

TURNER TOWN

Written by

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TEASER

INT. STUDIO - STAGE - NIGHT

The STUDIO AUDIENCE applauds a pitch black stage. The backdrop LIGHTS UP, reading NASHVILLE STAR. SPOTLIGHT on the show's host, **WOODY PAGE** (51), Fred Willard type.

WOODY

Good evening, folks. I'm your host Woody Page and tonight, after six grueling weeks of karaoke-style showdowns, we'll find out who America has chosen to be the next NASHVILLE STAR!

SPOTLIGHT on **KACEY CROCKETT** (25). She's no-nonsense and bananas hot. Woody shuffles around her, toying with the audience.

WOODY (CONT'D)

Will it be...
(apathetic)
Kacey Crockett from Turner, Texas?

Another SPOTLIGHT lands on Kacey's competition, **DELTA DOWDY** (24), fresh off a 90s country conveyor belt. Kacey and Delta hold hands. Woody slides over to Delta.

WOODY (CONT'D)

(enthusiastic)
Or Delta Dowdy from Dairyland, Mississippi!

Delta's dress sparkles next to Kacey's had-this-since-high-school version. They have a hushed conversation through fake smiles.

DELTA

Nice dress.

KACEY

Thanks! I actually wore it to prom.

DELTA

Aw. Were you one of those people whose prom date was just a friend?

KACEY

Okay, Delta. You know what?

Kacey takes a deep breath to the high road.

KACEY (CONT'D)
Good luck tonight.

DELTA
Luck is for losers. You keep it.

Woody, a true showman, uses the whole stage.

WOODY
Which one of these young ladies
will go on to country music super
stardom? We'll find out right after
this short break.

Woody moonwalks off stage as we CLOSE IN ON --

CHARLENE CROCKETT (44), Kacey's mom, waving to her from the front row. A price tag dangles from the sleeve of Charlene's fringe jumpsuit. She rips the tag off with fierce optimism.

CHARLENE
Go Kacey! Come on, baby. Bring it home!

GUS CROCKETT (46), standing next to her, wheels around, panicked. He takes the tag from Charlene and pockets it.

GUS
Whoops better keep that. Just in case.

Gus sweats profusely, nervous.

Back on STAGE --

Delta's smile is still plastered across her face. Kacey's smile, less practiced, starts twitching a little.

DELTA
(repulsed)
Is that your family?

KACEY
(defensive)
Yeah, what of it?

Delta shakes her head at Kacey's giant, younger brother, **DECKER CROCKETT** (16), winking at her from the audience. This kid is bulldozing his way through puberty.

DELTA
Gross.

KACEY
Your personality is gross.

Delta turns to Kacey, through a massive bleached smile --

DELTA
And you're so inbred you might as
well be a sandwich.

Woody reemerges from backstage with a cheesy "GOT YA" smile just as... **BAM!** Kacey PUNCHES Delta in the face at the exact moment Woody announces the winner.

WOODY
Delta Dowdy, you are the next
Nashville Star!

Delta falls to the ground. CONFETTI rains down. Stunned silence swallows the room.

KACEY
Shit.

Kacey is frozen. Delta pushes herself back up, going immediately into her pageant wave. No one is taking this moment from her.

DELTA
Go back to Turner, Kacey.

The audience begins to cheer, Decker throws air punches in support of his sister. Charlene turns around and flips the rest of the audience the bird. Gus whips out his flip phone.

GUS
Hey, Buddy, it's Gus. I was
thinking maybe I could come back to
work?

Two SECURITY GUARDS approach, dragging Kacey off stage.

Kacey's spotlight turns OFF.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - MORNING

CHYRON: ONE WEEK LATER

Kacey stocks shelves near the store's entrance, wearing a blue apron. An older lady, **MARGE**, walks over pushing a cart. It's empty except for her purse.

MARGE

Excuse me, is your name Kacey?

KACEY

I'm so much shorter in person,
right?

(feigning reluctance)

Appreciate ya, but I don't really
want my picture made right now, on
account of this is --

Kacey motions to her TURNER HARDWARE APRON.

KACEY (CONT'D)

-- sort of a low point for me.

Marge stares at her, confused.

KACEY (CONT'D)

Okay fine.

Kacey tosses her apron to the side, then reaches into Marge's purse, pulling a phone out. Kacey snaps a few selfies with her, then puts the phone back.

KACEY (CONT'D)

Don't think your votes were for
nothing. I'm moving back to
Nashville as soon as I save some
money.

(beat)

Bee-tee-dubs, did you find me
"unlikable" at all on the show?
That dickasaurus, Woody, he said --

Marge hands Kacey her name tag, interrupting her.

MARGE

Is your name Kacey? I think you
dropped this.

Marge walks away, leaving Kacey deflated. She reaches for a bag of popcorn next to a POPCORN MACHINE by the door. Before she can eat her feelings... **BAM! BAM! BAM!**

JAYLYNN OATMEN (26), massively pregnant, pounds on the glass storefront.

JAYLYNN
(muffled, through glass)
Kacey flippin' Crockett, no
flippin' way!

Jaylynn enters. Kacey pulls her hoodie shut around her face.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)
Pop that pretty little face out
where I can see it!

KACEY
Go awaaaaaay.

Jaylynn pries Kacey's hood open, then bear hugs her.

JAYLYNN
Come on, hug me back. You know you
want to.

Jaylynn lets Kacey out of her bear hug, impatient.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)
Can't stay mad forever.

Kacey shoves a fist full of popcorn into her mouth, definitely mad.

KACEY
(mouthful)
I'm not mad.

Kacey returns to stocking shelves with CHIA PETS. Jaylynn follows her and starts helping.

JAYLYNN
Then how come your eyebrows are
twitching like they always do, when
you're about to explo--

Kacey slams a boxed Chia Pet down on the shelf. Holding her eyebrows still with both hands.

KACEY
Back off! I move away for two years
and best friend marries my ex
boyfriend slash *only* backup plan?
(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)
I'm allowed to feel weird about that.

JAYLYNN
I knew it! Not fair. You broke up with Tyler a year before he and I so much as...

Jaylynn makes a hand job motion, then a finger-bang motion.
REVEAL Marge from earlier in the BG shaking her head at them.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)
I thought you'd be happy for me.

KACEY
I thought you'd pick somebody else.

Kacey and Jaylynn watch as the automatic doors open for a TUMBLEWEED that rolls past them.

JAYLYNN
Lotta options.

A beat. Kacey turns back to the shelf.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)
(forlorn)
You want to go to the homecoming game together this Saturday? We could get tore up under the bleachers like old times. Or you can. I'll keep the energy way up.

Kacey ignores her. **BELINDA BERRY** (33), permanently frowning, rolls up on a scooter. Belinda hands Kacey her apron (the one she tossed aside earlier) and a PINK SLIP.

KACEY
What's that for?

BELINDA
Socializing at work. You know what three of those will get you?

Belinda runs her index finger across her throat.

KACEY
Murdered?

BELINDA
Terminated.
(knife twisting)
And popcorn's for customer's only.

Kacey drops her bag of popcorn in the nearby trash

JAYLYNN
 (to Belinda)
 Excuse me. This is Kacey Crockett.
 Nashville Star?

BELINDA
 You know what they say about second
 place? Nothing at all.

Belinda jets off on her scooter. Kacey leaves Jaylynn at the
 entrance.

JAYLYNN
 So I'll see you at the game on
 Saturday?

KACEY
 Nope!

Off Kacey's eye roll --

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Charlene puts dinner on the table in front of Kacey. The
 rooster-themed kitchen looks like a Trading Spaces outtake.
 Gus, Decker and Charlene sit down.

CHARLENE
 Best, worst and weirdest! Who wants
 to go first?

A beat. No one. Charlene raises her hand as food gets passed
 around the table. Gus places a napkin neatly over his lap.

GUS
 All you, little baby.

CHARLENE
 Best thing, my whole family's back
 together. Worst thing, can't think
 of one. Weirdest, today I saw a
 cloud shaped like a cotton ball.
 (beat, to Kacey)
 Your turn!

KACEY
 Do I have to?

CHARLENE
 I guess not if you --

GUS
 Sure don't.

KACEY

Best thing that happened to me today is I slept through half of it. Worst thing, I went from having my picture in the paper to working part-time at Turner Hardware. Weirdest? Jaylynn found out where I work before I even told her I was home.

Kacey looks at Charlene, knowingly.

DECKER

Mine are all the worst. I've asked Trina to homecoming twice and she's said no three times. Once before I got the words out.

GUS

Yikes.

KACEY

Decker, how would you like it if some guy kept asking you the same question over and over?

DECKER

I'd be like, "Dude. Listening is the sincerest form of respect."

Kacey tilts her head at Decker.

DECKER (CONT'D)

(light bulb)

Oh no.

He jumps up from the table.

DECKER (CONT'D)

I'm so glad you're home.

Kacey reaches for the last biscuit, but Decker snatches it.

KACEY

Disrespectful!

INT. QUIKSTOP - MORNING

Gus stands behind the counter. **TRAMPAS MACK** (45), redneck heartthrob, enters with **DEB RUSSELL** (43), traps bigger than yours, and **RALPHIE JONES** (41), hype man. They're all wearing Mossy Oak.

TRAMPAS

Heya, Gus-Gus.

GUS

There's only one Gus, Trampas. Cool matching outfits.

TRAMPAS

Deer season, brother.

DEB

We'd invite you, but there's a little more at stake this year.

GUS

Don't eat steak, don't like hunting.

RALPHIE

First buck of the season gets their picture in the paper and five hundred cash. Fame and fortune.

GUS

Five-zero-zero?

RALPHIE

Yup.

GUS

Picture in the paper?

DEB

We'd take you along, but you remember...

Through the EYE of the BUCK on the cover of a nearby FISH & GAME MAGAZINE --

EXT. WOODS - FLASHBACK

A BUCK stands in the woods. Gus, Trampas, Ralphie and Deb watch through the pines. Trampas lifts his rifle into position. Gus JUMPS into the air, waving his arms.

GUS

Like the wind, Bambi!

BOOM. Trampas fires as the buck runs off, missing him. He lowers his rifle, scowling. Gus kicks at the dirt, whistling.

INT. QUIKSTOP - BACK TO SCENE

Trampas, Deb and Ralphie laugh hysterically. Gus doesn't.

GUS (CONT'D)
Get out of my Quikstop.

Trampas, Deb and Ralphie exit.

Gus flips the SIGN on the door from OPEN to CLOSED, locking the door behind them. He turns around, eyeing the hunting gear hanging on the back wall.

INT. TURNER HIGH SCHOOL - SAME

Decker walks up to **TRINA MACK** (16) wearing a gym rat style crop top.

DECKER
Hey, Trina. I need to talk to you about homecoming.

TRINA
I already said no, Decker. I'd go to homecoming with Mr. Miller before I'd go with you.

MR. MILLER (83), looks up from the drinking fountain.

DECKER	MR. MILLER
Harsh!	Harsh!

A passing STUDENT tosses a bottle at the trash, but misses.

DECKER
Air ball!

Decker picks up the bottle, juking the trash can before dunking it. Trina, unimpressed, pulls out the bottle and places it in the recycling bin.

TRINA
Bye, Decker.

Trina moves down the HALLWAY, handing out campaign pins to passing STUDENTS.

TRINA (CONT'D)
Trina Mack for homecoming queen!
Last day to vote! I'll use my platform for positive change. I'll make sure there are recycling bins in every classroom and --

As Trina hands out a pin, her t-shirt raises slightly, showing a sliver of midriff. **VICE PRINCIPAL HONG** (47) pops out of a classroom.

VICE PRINCIPAL HONG
Trina, exposed midriff is a dress code violation. My office.

Trina points at Decker's fully exposed abs.

TRINA
Seriously?

VICE PRINCIPAL HONG
Yo, Decker! Do you have any tape?

DECKER
No, why?

VICE PRINCIPAL HONG
Because you are ripped!

Trina shakes her head at Decker as Mr. Hong ushers her away. Off Decker's stunned look --

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - SAME

Kacey passes by a CAMPING DISPLAY holding another bag of popcorn. The TENT DOOR unzips and an ARM reaches out, pulling Kacey inside.

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - TENT DISPLAY - CONTINUOUS

Kacey lands on an air mattress inside. REVEAL Jaylynn.

JAYLYNN
Camping. Who needs it?

KACEY
What's wrong with you?!

JAYLYNN
Ignore my phone calls and you're gonna get got.

Kacey face palms and flops down on the air mattress.

KACEY
How long have you been here?

JAYLYNN

About an hour. I'm on my lunch break. I work across the street at Rusty Motors.

KACEY

Do you want me to get fired?

JAYLYNN

I'll make it quick, I have some big news.

Kacey sits up slowly, uninterested.

KACEY

(sarcastic)

You're pregnant.

Jaylynn looks at her massive belly, panicked.

JAYLYNN

No. Yes. Wait. Can that happen while I'm already --

Kacey shakes her head no.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)

Thank you, Jesus. That guy really thought of everything.

KACEY

Big news?

JAYLYNN

You know how I also work part-time at the high school?

Kacey shrugs, munching on popcorn apathetically.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)

I pulled some strings and guess who's singing at the homecoming game this weekend?

KACEY

Absolutely not.

JAYLYNN

Doesn't pay, but great exposure. We're playing a team from Dallas. Isn't Ryan Cabrera from Dallas?

KACEY

I don't know where he's from.

JAYLYNN

Kacey, this could be your big comeback.

KACEY

I'm not going from singing on national television to a high school football game. Doesn't matter. I work on Saturday.

From outside the tent, Kacey and Jaylynn overhear Belinda with two TEENAGE GIRLS at the nearby register.

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - REGISTER - SAME

Belinda side-eyes the obvious commotion inside the tent, mostly ignoring the two teenagers.

TEENAGER ONE

Can we get a picture with Kacey?
Heard she works here.

In the BG, Kacey hurriedly scrambles halfway out of the tent.

TEENAGER ONE (CONT'D)

If she could, like, fake punch me?
That'd be perfect.

Still in the BG, Kacey weasels right back inside the tent. Belinda pulls on the intercom microphone jusst right, making an insane squeaking sound. The teenagers back away, fearful.

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - TENT DISPLAY - CONTINUOUS

Jaylynn zips up the tent window, defensively.

JAYLYNN

Fuck 'em.

KACEY

You know what, fine. I'll sing at that stupid game. Lost my temper for half a second and it's all anybody remembers. So what if I'm "unlikeable." Most people are!

Behind Kacey, Belinda's shadow appears like a BEAR approaching the tent. Jaylynn sees the shadow and SHRIEKS. Belinda unzips the tent.

ACT TWO

EXT. FOSTER'S FREEZE - DAY

Kacey eats alone at an outdoor picnic table. Jaylynn sits down across from her in a Foster's Freeze uniform, holding a sundae the size of her head. Kacey jumps, startled.

KACEY

Is there anywhere you don't work?

JAYLYNN

I've got three jobs. Here, Rusty Motors and the high school.

(whispering)

This one's my favorite.

(then)

It lets me get real creative. My goal is to get this on the menu.

Kacey looks at Jaylynn's massive, every-ingredient sundae.

KACEY

What is it?

JAYLYNN

(as if obvious)

The Jaylynn.

KACEY

Last week, my goal was a record deal. This week, my goal is to not spend Saturday with a bunch of garden gnomes.

JAYLYNN

I still can't believe you didn't win that thing.

KACEY

America voted, you know.

JAYLYNN

Kacey, who's worse at voting than America?!

Kacey half smiles. A beat.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)

You know, when you left, people were saying Tyler was going to follow you up there. They said I was just a rebound.

(MORE)

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)

(then)

But you know, rebound this.

Jaylynn motions to her pregnant belly.

KACEY

Don't listen to those people.

JAYLYNN

Thanks.

KACEY

If you have three jobs, what's that make Tyler? A stay-at-home-father-to-be?

Jaylynn gets a little fidgety, uncomfortable.

JAYLYNN

Yeah right.

Then, over a speaker --

RADIO DJ (O.S.)

Next up, the latest single from your Nashville Star, Delta Dowdy!

Jaylynn shouts toward the counter at **DANNY** (16), nerdy.

JAYLYNN

Hey Danny, would you kindly turn that shit off.

(beat, to Kacey)

Delta Dowdy is hot garbage. You're the real deal and I'll be damned if I'm gonna let both of us give up on your dream.

Jaylynn's finishes her giant sundae. Off Kacey's impressed nod --

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - LATER

Kacey sweeps the floor enthusiastically, trying to get Belinda to notice. Belinda is fixated on RUSTY MOTORS across the parking lot.

KACEY

Hottie spotting?

Kacey grabs a pair of BINOCULARS off of a mannequin, then follows Belinda's gaze. She lands on a SALESPERSON showing a MAN a BLUE PICKUP.

KACEY (CONT'D)

Dad bod. I can dig it.

Belinda looks at Kacey, annoyed, then back toward the car lot, refocusing.

BELINDA

No. The pickup.

(under her breath,
nervous)

Don't you do it. Don't you do it.

The man and salesperson move down the line of vehicles. Belinda sighs, relieved. Kacey lowers the binoculars.

KACEY

You want that truck?

BELINDA

Doesn't matter.

KACEY

It's a nice truck.

BELINDA

Yeah, I know it's a nice truck.
Four hundred and fifty horsepower.
Four ton towing capacity. Fifteen
MPG.

KACEY

I think if something's important to
you, you ought to just go out and
get it.

BELINDA

My car runs just fine.

KACEY

Why don't we just go test drive it?

BELINDA

We're working.

KACEY

I won't tell. Who would I tell?

Belinda's eyes get a little squintier than they already are. A slow smile creeps across Kacey's face. Progress.

INT. TURNER HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - SAME

Trina walks into Home-Ec class wearing a TALL TEE that says DRESS CODE VIOLATOR. A few CLASSMATES snicker, Decker sees Trina is embarrassed.

DECKER
(earnestly)
Trina, if you were a tropical
fruit, you'd be a fine-apple.

TRINA
Shut up, Decker.

Decker looks to his right and sees a tall, broad ATHLETIC GIRL wearing jeans and a t-shirt. He looks at the sewing machine.

DECKER
(to athletic girl)
Ever wanted to be a part of
something bigger than you?

She looks at Decker aggressively.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Bigger than all of us.

She senses Decker's sincerity and nods.

EXT. WOODS - SAME

Gus walks through the woods, less prepared than the others. No hunting gear, just a gun slung over his shoulder. He hears a baby bird at his feet.

GUS
Hey, little fellow. Or should I
say, swallow.

Gus carefully holds the bird, climbs up the tree, putting it back in its nest. From the tree, Gus hears Trampas's voice in the distance. He climbs higher and stays put, listening.

TRAMPAS
That poor sucker. You gotta feel
bad for the guy. Probably thought
they was about to hit it big time
with Kacey. He's never really fit
in around here.

DEB
Kind of a pansy.

Gus white knuckles the tree branch, furious.

TRAMPAS

Felt kinda bad leaving him out of this, but the guy can't handle even a little blood.

Gus's anger turns to sadness. As Trampas, Deb and Ralphie leave his earshot, Gus whispers to the baby birds.

GUS

Sickos.

INT. TURNER HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - SAME

Decker rounds the corner of the hallway. He's swapped clothes with the athletic girl from Home-Ec and altered her jeans into a mini skirt and a crop top.

STUDENTS' Heads turn, TEACHERS drop their clip boards as he passes them. Decker stops in front of Trina, at her locker, still in her DRESS CODE VIOLATOR t-shirt.

DECKER

Hey Trina.

TRINA

What is your problem? It's not enough that I have to wear this stupid shirt, now you're making fun of me? All because I won't go to homecoming with you? Nice.

Trina turns and leaves. Decker shouts after her.

DECKER

I did this for you!

Decker sees his reflection, checks himself out, flexing.

EXT. TURNER HARDWARE - SAME

Kacey locks up the store as Jaylynn pulls up in the blue PICKUP. She hops out and tosses a nervous Belinda the keys.

KACEY

Hell yeah.

BELINDA

You're sure they don't mind? I'm not going to buy it.

Jaylynn's shrug says they definitely mind.

JAYLYNN

No, but we should go quick.

Kacey fist bumps Jaylynn, then gets into the passenger seat. Jaylynn pauses, ecstatic that she and Kacey just had a moment. Kacey reaches over and HONKS. Jaylynn snaps out of it and gets in.

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Gus walks through the woods, discouraged.

GUS

Man, I ain't never gonna get no buck.

Gus kicks a tree in frustration, stubbing his toe.

GUS (CONT'D)

Oh, brother.

He grabs it, wincing, just as a BUCK pops out in front of him. Gus hunkers down, readying his rifle.

GUS (CONT'D)

You got this, Gus. This is for your family. I bet Mr. Buck would understand. Surely he has a family of his own.

Gus closes his eyes, finger on the trigger.

GUS (CONT'D)

Dang it.

Just then, Gus hears Trampas, Deb and Ralphie closing in on the same buck. Gus throws a rock, scaring him off. Trampas, Ralphie and Deb look at each other, knowingly.

RALPHIE

Gus.

Gus army crawls back to his car.

INT. PICKUP - SAME

This is a brand new Belinda. 90s country music blasts from the speakers, all three girls singing along.

KACEY

Belinda! I've never seen you so happy. I've never even see you not kind of pissed off. You need this truck. You deserve this truck.

Jaylynn rattles off specs in from the backseat.

JAYLYNN

It's got brakes and tires and floor mats and after rebates it's...

(beat)

Holy SHIT. Wow. Okay. That's a lot.

BELINDA

My car runs just fine.

KACEY

Just fine? This is your dream car. How long have you had your eye on this thing?

BELINDA

Two years.

KACEY

That's two years you could have felt like you do right now. *Alive*. Like you're exactly where you're meant to be, doing exactly what you're meant to be doing.

Belinda looks at Kacey, skeptically.

KACEY (CONT'D)

Trust me, I get it. That's how I feel about singing. That's why I need to be at the game on Saturday.

Belinda turns the music off and flips a U-turn, annoyed.

BELINDA

That's real nice.

JAYLYNN

(getting anxious)

Should probably get back anyway.

Kacey turns around to Jaylynn in the backseat.

KACEY

(silently)

Help me.

While Kacey has her back to the road, a BUCK runs out in front of them. Belinda slams on the breaks, but it's too late. **BAM.** Then **BUH-BUMP.** Its body lays FLAT in road.

INT. TURNER HIGH SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - SAME

TIGHT ON Decker, arms crossed, sitting across from PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT (55), who is laughing hysterically.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT
This shit is hilarious.

Decker gets up and spins around in his denim skirt and crop top.

DECKER
It's not funny. You need to write me up. I am violating the dress code. Complete double standard!

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT
Hey, you wanna blow this joint and go get some lunch? I can do that, you know.

DECKER
I will not stop until my message is heard.

Decker hikes his skirt up and walks out.

INT. TURNER HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Decker stands on a box behind a plastic table where voting is taking place for homecoming court.

DECKER (CONT'D)
Decker Crockett for homecoming queen!

STUDENTS clap and cheer. Trina glares from down the hallway.

EXT. RUSTY MOTORS - SAME

Belinda, Kacey and Jaylynn get out of the dented truck. **RUSTY** (45), storms over. Jaylynn waves off Kacey and Belinda.

RUSTY
What the hell happened?

JAYLYNN

Rusty, I am so sorry. For what it's worth, Belinda loves that truck. You should have seen how happy she was driving it. I think there's a chance she'll come back for it.

RUSTY

I hired you to answer the phone, Jaylynn. That's all you had to do.

JAYLYNN

It won't happen again. And I'll find a way to pay for the damage.

RUSTY

We can fix that.

JAYLYNN

(whew)
That is a relief.

Rusty takes a beat, not relishing this.

RUSTY

Look, I'm sorry for what you're going through with your --
(beat)
-- with Tyler.
(then)
Can't be easy, but look at this thing.

Jaylynn nods, looking back at the truck.

INT./EXT. GUS'S CAR - SAME

Gus rips around a winding backroad in his sedan, teary eyed.

GUS

(to himself)
There are men who can and there are men who can't.

Gus looks at his reflection in the rear view, disappointed, and spots a DEAD BUCK on the side of the road.

EXT. GUS'S CAR / BACKROAD - CONTINUOUS

The car screeches to a halt. Gus jumps out and starts giving the buck CPR.

GUS
Stay with me, brother!

Gus goes in for mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. He listens for a heartbeat. Nothing. He shuts the buck's eyes.

GUS (CONT'D)
Your death will not be in vain.

Gus looks around. The coast is clear. He pops his trunk and rolls up his sleeves.

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - SAME

Belinda and Kacey are back at work, both agitated. Kacey sweeps the floor, Belinda walks past her, pulling a planter pot off the shelf so that it shatters in front of Kacey.

BELINDA
Clean up in gardening.

KACEY
(losing it)
Hey, remember when you were living your dream an hour ago? You're welcome.

BELINDA
When we basically stole a car and drove it around for fifteen minutes? Then hit a deer? You're a real hero, Kacey. Thank you.

KACEY
Not my fault the only thing you've got the nerve to dream about is some truck you'll never buy. Try wanting something that's actually difficult to accomplish. Then try losing everything for it.

Kacey motions around the store.

KACEY (CONT'D)
You think any of this matters to me? It doesn't.

BELINDA
You think I feel bad for you? That you can't leave early for the football game when you've worked here less than a month? You said in your interview you'd work weekends.

KACEY

I said a lot of things that day,
Belinda.

(beat)

You want to stay here and watch
everything you want go to somebody
else willing to go after it? Good
on you.

BELINDA

Fine.

Kacey takes off her apron, realizing she's out of a job.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Charlene clips coupons at the counter. Kacey enters.

KACEY

I just got fired from the fucking
hardware store.

CHARLENE

That's okay, right? You hated that
job. When one door closes...

KACEY

Where are my yearbooks? I'm giving
up. I'll just find out who's not
married yet so I can do nothing
with my life like Jaylynn. She
seems happy.

Jaylynn steps in the front door, behind Kacey, overhearing.
Charlene tries to signal to Kacey, but it's too late.

JAYLYNN

You left your purse in the truck.
Belinda said you went home, so...

Jaylynn hands Kacey her purse and runs out in tears.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SUNSET

Kacey walks down a gravel driveway where Jaylynn sits on the back of an ATV. The sun is setting and it's quiet outside. Kacey joins Jaylynn on the back of the ATV.

KACEY

I'm kind of a dick.

JAYLYNN

Sorry you lost your job. That's not what I wanted.

KACEY

I'm probably better off.

Kacey runs her finger across her throat, mimicking Belinda's move from earlier.

KACEY (CONT'D)

How'd things go over with Rusty?

JAYLYNN

Oh, he fired me on the spot. That's alright. I can pick up some shifts at Foster's.

KACEY

You're not making a strong case for marriage. I pictured it more like early retirement.

Jaylynn smiles.

JAYLYNN

I like working. And I don't really have a choice.

(then)

Tyler left six months ago.

KACEY

Left where?

JAYLYNN

Ran off with some buckle bunny in Kansas City.

KACEY

(shocked)

Gross.

(pissed)

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

Fuck him.
 (then)
 Why didn't you tell me?

JAYLYNN

I wanted to. Kept hoping maybe he'd come back. It's embarrassing. The guy I ruined our friendship over left anyway.

KACEY

You didn't ruin our friendship. That one's on me. I don't think I was ever really mad it was Tyler. Just scared not to have something to fall back on.

JAYLYNN

I don't think we ever really have that.

Kacey nods, then leans on Jaylynn.

KACEY

Take me back?

JAYLYNN

(choked up)
 Doi-dot-com.

KACEY

I should go ask Belinda the same thing. I'm gonna be a less shitty person starting now. Maybe even "likable."

JAYLYNN

What about the game? Who's gonna sing?

KACEY

You said you wanted a taste of the limelight.

Kacey jets out. Gulp. Jaylynn is petrified.

EXT. TURNER HARDWARE - LATER

Kacey peers inside the locked store, then notices the CLOSED sign. **HONKING**. Kacey turns around to find Belinda in the BLUE PICKUP, still dented.

KACEY
You bought it?!

BELINDA
Got a good deal on account of the
dent. Need a ride to the game?

KACEY
Oh hell yeah.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - SAME

The field is LIT UP. Bleachers are filled with spirited FANS. Principal Albrecht's voice comes over the intercom system. Trina and Decker stand to his left. ANOTHER DUDE, already wearing a crown, stands on the other side.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT
And now, this year's homecoming
queen. It came down to just a few
votes between Trina Mack...

The crowd cheers.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT (CONT'D)
(unamused)
And Decker Crockett.

Scattered APPLAUSE from the confused crowd. Principal Albrecht holds the microphone away from his mouth.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT (CONT'D)
What's this about, son?

TRINA
(interjecting)
He's trying to ruin my life because
I won't go to homecoming with him.

DECKER
Trina, no. That's not it. I'm
trying to do the right thing here.

Principal Albrecht opens an envelope, reading.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT
And this year's homecoming queen
is...
(reluctantly)
Decker Crockett.

Trina storms off.

DECKER
Trina, wait!

Decker turns back to Principal Albrecht, fuming.

DECKER (CONT'D)
You made Trina wear that stupid t-shirt, while I marched around our school in a mini skirt. Complete double standard.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT
Yeah, alright. I'll tell her sorry. What do you want?

DECKER
Equality. Now give me my crown.

Decker puts the crown on, hooks arms with the HOMECOMING KING and they walk off the field.

EXT. BLEACHERS - CONTINUOUS

Gus rushes to his seat next to Charlene. Trampas, Ralphie and Deb sit nearby with their families, suspicious of him.

GUS
Hey boys. Deb. How'd it go?

TRAMPAS
Not good, Gus. Not good.

DEB
We gotta sneaking suspicion we were being followed.

GUS
You know what they say about suspicions. They make an ass outta you and --

Charlene stops him with a big kiss. Gus spots Decker on the sidelines, wearing the crown.

GUS (CONT'D)
Decker won homecoming king?

CHARLENE
Kind of!

Charlene and Gus high-five.

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Belinda's truck comes to a sudden stop in front of the field entrance. Kacey BOLTS out.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Jaylynn steps onto the field. Over the loudspeaker --

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT (O.S.)
And now, our national anthem by
Turner Town's own, Nashville Star
runner-up... Kacey Crockett!

Jaylynn whispers into Principal Albrecht's ear.

PRINCIPAL ALBRECHT (CONT'D)
First runner-up... Kacey Crockett!

Jaylynn takes the mic from him. Principal Albrecht is too confused to ask where Kacey is.

JAYLYNN
(sheepishly)
Kacey couldn't make it.

Crickets.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)
So, I'm gonna sing it.
(shaky)
Oh say can you see...

Jaylynn spots KACEY WAVING HER ARMS, holding a microphone, on the sideline, out of sight from the audience. Kacey motions for Jaylynn to flick her mic OFF. Kacey starts to sing.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)	KACEY
(lip syncing)	By the dawn's early light...
By the dawn's early light...	

Kacey takes over as Jaylynn lip syncs along with her. It looks to the crowd as if Kacey's voice is coming from Jaylynn. Jaylynn goes all out with her performance.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Kacey meets Jaylynn in the parking lot.

JAYLYNN
That was the coolest thing ever.

JAYLYNN (CONT'D)
They loved me!

KACEY
They loved me!

KACEY (CONT'D)
We were great.

Gus calls for Kacey a few spots down.

GUS
Hey, come help me with something
would you?

Gus pops the trunk of his sedan and slings out the DEAD BUCK. Kacey SCREAMS. Gus, Charlene and Decker push Kacey front-and-center into frame behind the dead buck as a STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHER from the TURNER TOWN GAZETTE snaps a photo.

EXT. TRINA'S HOUSE - LATER

Decker, dressed for homecoming finds Trina outside, on her porch swing. Her hair and makeup are still done, but she's in pajamas. Decker sits down next to her, holding his crown.

DECKER
Trina, please accept this crown as an apology. I should have shown you more respect and honored your answer when you said you'd never go to homecoming with me in a million years.

Decker hands the crown to Trina.

TRINA
You keep it. Mr. Albrecht called me. Said he was sorry about the shirt. He's gonna change the rule so guys can't show midriff either.

DECKER
I specifically told him to let everyone show as much as they want!

Trina laughs, stands up and crowns Decker.

TRINA
You earned this.

Trampas opens the front door from inside.

TRAMPAS
What the shit is this?

TRINA
Decker's taking me to homecoming.

DECKER
Really?

TRAMPAS
Fine, but no touching.

TRINA
It's cool, Dad, we're just friends.

Decker looks slightly perturbed, but lets it go.

TRAMPAS
Teenage boys are not your friend.

DECKER
Thank you.

Trina runs upstairs to get ready.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME

Kacey sits on the porch swing. Gus comes out and sits down next to her.

GUS
Hey. Got you something.

KACEY
Is it a dead animal?

Gus hands Kacey a check.

KACEY (CONT'D)
Dad...

GUS
Me and your mom, we believe in you.
And we know Nashville didn't work
out the first time, but we'd bet
the house on you all over again.
Take that money, get yourself a
ticket back and show them what you
got.

Kacey hugs him.

KACEY
I can't take this. Don't get me
wrong, Nashville has not seen the
last of me.

(MORE)

KACEY (CONT'D)

And being home has been a real shit show.

(beat)

But I think I need to be in Turner right now.

GUS

Proud of you either way.

Gus puts an arm around Kacey, slowly pulling the check out of her hand.

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. TURNER HARDWARE - MORNING

Jaylynn, now also wearing a name tag and a blue apron, follows Kacey around the store. Kacey stops at the cash register. She punches the key board like a cartoon.

KACEY

Bleep bop boop. Money machine.

JAYLYNN

Got it. When does Belinda get in? I want to thank her for this opportunity.

Outside, they watch as Belinda's bright blue pickup manages to use three parking spaces. Belinda gets out, hair done, makeup snatched. The automatic doors open for her like a catwalk. Kacey and Jaylynn can only stare.

BELINDA

What?

KACEY

Nothing.

Kacey walks over to the NEWSPAPER RACK and throws out the old papers. She replaces them with the NEW STACK. Jaylynn picks one up.

JAYLYNN

Oh shit.

Kacey looks down at the paper. Kacey is front and center in a picture of her family with the buck.

The headline reads: CROCKETTS TAKE HOME THE FIRST BUCK OF THE SEASON. Belinda sees, too.

BELINDA

Oh look, you're famous.

Belinda snaps a selfie with Kacey, Jaylynn photobombs.

BELINDA (CONT'D)

But popcorn's for customers only.

Kacey throws out her popcorn, smiling.

END OF SHOW