

THE SUMMER I TURNED PRETTY

Written by

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Based on the novel by
Jenny Han

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE - DAY

A sprawling New England house on the beach. Old money but somehow still cozy. There are always fresh flowers, but it's the kind of house you can walk around in with sandy feet.

MUSIC CUE: "Mr. Blue Sky" by Electric Light Orchestra.

BELLY (V.O.)
My family's been going to
Susannah's beach house in Cousins
every summer since I was a baby,
since before I was even born.

Begin MONTAGE of summers past.

-BELLY (6) and three little boys running around in the sand. CONRAD (8), JEREMIAH (7), and STEVEN (7). Their parents, mid-30s, SUSANNAH and ADAM, LAUREL and JOHN, sit in Adirondack chairs on the deck, drinking white wine and playing cards.

BELLY (V.O.)
All year long I count the days
until I'm at that beach, in that
house.

- Dance party in the living room. Laurel and Susannah sway with each other Stevie Nicks-style while the boys bounce around like jumping beans. Belly boogies on the couch, a blankie tied around her neck like a superhero.

- The boys sneak up on a fully dressed Belly, throw her into the pool, and all dive in.

BELLY (V.O.)
The summer house is made up of lots
of things.

- Belly and Laurel sit on the deck while the boys play below. Belly stands between her mother's knees, howling in pain as Laurel tries to comb through her knotty hair.

BELLY (V.O.)
The deck we used to run around on.

On the beach, the boys toss a football around and Conrad calls up to her to come play. She bolts down the stairs, hair half-combed, Laurel calling after her.

- Conrad teaches Belly how to throw a spiral.

BELLY (V.O.)

The swimming pool late at night.

- Belly swims laps back and forth under the light of the moon.

BELLY (V.O.)

...but the boys, the boys most of all.

- Conrad (now 14) in glasses, reading *The Lord of the Rings*. Belly (12) sits next to him in glasses with a book of her own, as Jeremiah (13) and Steven (14) have a breakdancing contest on the rug.

- On the beach, Belly watches Conrad watching a pretty girl laughing with her friends. They're all in bikinis and Belly is very much a kid in her Speedo.

- Conrad gets ready to go out while Jeremiah, Steven, and Belly play cards on the floor. Conrad sprays cologne and Belly and the boys make a big show of coughing and acting like it stinks. He kicks them all out of his room.

- Belly is back in Conrad's room alone, uncaps the cologne bottle, sniffs it.

BELLY (V.O.)

It's the same every summer. I've always loved that about it.

- The parents are all dressed up for a night out, and they say good bye to the kids, who are playing cards on the floor. Adam kisses Susannah on the neck as he helps her into her coat, and John tries to do the same for Laurel, who brushes him away like a gnat.

- Belly (now 15) snuggles on the couch with the moms for movie night.

- Conrad (now 17) and Laurel at the kitchen table sharing the Sunday paper together, while Susannah pours juice and Belly, Jeremiah, and Steven fight over the last muffin.

BELLY (V.O.)

For me, everything good, everything magical happens between the months of June and August.

- Time lapse of family photos, each taken at the end of summer, everyone in the same spots on the porch year after year. We linger on the most recent photo--last summer. Adam, the boys' father is in the picture, but Belly and Steven's father John is not.

Conrad is 17, Steven and Jeremiah are 16, Belly is 15. She is still gawky and awkward with braces, glasses, and bad posture. The camera has caught her right as she is looking at Conrad, who is smiling, his arm slung around her shoulder.

END MONTAGE.

INT. BELLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON the same photograph, tucked into the dresser mirror. Sunlight streams into a teenaged girl's bedroom. The room looks like a tornado has blown through, clothes and sneakers and books everywhere. On the wall is a poster of Megan Rapinoe celebrating a goal, arms outstretched.

BELLY CONKLIN is about to turn 16 years old. The braces and glasses are gone. Impulsive, plucky, a late bloomer. Never had a boyfriend. Never been kissed.

At first we don't see her best friend TAYLOR JEWEL (16) lying on the bed, her body half-covered by a pile of t-shirts and bathing suits. Belly scurries around packing.

TAYLOR

(looking at her phone)

Drew's bummed you're missing the beach match-up with the boys' team next weekend.

BELLY

(stops short)

Make sure you tell Sophie to square up for the block.

TAYLOR

Drew Martinez is texting me about you and you're talking about volleyball? Are you serious right now?

BELLY

Drew doesn't care if I'm there or not. He just wants an excuse to text you.

(beat)

You better take that game against the boys seriously. I want all those guys eating sand. Team pride is on the line, Taylor.

TAYLOR

Please. You know me better than that. I'd never let a boy beat me at anything.

Taylor rolls onto her stomach.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Hey, doesn't my ass look like a peach in these shorts?

CLOSE ON Taylor striking a pose on the bed, trying unsuccessfully to take a selfie that shows off her butt. Belly ignores her and plucks her swimsuit off the bed.

BELLY

I thought you came here to help me pack.

TAYLOR

Fine. I'll help. Here's a tip. Don't bring that Speedo. It doesn't do a thing for your new boobs.

Taylor takes selfies as Belly catches a glimpse of herself in the mirror. She pulls her baggy t-shirt tighter to look at her body.

BELLY (V.O.)

My boobs happened overnight. Like one day, they were fried eggs. The next, cantaloupes. For volleyball, they're a nuisance. For every day life, they're...not so bad.

Releases the fabric. Tosses the one-piece into her duffel and zips it up.

BELLY

It's not a Speedo.

TAYLOR

I'm just saying, babes. You need to pack cute things.

BELLY

(defensive)

I always buy a new suit when I get there.

TAYLOR

Okay, then buy one that doesn't look like you're trying out for the swim team.

Belly lets out a growl and leaps on the bed with a flying elbow drop before trying to smother Taylor with a pillow. The girls are laughing so hard they can't breathe.

LAUREL (O.S.)

Belly, we're leaving in the next 10 minutes!

BELLY

(bolts upright)
Gotta go.

TAYLOR

Wait! We still have 10 minutes.

Taylor pulls Belly back down. She turns on her side to face her, their faces inches apart. Tenderly, she touches the freckles on Belly's nose.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Okay, so before I let you go, you have to tell me your summer wish. The one thing you want to happen this summer.

BELLY (V.O.)

I want to have my first kiss, and I want it to be with Conrad Fisher.

BELLY

I don't know.

TAYLOR

You little liar. You want a hot makeout with Conrad Fisher. You want his tongue in your mouth! You dirty little—

BELLY

Shut up, Taylor!

TAYLOR

I'm just saying. You've been in love with him since we were 12. You've gotta shit or get off the pot.

BELLY

A, that's disgusting. B, it doesn't matter what I do. He doesn't see me that way.

TAYLOR

(eyes her)

Oh, he'll see you, whether he wants to or not. You look a lot different than last summer, Belly. If you play your cards right, you could probably get a way better guy than Conrad.

BELLY (V.O.)

There's no guy better than Conrad.

TAYLOR

He's such a nerd.

BELLY

He's not a nerd. He's just smart at school. And don't forget he's also an athlete.

TAYLOR

Who cares if he can kick a ball with his foot? He's boring. Jeremiah's the one you should be in love with. He's fun.

BELLY

Conrad's not a kicker, he's a quarterback.

LAUREL (O.S.)

Two minutes, Belly! I'm serious!

They both sit up.

TAYLOR

(pouts)

You're gonna forget about me as soon as you get to Cousins. You always do.

BELLY (V.O.)

She's right. I do.

BELLY

I'll be better about texting.

TAYLOR

Yeah, right. I never hear from you all summer.

BELLY

Don't be so dramatic. You're visiting me in a month.

TAYLOR

A lot can happen in a month.

CLOSE ON Belly looking suddenly nervous.

INT. FAMILY CAR - DAY - MOVING

Belly sits shotgun with her older brother STEVEN (18) in the driver's seat and her mother LAUREL (40s) in the back. Steven is a handsome high achiever with a perpetual smirk on his face. Laurel is a Sandra Oh type, a novelist and adjunct professor with a wry sense of humor and an aversion to technology.

All the windows are down, CAN'T DO BETTER by Kim Petras is playing on the radio. Belly's got her feet up on the dashboard, singing along loudly and tunelessly.

LAUREL

Guys, I want you to be better about helping out this summer. Don't just leave your dishes in the sink. Load them into the dishwasher. And not just your own dish, either, Steven. I want you to be good houseguests.

BELLY (V.O.)

My mom is weird about money. The fact that Susannah has a lot and we...don't.

STEVEN

But...I mean...Susannah has people who clean, doesn't she?

LAUREL

Just- be considerate and act like I raised you right. Steven, that means don't stay out too late.

STEVEN

Mom, I'm about to be 18. I'm too old for a curfew.

LAUREL

I'm not talking about a curfew. Just don't stay out all hours of the night and wake up the whole house.

BELLY

What about me? I don't have a curfew either, do I?

STEVEN

(snorts)

Why would you need a curfew? You don't go anywhere. You don't have any friends in Cousins.

LAUREL

Don't be a jackass, Steven. Belly, we can talk about it when something comes up.

It's clear she's humoring Belly.

STEVEN

Spoiler alert. Nothing's coming up.

BELLY

Fuck off, Steven.

STEVEN

Just don't follow Conrad around like a puppy dog this summer, okay?

BELLY

Screw you! I never did that!

STEVEN

I'm only telling you this so you don't embarrass yourself. Remember that time I caught you trying to spy on him in the shower?

Belly lets out a strangled scream.

BELLY

I told you I wasn't trying to spy on him! I was getting my towel!

LAUREL

Steven, give it a rest.

CLOSE ON Steven's phone BUZZING in the console. He reaches for it but Belly grabs it first.

BELLY

Shayla says she'll see you at the bonfire tonight. Who's Shayla?

STEVEN

A girl I've been texting.

BELLY

(surprised)

Since last summer??

Belly didn't know Steven was talking to a girl last summer, much less staying in touch with her over the school year.

STEVEN

None of your business. Gimme my phone back.

LAUREL

Steven, don't you dare. You're 6 times more likely to get in a wreck texting while driving than drinking and driving.

BELLY

We know. You made us watch that documentary.

(to Steven)

Don't forget you promised you'd take me driving.

LAUREL

Belly, I told you I'd take you.

Belly twists in her seat to look at Laurel.

BELLY

You're too judgy.

(to Steven)

Steven, you promised.

STEVEN

We'll see.

Belly rolls down the window and dangles his phone out the window.

BELLY

Make a commitment to me right now or I'll drop it.

The phone BUZZES.

BELLY (CONT'D)

Ooh another message from Shayla! Better not be a sext.

STEVEN

(panicky)

Mom!

LAUREL

Hey, I'd be glad to see that thing at the bottom of the ocean.

STEVEN

Fine, I'll take you driving! God.

Belly tosses his phone into the backseat, triumphant.

EXT. COUSINS MAIN STREET - DAY

They drive through town.

Belly rolls down her window, pokes her head out, and breathes the sea air in.

BELLY (V.O.)

It smells exactly the same. Tastes
the same. Like it's been waiting
for me to get here.

They pass all the old familiar places--the drive-thru, the seafood shacks, the ice cream stand. Kids run around the grass barefoot, with dripping ice cream cones. Purple hydrangeas are in bloom, and everything is green and fresh. It's the kind of beach town where you wish you spent your summers.

EXT. ROADSIDE GAS STATION - DAY

They stop at a gas station. Steven gets out to fill the tank, and Belly and Laurel climb out too. The gas station is full of Teslas and Range Rovers. Their decade old Hyundai stands out.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Belly and her mother Laurel go inside to pay. Belly grabs a Cherry Coke, Cheetos, Sour Patch Kids, and Reeses Cups, as much as she can carry. Laurel gives her a Look.

LAUREL

Your organs are putrifying as we
speak.

Belly ignores Laurel and tears into the bag of chips. The cashier, JUMPER 20s, checks her out. She stuffs a handful of chips in her mouth when he smiles at her, and she covertly turns around to see who he's smiling at. Surely not her. But when she looks, there's no one there.

BELLY (V.O.)

Boys at school don't look at me
like that. Not when Taylor's
standing next to me.

(MORE)

BELLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Although--I guess she's not
 standing next to me.

The alarm on the door BEEPS as two LOCALS walk in.

LOCAL 1
 I swear to God, the traffic gets
 worse every summer.

LOCAL 2
 Fucking Richie Rich tourists.

Belly and Laurel exchange guilty looks.

BELLY (V.O.)
 We're not exactly tourists. And
 we're definitely not Richie Riches.
 We're the *guests* of Richie Riches.

When they reach the front of the line, Laurel gives Belly her
 card and goes to use the bathroom.

JUMPER
 (eyeing Belly)
 Are you new this summer?

BELLY
 (surprised)
 Me? No...

He starts to ring her up.

JUMPER
 I definitely would've remembered
 you.

Belly blushes. Wipes cheese powder off her face with the back
 of her hand.

JUMPER (CONT'D)
 Are you coming to the bonfire
 tonight? First of the season.

BELLY (V.O.)
 Be cool, be cool, be cool.

BELLY
 Uh...maybe.

JUMPER
 Come. I'll introduce you to some of
 my friends.

Belly tries not to smile.

BELLY
Maybe I will.

Jumper finishes ringing her up and Belly hands over Laurel's credit card. CLOSE ON her orange Cheeto-stained fingers.

Laurel returns from the bathroom and gives Belly a quizzical look, which Belly pretends not to see. Laurel pushes Belly's hair out of her face lovingly.

LAUREL
After we get settled, do you want to go to Whale of a Tale with me so I can pre-sign stock before the signing tomorrow night? Remember how you used to sit on my lap when I did signings there? You insisted on drawing a little whale on every book I signed.

BELLY
(acutely aware of Jumper)
Um...I don't remember that.

LAUREL
I'll make you a deal. I'll let you be in charge of picking out tonight's dessert if you come with me and keep me company.

Jumper smirks and Belly turns scarlet. The door alarm BEEPS and his eyes are already on another girl who just walked in.

JUMPER
(distracted)
I'll see you later?

Belly's too embarrassed to answer. She hustles her mom out.

LAUREL
What's later?

BELLY
Nothing.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

Belly and Laurel get into the car where Steven waits, scrolling on his phone.

BELLY

FYI Mom, I'm not a little kid anymore. It's not this huge perk to pick out what kind of pie we get.

LAUREL

(to Steven)

Steven, what kind of pie do you want for first night dinner?

STEVEN

Strawberry rhubarb!

BELLY

You dick. You know I hate rhubarb!
(turns around)
Please can we get blueberry? It's Susannah's favorite too.

She no longer looks like a surly teenager. For a moment, she is a little girl again.

LAUREL

(fondly)

If you come with me to Whale of a Tale, you'll be the one who gets to decide. Otherwise, strawberry rhubarb it is.

BELLY

Fine. I'll come.

From behind her sunglasses, Laurel hides a smile.

Steven starts the car. Belly pulls down the visor and puts on some lip balm, yanks her hair out of its ponytail. Reflexively moves to put it back up again, but leaves it.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - KITCHEN

Hydrangeas being washed in the sink.

Pull back to see SUSANNAH FISHER (40s) arranging the flowers in a glass pitcher in an all white marbled kitchen. Susannah's like if Daisy Buchanan had a good personality and a good heart. She's swathed in cashmere and soft linen, expensive highlights.

CLOSE ON Susannah as she hears the sound of a car pulling into the driveway. She beams.

SUSANNAH

They're here!

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE - DAY

They pull up to the house, and Laurel honks the horn. Susannah's son JEREMIAH (17) comes bounding out first, like a handsome golden retriever. He's easygoing, playful, quick to laugh. The one all the girls at school like. And he's clearly been lifting weights since last summer.

Jeremiah bear hugs a surprised Laurel, pounds Steven on the back.

Belly steps out the car. Her hair is down again. CLOSE ON Jeremiah's eyes going wide. She's grown up. No more gangly limbs and overbite. She doesn't look like a kid anymore. She looks like... a GIRL.

He snaps out of it and bounds over to her, lifts her into the air.

JEREMIAH

Look who came back all growed up!

Belly laughs and pounds him on the back.

BELLY

Put me down, Jeremiah!

She stops laughing when hers eyes meet CONRAD's (18). He hangs back, face inscrutable. Straight A student, a star athlete, he's always been responsible and serious.

BELLY (V.O.)

He looks different than last summer. Older. I wonder if I look different to him.

CONRAD

(to Belly)

I liked you better with glasses.

BELLY

(stung)

Too bad. I like me better without them.

He ruffles her hair.

Steven clocks this interaction.

STEVEN

(evilly)

Hey guys. I think it's time...for a Belly Flop.

Belly bolts and at first it seems like Conrad isn't going to participate, but just as she's about to make it into the house, he catches her. Steven grabs her by the legs and Conrad and Jeremiah grab her arms, and they swing her back and forth a few times like a sack of grain before they toss her into the pool.

When she resurfaces, she yells out.

BELLY

I hurt my ankle, you creeps!
Somebody help me out!

Warily, Conrad comes over and extends a hand—and she yanks him in with her. Now she's the one laughing, swimming away from him as he tries to catch her.

When Conrad finally does, it's only because she lets him. He doesn't release her right away, and there is a brief stillness between them. A sudden heat.

BELLY (CONT'D)

Let go.

He releases her—and dunks her head underwater.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON Belly as she steps inside the house. To her untrained eye, the house is cozy and comfortable, like Ina Garten's house. In reality, it's a rich person's house. There are always fresh flowers and fresh muffins, and everything is in shades of unblemished cream—cream cashmere throws, cream overstuffed sofas—the mark of an expensive household.

We see framed PHOTOS of young Laurel and Susannah and of the children over the years. Belly, gangly in braces with an overbite, hair a rat's nest, flat chested in a one piece bathing suit. Conrad, his arms slung around her and the other boys, looking every inch the responsible older brother. Jeremiah, angelic with a devilish glint in his eye. Steven, a wide grin on his face.

Belly moves the picture behind another frame.

In the kitchen, Susannah pours two glasses of iced tea as Laurel walks through the back door, sunglasses on her head, laden with Costco boxes. Susannah groans.

SUSANNAH

Oh my God, Laurel! How many boxes
did you bring? I told you not to
bother!

LAUREL

Your fancy little market doesn't even carry Diet Coke and I know you need it fed intravenously.

Belly enters, still shivering and sopping wet from the pool. Susannah does a double take as Laurel shakes her head.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

You're dripping water all over the place!

SUSANNAH

(mouths to Laurel)

She's gorgeous!

She goes to hug her, Laurel goes to get a towel.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

You've always been lovely, but oh honey, look at you.

BELLY

(awkwardly)

I think I look pretty much the same.

SUSANNAH

You're not the same at all. You're growing up. You're in bloom.

Belly blushes.

BELLY (V.O.)

Susannah has a way of saying things that almost makes me believe her.

Laurel comes back into the kitchen with a fluffy towel, and she rubs Belly's hair with it briskly, like Belly is a puppy just out of the bath.

SUSANNAH

Laur, she's you all over.

BELLY

People always say I look like my dad.

SUSANNAH

No, when your mom was sixteen, she looked just like you.

LAUREL

I never had those boobs.

BELLY
Gross, Mom!

Laurel wraps her shoulders in the towel.

LAUREL
You should call your father and
tell him we arrived safely.

BELLY
Why don't you tell Steven to do it?

LAUREL
Because I'm telling you.
(off her look)
He misses you guys when you're
gone.

BELLY
(shrugging)
He'll see us at the end of summer.

LAUREL
He'll be here for the 4th.

BELLY
He's coming? Here??

LAUREL
Of course. He always comes for the
4th.

BELLY
Yeah, but he didn't come last
summer.

LAUREL
The ink was barely dry on the
divorce. We're good now.

BELLY (V.O.)
If they were 'good,' they'd still
be married.

Belly hops on the counter and watches the moms gab and unpack
groceries.

BELLY (V.O.)
If you asked me why my parents got
divorced, I couldn't tell you. They
never even fought.
(MORE)

BELLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My dad's not the kind of person you have fights with. Mr. Fisher, on the other hand, my mom can't stand.

BELLY

(to Susannah)

Where's Mr. Fisher?

SUSANNAH

He's in London. They've got him going back and forth. He'll come join us later in the summer.

(beatific)

For now it's just the women and children, the way we like it best.

Laurel shoots her a questioning look, and she just smiles.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - BELLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

In stark contrast to her modest room back home. Susannah had this room designed specially for Belly, in her favorite color blue. Toile wallpaper, a four poster bed, matching dresser and nightstands.

A stuffed polar bear sits on the dresser. Belly picks it up, hugs it...when Jeremiah barges in. She releases the bear as Jeremiah plops on her bed.

JEREMIAH

I can't believe you still have that bear.

BELLY

Duh. I would never throw away Junior Mint.

He starts tossing Belly shirts and she stuffs them into the dresser in crumbled balls.

JEREMIAH

Shouldn't you at least fold them?

BELLY

(mimics)

Shouldn't you at least fold them?

Jeremiah goes back to unpacking...and pulls out a very unsexy stretched out bra. It looks like it's never been washed. He yelps and throws it to her like a hot potato. She turns red, stuffs it in a drawer.

BELLY (CONT'D)

Hey, maybe you're the one who needs a bra. Are you on steroids or something?

Jeremiah laughs.

JEREMIAH

Hurry up and unpack so we can swim before dinner.

BELLY

I can't. I have to go with my mom to Whale of a Tale.

JEREMIAH

Aw man. I've been wanting to go in the ocean all day but I've been waiting for you to get here.

BELLY

You know what, screw it. Let's just go swim.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - DAY

Laurel looks for Belly upstairs, walking from room to room. She's got her sunglasses on her head, car keys in her hand. She pokes her head in Conrad's door.

LAUREL

Have you seen Bell- Conrad!

He's smoking a joint out the window, watching Belly and Jeremiah. Startled, he drops it. Laurel rushes over and picks up the joint before it burns the carpet.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Since when do you smoke!

CONRAD

It's legal in Massachusetts.

LAUREL

If you're 21! Which you're not. And it's not good for you.

Flustered, Laurel takes the baggie of weed and his lighter.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Your mom would flip her shit over this.

CONRAD

Come on, Laur. I know you guys
smoke.

(beat)

You're not gonna tell her, are you?

LAUREL

Well-no. Not this time. But don't
let it happen again.

CONRAD

(shrugs)

Sure.

LAUREL

Have you seen Belly?

CONRAD

She's in the ocean with Jere.

LAUREL

(checks her watch)

I still have to pick up the pies
for dinner and stop by the
bookstore. Wanna come along?

CONRAD

No thanks.

LAUREL

I'll pick up the Sunday paper for
us.

CONRAD

Don't bother. I read it on my phone
now.

Laurel senses something is off. A pause. Then she exits. As she closes his door, she runs into Susannah. She stuffs the contraband deeper into her tote bag.

SUSANNAH

Are you going into town?

LAUREL

Belly and I were going to go by
Whale of Tale so I can sign stock
but it looks like she's ditched me
for the ocean.

SUSANNAH

Oh, let her play. I'll go with you.
I just need to drop by the country
club first.

LAUREL

Oh God. Never mind. I'll go by myself.

SUSANNAH

(bumps her with her shoulder)

I'm going to check on the catering for your book party.

LAUREL

Catering?! I swear to God, Susannah. You said you were doing a few bottles of wine and that's it.

SUSANNAH

Just some light appies. Calm down. (puts her arm around Laurel)

You don't have to go inside the country club. You can wait in the car.

EXT. COUSINS COUNTRY CLUB

A stately building surrounded by golf greens. Everything manicured and pristine.

Susannah parks her BMW and hops out of the car while Laurel stays in her seat.

LAUREL

(out the window)

Be quick! If you leave me too long I'll get Sunken Placed!

Without turning around, Susannah laughs and shakes her head.

INT. COUSINS COUNTRY CLUB - ENTRYWAY - DAY

Paintings of founders hang on the walls. The club is past its glory days, a bit faded, but it's still impressive.

Susannah walks by the dining room, spots a familiar face-- DENISE, a late 30-something woman in a black dress, setting down a tray of drinks.

SUSANNAH

Denise! What are you doing carrying drinks? You're the manager now.

Denise comes over, and they do a polite sideways hug. Denise used to clean Susannah's house, then she started working at the country club restaurant and moved her way up.

DENISE

I'm just helping out. We're not fully staffed for the season yet.

SUSANNAH

How's your son?

Before Denise can reply, a 40-something blond woman in a Tory Burch sundress interrupts them, ignores Denise.

PAIGE

Susannah! You look amazing! Your hair!

SUSANNAH

(laughs)

Gee, thanks, just bought it.

Paige looks at her blankly as Denise laughs.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Ariana Grande. Jeremiah loves her.

(beat)

I'm seeing a new colorist. Can I talk to you for a sec? I have a favor to ask.

PAIGE

Of course. Let's go to my office. Denise, can you have somebody bring us some ice teas on a tray?

DENISE

Of course.

Paige sweeps Susannah away.

PAIGE

I need to tell you about this new blood therapy I'm doing for my neck wrinkles.

INT. COUSINS COUNTRY CLUB - PAIGE'S OFFICE - DAY

Open door of Paige's office. Inside we see pictures of debutantes from seasons past hanging on the walls--the 40s, 50s, 60s, on through to modern day. The hairstyles change, but the white dresses remain the same.

There's a book of what look like wedding invitations on Paige's desk.

Susannah and Paige walk in, Paige closes the door behind them.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COUSINS - DAY

We see a quaint street with an ice cream shop, upscale Eileen Fisher-type boutique, beachy home furnishings store, gourmet foodstore, Whale of Tale. Laurel and Susannah cross the street and enter.

INT. WHALE OF A TALE - DAY

Susannah browses as Laurel chats with the storeowners by the register. They are a couple named DANNY, trans in his 40s and MIKA, 40s.

MIKA

We're all set for the party tomorrow night.

DANNY

How was tour?

LAUREL

Oh-- my publisher didn't send me on tour for this one. It's been a pretty quiet release.

MIKA

Are you on social media? You should really be on social media.

LAUREL

Ah. Well. No. I'm not.

DANNY

Are you working on something new?

LAUREL

(tries to smile)
Always.

Mika hands Laurel two books to sign. CLOSE ON the book cover, a literary looking novel titled PARTY'S OVER.

Susannah wanders over, a book under her arm.

SUSANNAH

How many copies did you guys order
for tomorrow night?

DANNY

I think 20?

SUSANNAH

Oh but that's not going to be
nearly enough! I've invited half
the town.

Laurel shoots her a look.

LAUREL

I thought this was just going to be
a small thing!

SUSANNAH

(ignores her)

Mika, I'm so sorry but you might
have to go over to the Barnes and
Noble in Portsmouth and get more.

MIKA

(embarrassed)

Business has been slow. We haven't
been keeping as much stock.

Susannah points to the book she's holding.

SUSANNAH

What about this? You must have a
hundred copies of this book!

LAUREL

(scoffs)

Cleveland O'Henry is like Nicholas
Sparks for men who don't want to
admit they read Nicholas Sparks.

A mangy-looking man with a straggly beard, wearing glasses, a
holey t-shirt, Texas, and a backpack approaches. Laurel is
oblivious and Susannah automatically shifts away from him.

SUSANNAH

No, thank you.

Mika looks horrified as Laurel continues on her tirade.

LAUREL

Cleveland O'Henry is such a phony
name. It's like, hi, I'm masculine
but I'm an intellectual.

(MORE)

LAUREL (CONT'D)

God, how pretentious. I bet
Hemingway is his hero. I bet he
wears horn rimmed glasses.

She takes the book from Susannah and flips to the back and holds it up.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

See?!

HOMELESS MAN

Contacts irritate my eyes.

Laurel turns around, startled. It's her first time noticing him. They look at each other for a beat before the man leaves. As soon as the bell on the door jingles:

MIKA

That was Cleveland O'Henry! He's
renting the Burke house all summer!

Susannah makes a yikes face and Laurel mouths FUCKKKKK.

EXT. OCEAN - SUNSET

Belly and Jeremiah float in the ocean, up to their necks in the water, their heads bobbing up and down. It's golden hour. They're out far, the house a tiny dot down the beach. They have the ocean all to themselves. This is their catch-up time.

BELLY

My dad's coming up next month.

JEREMIAH

Cool.

BELLY

Don't you think it's weird?

JEREMIAH

Not really. I love your dad.

BELLY

They've only been divorced for a
year and a half!

JEREMIAH

Yeah, but Laurel's cool like that.
She doesn't give a shit.

BELLY

Exactly. She doesn't give a shit
because she's the one who wanted
the divorce in the first place.

JEREMIAH

I think if you don't want to be married anymore, you shouldn't be married.

BELLY

Did you know my dad has a new girlfriend already?

JEREMIAH

Have you met her?

BELLY

Not yet.

JEREMIAH

Is your mom dating anybody?

BELLY

(taken aback)

No.

(beat)

Oh, and he has a beard now.

JEREMIAH

Your dad has a beard??

BELLY

Yeah. He thinks it makes him look cool.

JEREMIAH

Does it?

BELLY

Kind of.

They both laugh. As the sun sets, they splash around like two kids.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner that night is bouillabaisse, as is the first night tradition. Jeremiah has showered and is in a button down and shorts. Everyone is dressed but Belly. She's still in her bathing suit, wrapped in a towel, hair tangled and clumpy from the saltwater.

LAUREL

Steven, I swear to God if you look at that phone one more time, I'm putting it in the screen basket.

A vestige from their childhood.

SUSANNAH

It's just that we love to see your beautiful faces. Can dinnertime be a screen-free zone? Like the olden days.

Grinning, Jeremiah snatches Steven's phone out of his hand and throws it across the room, a perfect pass. He jumps up and does a little victory dance.

STEVEN

We get it, you have abs now.

BELLY

(laughing)

You're just jealous Jere has a better body than you.

Jeremiah snorts with laughter, and Conrad almost smiles. Belly's delighted. As always, she plays for an audience of 2.

STEVEN

It's all about the lean look now. Otherwise you can't wear tailored suits.

(to Conrad)

When are you leaving for training camp?

JEREMIAH

He quit football.

STEVEN

You quit??

Conrad doesn't answer.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Are you serious, man? I'd kill to play college ball.

SUSANNAH

He can always change his mind.

CONRAD

I'm not changing my mind. I was just going to sit on the bench all season anyway.

Belly and Steven exchange *yikes* looks; as outsiders to this sudden family dynamic, they are temporary allies.

Jeremiah glares at his brother, but Susannah shakes her head at him, gently but firmly.

LAUREL

Well, if you're not playing football anymore, what are you doing all summer?

STEVEN

He can work at the club with me and Jere.

CONRAD

No thanks.

Belly turns to Jeremiah, surprised.

BELLY

You guys are working this summer?

JEREMIAH

Yeah, I'm lifeguarding and Steven's bussing tables.

Susannah clocks Belly as she takes all this in.

BELLY (V.O.)

Conrad's never missed football camp. Steven and Jeremiah have never had jobs. This summer's already so different.

SUSANNAH

Belly, I almost forgot I have a surprise for you.

She gets up and presents Belly with an INVITATION. Laurel groans.

LAUREL

So *this* is why you had to stop by the country club.

STEVEN

What? What is that?

SUSANNAH

I wrangled Belly an invitation to be a debutante.

BELLY

What's a debutante?

SUSANNAH

It's when a young girl comes of age and is presented to society. I know it sounds goofy but I swear it's fun. Girls come to Cousins from all over New England to be a part of it. You'll make so many new friends.

Belly looks from her mother to Susannah uncertainly.

BELLY

I don't know...

LAUREL

I cannot *believe* you're still holding on to this archaic dream.

Laurel gets up and starts clearing dishes.

SUSANNAH

It used to be about finding a husband, now it's about networking!

Laurel carries plates into the kitchen.

LAUREL

(over her shoulder)
Oh please!

SUSANNAH

It's changed so much from when I did it in the 90s. Yes, they teach you etiquette--

CLOSE ON Belly's horrified face.

BELLY

Etiquette? I don't know anything about that.

SUSANNAH

They also teach you leadership skills like how to market yourself. And it benefits charity! It's like a bat mitzvah!

Laurel comes back from the kitchen for more plates.

LAUREL

(snorts)
It is *not* a bat mitzvah. There's nothing religious about a debutante ball.

CONRAD

The whole deb scene is bullshit.
It's for sheep.

SUSANNAH

No, it's not. When a girl has a coming out, it's a formal recognition of a young woman who's reached maturity.

STEVEN

(cackles)
Mature? Belly?
(turns to Belly)
A couple of months ago you had a cat funeral. You made us all wear black!

BELLY

Shut up, Steven. I saw you crying in your room.

JEREMIAH

Mochi died? Dang. Sorry, Bells.

SUSANNAH

(to Belly)
Wouldn't it be fun to get all dressed up?

Laurel comes back with a bottle of wine and refills her glass.

LAUREL

It's just not Belly's kind of thing. She's our feral little alley cat.

CLOSE ON Belly as the boys snicker. Laurel leans over to tousle Belly's messy mane of hair, and Belly moves just out of her reach.

BELLY

I'll think about it.

On Laurel's surprised face.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Steven's in the shower, singing to himself. Jeremiah is at the mirror, brushing his teeth. Deodorant, shaving cream, razors clutter the counter.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Belly's still in her bathing suit, she has a fresh towel wrapped around her. She passes Laurel, who is looking at her phone. CLOSE ON Cleveland O'Henry's Instagram page.

LAUREL
(without looking up)
Night swim?

BELLY
Night swim.

LAUREL
Hey, how many followers is a lot of followers on Instagram?

BELLY
Is it somebody who's verified or not verified?

LAUREL
What's verified?

BELLY
Oh my God, Mom.

She takes the phone from Laurel.

BELLY (CONT'D)
Taylor's dad was reading this guy's book. Yeah, 150 thousand followers is a lot. Especially for a writer.

Laurel grabs the phone back.

LAUREL
(embarrassed)
Okay, thanks.

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE - POOL - NIGHT

Belly hurries to the pool. Stops short when she sees Conrad sitting at the edge of the pool, smoking a joint and drinking a beer, his legs dangling in the water. She's never seen him do either of these things before. Clutches her towel and walks up to him.

BELLY
(blurts out)
I thought you said smoking pot changes the way your brain processes information.

CONRAD

So does your cell phone.

She drops her towel and jumps in the pool. Water splashes everywhere, including on Conrad. We see her underwater before she breaks through the surface.

BELLY

You said marijuana messes with white matter.

CONRAD

Do you even know what white matter is?

She circles him like a shark.

BELLY

You said our brains are still developing and that—

CONRAD

God, do you memorize every single thing I ever said?

BELLY (V.O.)

Yes.

BELLY

(defensive)

Get over yourself. You're the one who said smoking's dumb and real athletes don't put shit in their bodies.

CONRAD

I said a lot of stuff. And I'm not an athlete anymore.

BELLY

Well, I still think you should quit.

CONRAD

(teasing)

What will you give me if I do?

Suddenly the air is charged between them. She hesitates. Turns away.

BELLY

Nothing, you should quit for yourself.

Just like that, the little spark between them is snuffed out.

CONRAD

Why are you considering this debutante thing?

BELLY

I don't know. It's not like I have anything else going on.

CONRAD

It's not you. Don't let my mom make you into her little doll just because she never had a daughter.

Belly kicks her legs in the water, looks up at the moon.

BELLY

I don't mind it. Sometimes I wish I was her daughter.

CONRAD

You're better off with Laurel.

Belly watches him take a hit of his joint.

BELLY

Why are you acting so different?

Conrad is startled. Belly's childlike bluntness has always had a way of disarming him.

CONRAD

I--I'm not.

BELLY

Yes, you are. What happened?

CONRAD

I don't know what you're talking about.

BELLY

I know you. Something's going on. Just tell me.

Conrad's cool facade slips. Part of him wants to talk to her. To let go of some of the weight he's been carrying for months.

He's about to speak when Steven and Jeremiah come outside, dressed up and ready to go out for the night. Jeremiah looks from Belly to his brother. Clearly they've interrupted something.

STEVEN
 (to Conrad)
 We're leaving. You ready?

BELLY
 (blurts out)
 Can I come too?

STEVEN
 No.

JEREMIAH
 (surprised)
 The moms are getting everything set
 up for your movie night.

She looks at Conrad. Their eyes meet.

CONRAD
 See ya.

STEVEN
 (over his shoulder)
 Have fun with the moms!

CLOSE ON Belly's hurt face. In the distance, the car doors
 slam shut and the engine starts.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Belly walks inside, wrapped in her towel. Laurel pops
 popcorn, Susannah scoops ice cream into steins of foamy root
 beer.

SUSANNAH
 Brownies are about to go in the
 oven!

Belly smiles wanly.

LAUREL
 Go put the dvd in.

BELLY
 Do we have to watch *It Happened One
 Night*? Can't we do something
 different?

LAUREL
 But we always watch *It Happened One
 Night* on the first night.

SUSANNAH

We could do *The Philadelphia Story*
instead.

Susannah stops and takes a closer look at Belly.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Everything okay?

BELLY

Yeah, I'm just kind of tired. I
might skip the movie and go to bed.

Laurel and Susannah exchange looks.

SUSANNAH

Sure, honey. We can save the
brownies for tomorrow night.

They watch her go.

INT/EXT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Jeremiah's Range Rover drives down the road, headlights on. Jeremiah is at the wheel. He and Steven are laughing and joking, windows down, music blaring. Conrad is quiet.

JEREMIAH

What were you and Belly talking
about?

CONRAD

Nothing.

Steven glances at Conrad in the rearview mirror.

STEVEN

Yo Con, you remember that girl you
were talking to last summer who's
friends with Shayla? They're coming
together.

Conrad looks out the window as if he didn't hear him, and Jeremiah just shakes his head at Steven, like don't bother.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - BELLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Belly is in a big t-shirt, lying in bed, staring up at the wall. She grabs her phone and FaceTimes Taylor. Taylor picks up in the middle of putting on her makeup, surprised to hear from Belly on the first night.

TAYLOR (FACETIME)
Why am I hearing from you? You
never call me on the first night.

BELLY
(avoids question)
Where are you going?

TAYLOR
To a show. What's wrong?

BELLY
Tonight Conrad and I were talking
by the pool just the two of us, and
it felt...different.

TAYLOR
Good different?! See, I told you!

BELLY
I don't know. Jeremiah and Steven
came down and they all just left
and went to this thing at the
beach.

TAYLOR
Why didn't you go with them?

BELLY
(lying)
Like I care about a beach bonfire.
(a beat)
And it's not like they asked me to
go with them either.

TAYLOR
They don't own the beach!

BELLY
Well, I did talk to this one guy at
the gas station and he mentioned it
to me.

TAYLOR
See?! Come on, girl. Go have fun!

BELLY
I don't like that guy.

TAYLOR
That's not the point. Conrad will
be there. Go to the bonfire, get in
his eyeline. Let him see you all
dressed up looking cute.

(MORE)

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Nothing is ever gonna happen if you're alone crying in your room in your big t-shirt waiting for the boys to come home.

CLOSE ON Belly as this idea grows on her. She sits up suddenly.

BELLY

All right! Shut up. I'll go.

Taylor peers into the camera.

TAYLOR

Is that what you're wearing??

BELLY

It's fine! Nobody dresses up for bonfires.

TAYLOR

How do you know when you've never even been to one?

BELLY

I've seen what the guys wear!

TAYLOR

(sighs)

Look in your duffel bag. I gifted you my secret weapon. Not to keep, obvs, just to borrow.

Belly opens the duffel bag. Taylor has snuck in her favorite body-con dress, tight as a second skin.

BELLY

No way in hell.

TAYLOR

Belly. Who got 5 promposals, you or me?

BELLY (V.O.)

I didn't even get one. People keep saying I look so different from last year but not one person asked me.

Belly holds the dress up against her and looks in the mirror uncertainly.

BELLY

Won't you be able to see my
underwear underneath it?

TAYLOR

So wear a thong!

BELLY

Thongs are unhygienic. Wearing a
thong is basically flossing your
butthole.

TAYLOR

(screams with laughter)
Belly! Thongs are mainstream!

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - SUSANNAH'S BATHROOM

Belly rifles around Susannah's drawers. She opens tubes of lipsticks. Tries one on, wipes it right off. Tries on another. She opens the medicine cabinet. There are lots of prescription bottles, which Belly doesn't notice. She sprays Susannah's perfumes, settles on one.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

Belly is in Taylor's dress, tiptoeing down the stairs. The lights from the tv flash in the dark living room. It's the famous hitchhiking scene from *It Happened One Night*.

ELLIE (ON TV)

Do you mind if I try?

PETER (ON TV)

You? Don't make me laugh.

She stops to watch.

ELLIE (ON TV)

You're such a smart aleck! Nobody
knows anything but you. I'll stop a
car--and I won't use my thumb.

PETER (ON TV)

What are you going to do?

ELLIE (ON TV)

It's a system, all my own.

Laurel and Susannah laugh, and so does Belly-- silently. Susannah puts her head on Laurel's shoulder. They look so cozy on the couch.

Belly's tempted to stay and let this night be like every other first night at Cousins. But then it would be like every other first night at Cousins.

She sneaks out the back door unnoticed.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A bonfire on the beach, a crowd of TEENS, a KEG.

Belly's in Taylor's tight dress, and the other GIRLS are wearing cutoffs and little tops.

BELLY (V.O.)
I'm gonna kill Taylor.

Belly crosses her arms over her chest, embarrassed. Out of place. She looks around, not seeing her brother or Conrad or Jeremiah anywhere. She stands on the beach alone.

Until Jumper from the gas station spots her. His eyes light up. He hurries over, a red Solo cup in his hand.

JUMPER
(slurs)
Whoa, where are you coming from?

BELLY
Um, another party.

JUMPER
Sweet. Here, take my beer.

BELLY
No, I'm okay.

He accidentally sloshes beer on her dress.

JUMPER
Oh shit!

Tries to wipe it off with his sleeve.

BELLY
Taylor's gonna kill me.

JUMPER
Who's Taylor?

BELLY
My best friend.

Belly scans around, looking for Conrad.

JUMPER
(sizing her up)
So what, you have a boyfriend back
home or something?

Before Belly can answer, she sees Steven walk past her with SHAYLA (17).

BELLY
(relieved)
Steven!

He looks at her like doesn't know her. Does a double take.

STEVEN
What are you doing here? And what
are you wearing??

JUMPER
I invited her. Who the fuck are
you?

STEVEN
Her brother, you pedo. She's
fifteen.

Jumper jumps away from her as Steven tries to drape his hoodie over her shoulders and she flings it back at him.

BELLY
I'm almost sixteen!

Steven frog marches her down the beach, over to their bonfire. Shayla trails after them.

BELLY (CONT'D)
Let go of me!

STEVEN
Quit embarrassing yourself!

She twists away from him and trips and falls in the sand. He tries to help her to her feet, and she pushes him away. She spits sand out of her mouth, looks up.

Angle on the crowd. Everybody's looking at her. Belly looks up and sees Conrad, kissing NICOLE, a pretty girl in a Red Sox cap and a pair of cutoffs. When he pulls away, she wipes her lipstick off his mouth. He takes a sip of beer. And then he sees her.

CONRAD
Belly??

Belly struggles to her feet.

BELLY
(to Conrad)
But-- but you hate the Red Sox!

He looks away, embarrassed. Already regretful.

NICOLE
Who are you?

BELLY
(chokes out)
Who are YOU?!

NICOLE
Conrad took me to my deb ball last
summer. How do you know him?

BELLY
(to Conrad)
But--I thought you said deb balls
were bullshit, and all debs were
sheep!

Red Sox Girl glares at him.

CONRAD
(embarrassed)
You're a brat.

BELLY
Well, you're an asshole.

Belly is close to tears. Everyone at the bonfire is staring
at her, which is when Jeremiah ambles over.

JEREMIAH
Belly, you came! We can all hang
out tonight!

He puts his arms around Belly and Conrad. Belly shrugs away
from him.

STEVEN
I'm about to take her home.

JEREMIAH
What about Shayla? You can't leave
now.

Steven looks over at Shayla. Contemplating.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)
 Just let Belly hang. What's the big deal? She's already here.

Jeremiah waves at somebody who's calling him over.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)
 BRB.

STEVEN
 (to Belly)
 Stay right here and don't talk to anybody.

Belly gives him the finger and wanders off.

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE - SUSANNAH'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Laurel and Susannah are smoking marijuana on Adirondack chairs. Not Conrad's joints-- Susannah's high end stash.

SUSANNAH
 Did you see Jere practically doing somersaults for Belly's attention at dinner tonight?

They chuckle.

LAUREL
 Just Jere being Jere.

SUSANNAH
 I always said that if you had a girl, she was marrying one of my boys.

LAUREL
 Bite your tongue. We don't need that kind of drama in our lives.

SUSANNAH
 When the boys threw Belly into the pool, I swear I almost saw a smile on Connie's face. He was in a better mood today than he's been in weeks.

LAUREL
That was a good mood? I know you said he's been moody but he's so... unlike himself.

CLOSE ON a worried-looking Laurel.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Since when did he quit football?

SUSANNAH

He only told me a couple weeks ago. I think he's rebelling. He only ever played football to please Adam. I told you they haven't been getting along.

LAUREL

(dry)

And who could blame the kid?

SUSANNAH

Quitting is just Connie's way of getting back at him. I'm going to let him do his own thing. Let him have his space.

LAUREL

(gently)

Don't you think maybe it's time you talked to him?

Susannah gives Laurel an uncharacteristically hard look. Laurel is breaking the rules, and she knows it.

SUSANNAH

There's nothing to talk about. Not yet.

(softer)

Let's just have a really great summer like we said we would.

(passes joint)

How's the writing coming?

LAUREL

My book just came out. I haven't had time to write.

SUSANNAH

You always start your next book right away.

LAUREL

(hesitates, puffs)

I haven't written in months.

CLOSE ON Susannah's look of alarm.

SUSANNAH

Laur. You have to write. If you don't, you'll go crazy and then you'll drive me crazy. Your office is all set up for you. I put fresh flowers in there.

LAUREL

I just want to hang out with you. I could give a shit about my book right now.

SUSANNAH

(lightly)

Liar. You give so many shits about your books. All the shits.

LAUREL

I don't know why I bother. "Party's Over" has been out for a month and it's barely selling.

*

*

SUSANNAH

Well, you're going to sell a ton of copies tomorrow. And I can't wait to read it.

LAUREL

Don't feel like you have to.

SUSANNAH

Of course I'm going to read it. I read all of your books.

LAUREL

Read Cleveland O'Henry's book instead. He's got 150,000 followers on Instagram.

SUSANNAH

Oh, please. He's clearly a hack! You don't have to be on social media. You're above all that! You're a real *writer*.

LAUREL

I'm telling you, nobody's above social media. Not even writers.

SUSANNAH

We'll post pics of the party on Instagram. Voila!

(beat)

(MORE)

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

You know, it wouldn't kill you to put yourself out there more. Get on Tinder while you're at it.

LAUREL

(groans)

Oh my God, please stop.

SUSANNAH

Fine, not Tinder. What's that app for the 40 and up crowd? "Our Time?"

LAUREL

I'm begging you. Stop.

SUSANNAH

John's dating! Why shouldn't you?

LAUREL

John's having a midlife crisis. Whereas I'm perfectly content on my own. We can't all be like you and Adam.

Susannah smiles a smile that doesn't quite reach her eyes, but Laurel's taking another hit and doesn't notice.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Belly sits alone on the beach, knees apart, unladylike in her dress. She wipes tears out her eyes.

BELLY (V.O.)

I never should've come. Maybe some things change but not this. This is the one constant thing-- Conrad Fisher will never love me back.

CAM (O.S.)

Flavia? It's me, Sextus!

Startled, she looks up and sees a cute guy named CAM (16). A straight edged local boy in a stylish hoodie. He has an emo skater guy type of look.

BELLY

(mis-hears him, glares)

What did you say to me?

CAM

(alarmed)

No no no! Sex-tus!

(MORE)

CAM (CONT'D)

From Latin convention in 7th grade?
You're Flavia, right? You placed
second in the poem recitation.

BELLY

(pulls down her dress so
her thighs are covered)
Oh! Yeah! You dressed up for the
costume contest. Weren't you...a
wizard or something?

CAM

I was Charon, ferryman of the dead.
(tips his nonexistent hat)
Salve, Flavia.

BELLY

Salve, Sextus.

CAM

My name's not really Sextus. It's
Cam.

BELLY

I'm Belly. Isabel.
(beat)
You can sit down, if you want.

CAM

Oh, I was on my way out.
(sits)
But I'll hang for a bit.

BELLY

Are you new this summer?

CAM

Nah, I'm from here. You?

BELLY

I've been coming to Cousins ever
since I was a baby.

CAM

How have we not seen each other
until now? I would've remembered
you.

(coughs)

I mean, your poem was really, uh,
memorable.

Belly rolls her eyes, she can't help but smile.

BELLY

I stick pretty close to home when I'm here.

CAM

How come?

BELLY

I guess because I don't really know anybody, other than my family.

CAM

(sweet)

Oh. Well, now you do.

She smiles at him, then shivers. She should've taken Steven's jacket after all. Cam shrugs out of his hoodie and gives it to her. She hugs her knees to her chest and pulls the hoodie over her knees.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - SUSANNAH'S BALCONY - NIGHT

SUSANNAH

Don't get mad at me but I think you should let Belly have a deb season. She's growing up, Laur.

LAUREL

She's still such a child.

SUSANNAH

I think it would be good for her. We can't keep her locked up with us like Rapunzel.

LAUREL

Look, I'd just rather she got a job to save up for college.

SUSANNAH

I really wish you'd let me help.

Laurel gives her a warning look. They've had this conversation before, Susannah offering Laurel money. Though Laurel's never been the slightest bit tempted to take her up on it-- until lately.

SUSANNAH (CONT'D)

Okay, okay. But just give me this one thing. I really want to see our girl in a white dress.

A long beat. The two women look at each other-- Susannah's gaze is steady, resolved. Laurel is the one to look away.

LAUREL
Fine! You win!

SUSANNAH
(tender)
I always do.

Susannah reaches over for Laurel's hand, squeezes it.

LAUREL
I still don't think she'll go through with it.

SUSANNAH
She might surprise you. People are allowed to change, you know.

LAUREL
(takes a deep drag)
Not us though.

SUSANNAH
You and I are immovable objects.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Belly and Cam sit on the beach like two old friends. Which they kind of are.

BELLY
Hey, so did--did everybody see me fall down before?

CAM
...Um. Sort of.

BELLY
My brother's such a dick.

CAM
(casual)
Who are those other guys? Is one of them your, um, boyfriend?

BELLY
(dismissive)
No way. They're family friends. My mom's best friend's sons. It's their house we stay at every summer.

(MORE)

BELLY (CONT'D)
 (looks over at them
 balefully)
 They're just mad that I'm here.

CAM
 Well, I'm glad you came. I didn't
 want to come because I knew it was
 just going to be people getting
 drunk, and I don't really drink.

BELLY
 Me either.
 (beat)
 So how do you know all these summer
 people, if you're local?

CAM
 My mom works at the country club. I
 grew up around them.

BELLY
 (suddenly remembers)
 Hey, do you know anything about the
 debutante thing at the country
 club? It's dumb, right?

CAM
 Well-- it's definitely steeped in
 the patriarchy, if that's what you
 mean.

BELLY
 (definitely not what she
 meant)
 Yeah, that's what I thought.

CAM
 But it's not all garbage. They do a
 big fundraiser for women's health,
 and they raised the most money in
 Massachusetts last year. Elizabeth
 Warren came! Look.

Digs in his pocket for his phone, proudly shows her his
 wallpaper-- a picture of him and Elizabeth Warren.

BELLY
 That's awesome.

CAM
 (looks at time on his
 phone)
 Oh man. It's late.
 (MORE)

CAM (CONT'D)

I really don't want to leave but I
have to be up early tomorrow. I'm
interning on a whale watching boat.

He hesitates. He's about to ask her if she wants to come, but they are interrupted by a loud COMMOTION. They turn around. CLOSE ON Conrad drunk and arguing with Jumper, who has a six-pack of bottles of craft beer under his arm.

NICOLE

Who cares? There's plenty of beer.
Why are you starting shit?

CONRAD

(ignores her, steps closer
to Jumper)
They're our beers. Get the fuck out
of here and go drink your cheap-ass
shitty beer.

She rolls her eyes and walks away as Jumper gets in Conrad's face.

JUMPER

Say that again.

Belly jumps up.

BELLY

(to Cam)
I'll be right back! Don't go
anywhere!

She runs in between them and is accidentally ELBOWED in the face in the scuffle. She falls in the sand and Conrad turns, horrified, checking to see if she's okay. Jumper takes advantage, landing a blow.

Conrad rears up, enraged.

CONRAD

What the fuck!

Conrad swings at Jumper, who gets another punch in. Jumper's BUDDIES join the scuffle, and Jeremiah and Steven run to help.

CLOSE ON Cam checking on Belly, touching her face worriedly.

CAM

Are you okay?

BELLY
 (stunned)
 Yeah.

Police lights flash on the beach.

GUY
 Cops!

Everyone scatters in different directions. Cam grabs Belly's hand and they run down the beach toward the cars.

EXT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Jeremiah shoves Conrad into the back seat and gets into the driver's seat.

JEREMIAH
 Let's go, Belly.

BELLY
 (glances at Cam)
 Cam can give me a ride home. Right, Cam?

CAM
 Yeah, it's no problem.

JEREMIAH
 You can't get into a car with a guy you just met.

CAM
 Uh--actually, we sort of know each other. 7th grade Latin convention? So we're not like, total strangers.

JEREMIAH
 No offense, but no. Belly, we're going.

CONRAD
 (from the back seat)
 Just get in, Belly.

She throws him a dirty look.

CAM
 You should go.
 (hesitates)
 The whaling boat I intern on leaves at dawn from the piers every morning.

(MORE)

CAM (CONT'D)

Would you maybe be interested in coming one day? I could introduce you to my favorite whale. Jonah.

BELLY

(elated)

Um, yes. Sure! How else will you get back your hoodie?

They grin at each other. Both nervous.

BELLY (V.O.)

This could be my summer wish. This night, this boy.

In a truly impulsive move, Belly gets up on her tip toes and gives Cam a sweet peck on the lips before jumping into the car. She's thrilled. Delighted with herself. Just pure adrenaline. The boys are dumbfounded. Jeremiah peels out.

Cam watches them drive off, completely awestruck.

INT. JEREMIAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Jeremiah slams the breaks.

JEREMIAH

We forgot Steven.

He reverses the car, parks, jumps out.

JEREMIAH (CONT'D)

(to Belly)

Watch Conrad!

Belly leans her head back, her long hair hanging loose. She touches her fingers to her lips.

It's quiet in the car. Dark.

ON CONRAD as he reaches out and touches her hair, runs his fingers along the bottom.

ON BELLY as it dawns on her that *Conrad Fisher is playing with her hair.*

CONRAD

Your hair is like a little kid's,
the way it's always so messy.

Belly holds her breath. Their eyes meet in the rearview mirror. Everything between them unspoken.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Belly...

They are interrupted by a KNOCK at the window. It's the cops, with Steven and Jeremiah in tow.

COP 1

Have you kids been drinking?

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Two cops stand on the mat. Laurel talks to the cops in her robe, all the kids stand behind her.

LAUREL

Officers, thank you. It won't happen again, I can promise you that much.

COP 2

Tell Mr. Fisher the Chief wants to set a tee time with him when he's back in town.

LAUREL

(tries not to grimace)
Absolutely. Sorry again for the trouble. Have a good night, officers.

She closes the door and turns to face Belly, Conrad, Steven, and Jeremiah.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

How could you guys be so irresponsible?

STEVEN

Mom, it wasn't a big deal. Seriously. The cops were just looking to break up the bonfire.

LAUREL

Not a big deal? I would say getting picked up by the cops for underage drinking is a pretty big deal, Steven!

Laurel's hair swings around and Steven sniffs.

STEVEN

Were you guys smoking tonight?

Laurel shoots him a look.

LAUREL
Keep your voice down! Susannah's
asleep on the couch.

STEVEN
(whispers)
But I wasn't yelling. You were.

He's silenced by another Look.

JEREMIAH
I was the DD tonight and I didn't
drink, Laurel, I swear.

Laurel turns to Conrad. He is clearly drunk, swaying on his
feet, shirt torn, a cut on his cheek.

LAUREL
(to the group)
What's with him?!
(to Conrad)
You're the oldest. What the hell's
gotten into you?

Before he can answer, she notices Belly.

LAUREL (CONT'D)
When did you leave the house
without telling anybody? And what
in the world are you wearing?

BELLY
It's Taylor's.
(pulls hoodie tighter)
And why am I the only one not
allowed to go out?

LAUREL
It's not that you're not allowed.
It's that you should have told us
you were going. How did you even
get there?

BELLY
(hesitates)
I walked.

LAUREL
Jesus. You know better than to walk
that far down the beach alone late
at night!

BELLY

I was fine! Stop treating me like a kid!

LAUREL

If you want to be treated like an adult, you need to act like one.

CONRAD

Then maybe you guys should too.

The others look at each other, confused.

LAUREL

What does that mean?

Conrad just shrugs and doesn't answer.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

Guys, I don't want to be the nagging mom. It's even less fun for me than it is for you. Don't put me in that position.

(to Belly and Steven)

We are guests in this house. Remember that. And the next time I call you, you better pick up the phone.

They nod guiltily.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

(to Jeremiah and Conrad)

I hope you realize that this night could've ended a lot differently if your family wasn't your family.

JEREMIAH

Sorry, Laur.

LAUREL

Just--go to bed, guys.

Conrad moves to follow Belly and Jeremiah and Steven upstairs, but Laurel stops him.

LAUREL (CONT'D)

I don't understand what's going on with you.

CONRAD

Gee, I don't know, Laurel. What could possibly be going on with me?

He stares at her. A challenge. She swallows nervously. *Does he know?* She looks over at the couch, where Susannah sleeps.

LAUREL

Connie...

He brushes past her and up the stairs. She doesn't follow.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - BELLY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Belly crawls into bed. She hears two little knocks on the wall next her bed.

INT. SUMMER HOUSE - JEREMIAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jeremiah in his room and the wall is between them.

SPLIT SCREEN. We see both of them, only a wall separating them. She knocks back twice. It's their secret way of saying good night. Jeremiah smiles and turns out his light. His screen goes dark.

Montage of the house winding down.

- Steven brushes his teeth.

- Laurel in glasses, setting up her Instagram.

- Susannah asleep on the couch. Conrad puts a blanket over her. On his face, we see more is happening than we know.

Back on Belly. She can't fall asleep. She texts Taylor.

BELLY (TEXT)

- It happened.

Taylor texts back a series of emojis.

- You kissed Conrad?!

A beat of regret from Belly.

- No. It was a boy I met at the bonfire. Sextus.

- Sex WHAT?! TELL ME EVERYTHING.

TIME LAPSE. We go from night to nearly dawn.

It'll be light out soon. Belly gets up, puts on Cam's hoodie, * and sees the debutante invitation on her bedside table.

She runs her fingers along her name written in fancy calligraphy. ISABEL CONKLIN, it says. Not Belly. Isabel.

BELLY (V.O.)
 Things change. Whether you want them to or not. So maybe I'll change too.

On the RSVP card, she checks the ACCEPTS WITH PLEASURE box. She puts on Cam's hoodie and heads down to the beach...

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

Where she finds Conrad sitting in the sand, waiting for the sun to come up. She plops down next to him.

BELLY
 Last night was...

CONRAD
 A shitshow.

BELLY (CONT'D)
 Amazing.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
 You're gonna have a black eye tomorrow.

BELLY
 It's already tomorrow.
 (a beat)
 Do you even remember anything from last night? You were pretty wasted.

CONRAD
 (matter-of-fact)
 I always remember everything when I drink.

Belly touches her hair, wondering if that includes what happened between them in the car. Conrad reaches in his pocket for a cigarette, and Belly looks at him sideways.

BELLY
 Let me have a puff.

CONRAD
 No way! Laurel will kill me.

BELLY
 Okay then, if I can't smoke, you can't smoke.

Conrad laughs. It's the first time we've seen him so much as crack a smile.

CONRAD
Same old Belly.

Belly hugs her knees to her chest. Slowly, a smile spreads across her face. She touches her hand to the bruise forming around her eye. She's not the same. Not by a long shot.

CONRAD (CONT'D)
Let's go pick up some of the good
muffins before everybody wakes up.

A glimpse of the old Conrad. The old Belly would've jumped at the chance. She stands up.

BELLY
I've got somewhere I need to be.
Don't let Steven eat all the
muffins.

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE - DAY

She makes a run for the side of the house, where a bike is propped up.

CONRAD
(surprised)
Wait, where are you going?

BELLY
(over her shoulder)
To see about a whale!

She rides off on her bike, pedaling like crazy, her long hair flying behind her as first light appears.

MUSIC CUE: "Can't Do Better" by Kim Petras.

BELLY (V.O.)
I thought this summer was going to
be like all the other summers. But
it's not. Because I won't let it
be.

FADE OUT.

END OF PILOT