn nods and trots off.

IN THE BLEACHERS

Jackie stands on her feet, huddling her hands together in nervous energy.

INT. DR. REESE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Dr. Reese scoots to the edge of her couch, watching the TV in front of her.

EXT. TRACK - SAME

IN THE FIELD

Luther notices Gena as the third runner. Panic rushes through him, followed by anger.

LUTHER

What the hell?

He charges for Robyn at the anchor zone.

AT THE STARTING LINE

Sidney stands in her lane in front of her blocks. The competition does the same. They sway back and forth and shake their legs with nervous energy.

STARTER

On your mark!

The runners get into their blocks.

ON THE FIELD

Luther starts to sprint. Robyn notices him coming.

LUTHER

Robyn!

AT THE STARTING LINE

STARTER

Set!

The runners lift their butts.

ON THE FIELD

Closer now, Luther gets ready to cross over onto the track, when:

POW! The gun goes off. Luther's attention is drawn to the race. He fumes with anger. There's nothing he can do now.

TRAVELING

Sidney drives out of the blocks, explosive. She dashes around the curve.

She rushes towards Maya. The handoff is the cleanest it's ever been.

IN THE STANDS

Jackie jumps up and down, screaming.

JACKIE

Go! Go, South Summit!

INT. DR. REESE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Dr. Reese stands to her feet, pacing back and forth.

EXT. TRACK - SAME

In an even race, Maya tears down the backstretch, smooth and steady.

Reaching Gena's exchange zone, Maya stretches to reach her hand. Another clean exchange.

Robyn intently watches Gena soaring around the curve towards her. She prepares to run.

IN THE STANDS

JACKIE

Come on, Robyn. Come on, baby!

ON THE TRACK

When Gena's only footsteps away, Robyn darts from her position. Gena yells out for Robyn who slings her arm back. In a perfect handoff, Gena passes the baton.

Barreling down the track, Robyn sprints like she's running through air.

Then, all at once, all the noise cancels out. All the competition fades. Only Robyn and the open track remain. Her footsteps and rhythmic panting can be heard over all else.

ROBYN (V.O.)

I used to think being a champion
was about sacrificing at all cost -
giving up your happiness, giving up
who you are, even giving up your
voice. It's everything I've always
known. And somewhere along the way,
I lost my own voice.

In the middle of the track, Robyn's determined expression fades. She lets up as competitors pull ahead of her.

ROBYN (V.O.)

But I don't want to run from it
anymore...It's time for me to heal
the fracture from within. It's time
for me to take a stand.

Robyn slows down immensely now. People in the stands perk and gasp. Behind her, Gena is in shock.

GENA

Go, Robyn!

IN THE BLEACHERS

Jackie looks on concerned.

JACKIE
What are you doing, baby?

IN THE FIELD

Appalled, Luther drops his mouth.

INT. DR. REESE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Eyes glued to the TV, Dr. Reese places her hands over her mouth in awe.

EXT. TRACK - SAME

Robyn stops running completely in the middle of the track. She stands in the middle of the straight away as all the competitors cross the line. She's frozen in place.

The sound returns, but the stadium remains quiet, in complete shock.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
We may have...an injury with South Summit?

Across the field, medics come running. They stop at the edge of the track, noticing Robyn is unhurt.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
It looks like South Summit is refusing to run.

MURMURS come from the stands.

Then, Robyn sees him. At the end of the track, Luther marches towards her in epic fury.

Nervous and petrified, Robyn breathes harder but stays her ground as Luther charges right up to her. His fists balled, he lifts his hand, as if to strike, when Robyn drops the baton to her side. It bounces on the track.

Robyn strikes the air with her fist.

INTERCUT WITH

FOOTAGE: 1968 Olympics - John Carlos reaching his fist into the air on top of the podium.

BACK TO SCENE

Robyn's a matching image of her poster.

ROBYN

NO!

Luther flinches back. The spectators GASP.

Running onto the track, a MEET OFFICIAL carries a microphone.

MEET OFFICIAL

(to Robyn and Luther)

Guys, what's happening? Do you need
a medic?

ROBYN

I need that microphone.

Thoroughly confused, the official hands it over. Robyn speaks
into the mic.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

I will NOT be silenced by you
anymore! *This* man physically and
emotionally abuses us every day!

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. The photographers fight for
position. Luther looks around with no where to go.

LUTHER

(to Robyn)

This is fucking enough-

ROBYN

This man hits us! And takes our
earned scholarships away!

All of the crowd stand to their feet, appalled. They hold
their hands over their mouths and shake their heads.
Reporters record and snap pictures.

LUTHER

Shut your fucking mouth.

ROBYN

This man assaults us every single
day. And everyone at this school
knows but doesn't say a word,
because all you care about is
winning. I've had enough!

LUTHER

THAT'S ENOUGH-

She points her finger directly at him.

ROBYN
You killed my friend!

A LARGER GASP from the crowd.

ROBYN (CONT'D)
And I say, no fucking more.

Robyn's words echo. Luther is motionless. His eyes are wide, enraged. They stand off, glaring at one another.

The stadium remains in shock. Behind Robyn, Gena stands in the same lane, eyes filled with tears, finally understanding. And then:

Gena takes a kneel onto the track.

Nearby, a South Summit trainer takes a kneel. Then a South Summit teammate, followed by another and another.

BACK WITH LUTHER AND ROBYN

Movement rattles behind Robyn.

She continues to look into Luther's eyes, determined for him to back down. Finally, Luther does. His gaze leaves hers and drift to the stadium - behind her and around her.

Noticing, Robyn hesitantly looks behind her, then turns around to the entire stadium in awe. Her eyes widen.

Her teammates get down on one knee.

In the field, other teams kneel.

In the stands, the spectators kneel from the bottom to the top.

Robyn looks all around her. Everyone performs the South Summit kneel for her.

IN THE STANDS

Robyn's mom kneels with tears in her eyes.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK. The photographers snap away.

Behind her, Robyn makes eye contact with Gena as she kneels and nods, encouraging her teammate.

Finally, Robyn looks back at Luther, for the first time, glaring directly into his eyes with triumphant authority.

ROBYN (CONT'D)

It's over.

Cameras, photographers, and reporters run up to him. They film and bombard him with questions. He withdraws, backing away from Robyn, then rushes off the track where he's met with a mob of POLICE.

INT. DR. REESE'S APARTMENT - SAME

Tears falling from her face, Dr. Reese claps at her television screen, still in complete shock.

DR. REESE

Good girl, Robyn. Yes!

EXT. TRACK - SAME

Robyn remains, standing her ground with hands still in a fist by her side. She releases the microphone. It falls to the track with a loud THUD, landing right beside the baton.

INT. DORM ROOM - DAY

CARD: SOUTH SUMMIT UNIVERSITY, END OF SPRING SEMESTER

Robyn lifts a full duffle bag and swings it over her shoulder. Her side of the room is emptied and cleared.

JULIA

Never thought I would say this,
but, I'm actually gonna miss having
you as a roommate.

ROBYN

Yeah, me too. You're not too bad.

Julia and Robyn hug. Robyn slings her spikes over her shoulders. She unpins a letter from a cork board over her desk.

JULIA

Remember to stay in touch. I want
to hear all about the internship.

ROBYN

I will. See you when I come back
junior year?

JULIA

I'll be here.

They embrace one final time.

INT. ACADEMIC BUILDING HALLWAY - LATER

Robyn knocks on Professor Burke's office door. No answer.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
It's crazy to think that this could
be happening at our D1
institutions.

SPORTS ANALYST (V.O.)
Well the fact of the matter is,
abuse *is* happening, and at more
than just one institution.

Propping the letter on the door, she writes a note at the top
with her pen. She slides the letter under the door.

SPORTS ANALYST (V.O.)
Since the investigation took place
down at South Summit, 30 more cases
across the country have emerged.
You can't tell me this isn't
something major.

INT. PROFESSOR BURKE'S OFFICE - SAME

The letter slides through. In Robyn's handwriting, a note
reads:

'Thanks for helping me find my truth.'

Beneath it, in formal print:

'Dear Ms. Vaughn, Congratulations on winning the National
Collegiate Journalism Contest...'

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
Well, I'm not arguing with you on
that. But as we can see with
Princeton now hiring James Luther,
would you say the system is a
flawed cycle?

EXT. SOUTH SUMMIT CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Robyn walks through campus.

SPORTS ANALYST (V.O.)
There's too many loopholes in the
D1 athletic system. Simple as that.
The truth of the matter is, it'll
take the dismantling of
institutions. It's going to take
more than brave athletes standing
up or kneeling down in order to
make a systemic change.

INT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Robyn walks towards a car. She opens the trunk and puts her
bag inside, then gets into the passenger seat.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)
That's true, but one thing's for
sure - Robyn Vaughn is a true
champion for doing what she did.

INT. DR. REESE'S APARTMENT - SAME

ON THE TV SCREEN

The reporter and sports analyst sit at a table across from
each other. The screen goes black.

BACK TO SCENE

DR. REESE
Good for you, Robyn.

INT. CAR - SAME

Sitting in the driver's seat, Jackie puts the car in gear.
Robyn buckles up.

JACKIE
You got everything?

ROBYN
Yep.

JACKIE
The stuff from your locker room?

ROBYN
Yeah.

JACKIE
How about-

ROBYN
(with a smile)
Ma, I got everything.

JACKIE
Okay...I'm proud of you, Robyn.

Robyn lets that one sink in. She looks back at Jackie.

ROBYN
I know.

Jackie pulls out of the parking lot.

Robyn looks out the window as they drive through campus, past the academic buildings with colonial architecture, past the warrior statue on bended knee, and onto a main road.

Jackie stops at a red light. Holding her shoe box in her lap, Robyn opens it, staring down at Jackie's spikes which are now hers.

Noticing a piece of paper inside the left shoe, Robyn pulls it out and opens it.

At the top, the word 'Ethics' is written and above it, the word 'Truth.'

Robyn smiles. She folds the paper, and places it back in the shoe.

The light turns green.

EXT. CAR - SAME

The car drives away from South Summit and towards a future that awaits.

FADE OUT.

THE END