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To my friends at La-De-Da...

Cast of Characters

AMBER
BLAKE
CALEB
EMMA
HALLIE
KYLIE
LESLIE
MADISON
MILES
NOAH
RYANN
SCOTT
SIERRA

Setting

The play is set at “Common Ground,” a coffee shop and local hangout for young people. There are five seating areas—two with tables and chairs, two with sofas and/or big comfy chairs, and one with two chairs and a chess table. A counter is stage right. A door stage left. There is a “Starbuckian”-style lamp above each seating area. The lights are dim with a coffee shop atmosphere. Soft music is in the background and continues softly throughout the play. A strong light comes up on a different seating area for each scene, making it the focus of the audience’s attention.

COMMON GROUND

by Brendon Votipka

Scene 1

(Prelude: Before the first scene, the lights come up and we see the coffee shop. SCOTT and LESLIE are behind the counter, working. CALEB is at a table alone. RYANN and NOAH are on a couch; RYANN is reading an almanac and NOAH is writing. AMBER sits at a table, waiting. BLAKE and KYLIE are playing chess; KYLIE struggles to make a move, and BLAKE moves his pieces without a thought. Lights up on SCOTT and LESLIE behind the counter.)

SCOTT. There are certain things you can just tell about people. I think beverage preference is one of those things. I can usually tell what kind of drink someone will have from the way they walk in and who they're with.

LESLIE. Scott, there is no way you can know that.

SCOTT. I could tell you liked non-fat chai lattes.

LESLIE. That's just because you see me drink them all the time!

SCOTT. No, well maybe, but I know I thought that was what you would order before you ever worked here.

LESLIE. Whatever Scott.

SCOTT. There are things you learn after you have worked in this coffee shop as long as I have. The kind of person who gets a Café Breve is not the kind who will get iced tea or a Carmel Cappuccino. You'll figure it out.

LESLIE. Yeah. OK.

SCOTT. I bet you five bucks I can nail the next order we get.

LESLIE. Fine.

SCOTT. Awesome.

LESLIE. You are so full of it.

SCOTT. Two out of three times I'm right on the money.

(SIERRA and HALLIE enter across the stage.)

LESLIE. Go!

SCOTT. Let's see. Um, Italian sodas for both, one raspberry and one either peach or strawberry. The shorter girl will get cream in hers.

LESLIE. Hmm. We'll see. Hey, welcome to Common Ground, how are you guys today?

SIERRA. Pretty good.

LESLIE. Great. What can I get for you?

HALLIE. I'll have a peach Italian soda. And a lemon bar please.

LESLIE. Um. Yeah no problem. You got that Scott?

SCOTT. No problem Leslie

LESLIE. That will be three dollars and seventy-nine cents please.

HALLIE. Great.

LESLIE. And what can I get for you? Would you like to try our special of the day? It's the Iced Carmel Mocha.

SIERRA. I think I'll have to go with an Italian soda too actually.

LESLIE. What flavor would you like?

SIERRA. Raspberry and cream. (LESLIE stares.) Is that OK?

LESLIE. Yeah. Good. It'll be right up.

SIERRA. How much do I owe you?

LESLIE. Oh. Um, two eleven.

SIERRA. Thanks.

SCOTT. Here are your drinks.

SIERRA / HALLIE. Thanks.

SCOTT. Sure.

(The two girls sit down with CALEB.)

Pay up.

LESLIE. That doesn't count, you didn't say she was going to get a lemon bar.

SCOTT. The theory is you are what you drink. I never said anything about eating.

LESLIE. Fine.

(She gives him five dollars.)

Wait. One more. Five bucks again says this guy will order a third cup of house coffee two sugars.

(NOAH is crossing to the counter from across the room.)

SCOTT. He already had two cups of coffee.

LESLIE. Exactly!

SCOTT. Five bucks says he'll get a double shot of espresso instead.

LESLIE. We'll see.

NOAH. Hey, can you hit me up for a shot of espresso?

LESLIE. Um, Yeah, would you like us to make that a latte it'll taste a lot better.

NOAH. I'm fine with a straight single shot.

(He opens his wallet, looks inside, sees he has more money than he thought and changes his mind.)

Actually, make that a double shot, I could use the caffeine.

SCOTT. Comin' right up!

LESLIE. *(Agitated:)* Two dollars and ninety-three cents is your total.

NOAH. Can't wait.

(A second later he gets his mug and goes back to his table.)

LESLIE. That's a freak accident. They're probably just regular customers and you know what they get.

SCOTT. Nope.

LESLIE. You can't tell that much about a person from their appearance.

SCOTT. It's not just the way they look. It's more about the way they act with the people they're with, and the way they carry themselves and all those things you can just sense but can't put into words. And although it's hard to really get to know someone, strangely enough, it's not too hard to tell what someone will order in a coffee shop. Except for a few wild cards who always have to order something different. Don't worry. You'll get the hang of it in time.

LESLIE. You are really something.

SCOTT. Yup. We all are. That's the thing.

Scene 2

(RYANN is reading an almanac while drinking a strawberry milkshake, and NOAH sits and stares. Nothing happens for quite a few seconds, until RYANN smiles very big, and starts to chuckle.)

NOAH. What?

RYANN. Sorry. What did you say?

NOAH. What was it?

RYANN. What was what?

NOAH. What was it? What were you laughing at?

RYANN. Oh, the almanac? It was nothing.

NOAH. It was something. You laughed.

RYANN. No, it really wasn't anything. I don't even remember anymore.

NOAH. Whatever. You remember.

RYANN. No I don't.

NOAH. I know you remember. I'm not dumb, Ryann. Tell me what was so funny.

RYANN. Why are you getting so mad? Do you really want to know that badly?

NOAH. Yes! I want to know that badly. Tell me.

RYANN. Why do you wanna know? Nosey.

NOAH. I want to know because you won't tell me. And I want to know what you won't tell me, which I'll know when you tell me. So tell me what you read in the almanac that was so ridiculously funny.

RYANN. I don't remember.

NOAH. Of course you remember. I don't think you would have drawn this out so long if you there weren't something you didn't want me to know. You should have just told me from the start.

RYANN. There's nothing to know. Really.

NOAH. Sure.

RYANN. No really, I have no idea what it was. And I drew this conversation out so long because you are absolutely adorable when you get mad. I can't believe you. It really is funny. I should tape you and then you'll watch it and realize how adorable you really are when you're mad. Really.

NOAH. Stop. Don't make fun of me.

RYANN. I wasn't making fun of you.

NOAH. First you keep this big secret behind my back, now you ridicule me?

RYANN. Slow down! I thought this was about an almanac.

NOAH. This conversation is about way more than a stupid almanac. Seriously!

RYANN. But this isn't a serious conversation. At least it shouldn't be. You're getting all worked up over an almanac. But it's OK.

NOAH. You really don't remember.

RYANN. Positive.

NOAH. OK. Fine.

RYANN. Good. Good.

(She goes back to reading the almanac, and NOAH relaxes. RYANN is reading and after a long pause she starts to smile again. She giggles.)

NOAH. What was it!?

RYANN. It was just, Never mind. It's not important.

(Interlude: MILES enters and orders during the next scene, and then sits down. BLAKE wins the game with a checkmate.)

Scene 3

(KYLIE drinks a plain Iced Tea and BLAKE drinks Iced Mocha.)

KYLIE. What do you wanna to be?

BLAKE. What?

KYLIE. What do you want to be?

BLAKE. Like what I want to be when I grow up?

KYLIE. Maybe. Well kind of, I guess, I don't know.

BLAKE. Well, I don't know what you mean then.

KYLIE. I guess what you want to do as a career might answer the question.

BLAKE. Well that's easy, I want to be a singer.

KYLIE. OK. Well what kind of a singer do you want to be?

BLAKE. A good one.

KYLIE. OK, what do you want to sing?

BLAKE. Songs.

KYLIE. What kind of songs?

BLAKE. Good ones. Stuff people like. Music.

KYLIE. But do you think about what kind of songs you really want to sing.

BLAKE. Sometimes. Does it really matter at all?

KYLIE. I guess not.

BLAKE. OK then. Good.

Scene 4

(CALEB drinks an Americano, the girls drink their Italian sodas, HALLIE has finished her lemon bar.)

CALEB. OK new subject.

SIERRA. OK.

HALLIE. I have one.

SIERRA. OK, what is it?

HALLIE. It's kind of a game. But it's one of those bonding things that bring us closer together as friends.

SIERRA. OK.

HALLIE. We all have to go around the circle and say one thing we like about the other people and one thing we really dislike.

CALEB. I don't really want to play...

HALLIE. It'll be fun. Sierra wants to.

SIERRA. I guess I'm in.

CALEB. I'll play if you play.

HALLIE. OK. And we have to be brutally honest. OK? Who's first?

CALEB. You go. It's your game.

HALLIE. OK. Well, I think my favorite thing about you Sierra is that you are so "chill." You just go along with things. You are an

agreeable person, which I like. Whenever I have an idea you agree. And whenever I want to do something you don't stand in my way. You're a good follower.

SIERRA. Thanks.

HALLIE. Sure.

CALEB. What's your favorite thing about me?

HALLIE. *(Pause.)* The way you dress.

CALEB. The way I dress?

HALLIE. Yeah. You are very stylish.

CALEB. Thanks, but is that all I am? Are there any other outstanding qualities to me?

(HALLIE stares at him blankly.)

Come on. Sierra, is the best thing about me the way I dress?

SIERRA. Sure, I guess. You wear nice clothes and have a nice style. But there's a lot of other good stuff about you too.

CALEB. Well, pardon me if I think that there is more to me than what's on the outside.

HALLIE. I know what my least favorite thing about you is.

CALEB. Here we go.

HALLIE. You overreact to everything.

CALEB. I overreact?

HALLIE. Definitely. You're overreacting right now, I gave you a compliment and you're freaking out. It's really not a big deal.

CALEB. Sierra, am I overreacting here?

(Both CALEB and HALLIE look at her expectantly.)

SIERRA. I don't know. Sometimes maybe a little bit. But you aren't overreacting now.

CALEB. When do I overreact?

SIERRA. I don't know. I can't think of any examples right now.

CALEB. Then you can't say I overreact. Come on.

SIERRA. I guess you don't overreact ever.

(HALLIE gives her a look.)

Wait no, you do overreact sometimes.

HALLIE. You really do. You overreact about everything.

CALEB. Come on. Sierra, my least favorite thing about you is that you can't stand up for yourself! You feel like you have to please everyone but you really have no conviction.

SIERRA. Does that really bother you?

CALEB. Yes it does. Have an opinion sometime.

SIERRA. I'm sorry.

CALEB. Don't be sorry. Stand up for yourself.

SIERRA. I'm sorry.

HALLIE. Would you stop, you know she's sorry.

CALEB. I don't want her to be sorry. I want her to stand up and do something. I'm tired of you trampling all over her. Who do you think you are?

HALLIE. What?

CALEB. Yeah. My least favorite thing is that you need to be the center of attention. It's sad really. Center of the Universe syndrome. Sierra doesn't need you to tell her what to do and think. She just lets you because that's the only thing that'll make you happy. It's ridiculous.

HALLIE. I'm not going to sit here while you trash me.

CALEB. Your game. Your rules. I'm just playing by your game.

HALLIE. No those aren't the rules; you have to compliment me first.

CALEB. Fine. I think you have the nicest clothes.

HALLIE. My clothes?

CALEB. Yes. Beyond your outside appearance there isn't much there.

HALLIE. I can't believe you just said that!

CALEB. Well I did and I meant it.

SIERRA. You guys,

HALLIE. Stay out of this. Don't talk to that jerk!

CALEB. She can talk to me if she wants and you can't tell her to stay out of an argument if she wants to say something.

HALLIE. Fine! Sierra what did you want to say?

SIERRA. Well,

HALLIE. Don't be afraid of saying something to hurt Caleb. He has no feelings anyway.

CALEB. She doesn't need you to tell her to speak.

HALLIE. Fine.

SIERRA. It's just that,

HALLIE. Say it, Sierra.

(CALEB glares at her.)

OK, I'm sorry.

SIERRA. I just want us to stop this dumb conversation. It's not going to go anywhere. So just stop.

HALLIE. But if we are mature about this game, we can find our own strengths and weaknesses and be better people for recognizing our faults. That is, we could do it if people didn't overreact!

SIERRA. Stop. OK? Just stop, you two. It's stupid. We are friends and we don't need to argue. And Caleb, I'm not just trying to avoid confrontation. I just think that this conversation will go nowhere. We can all recognize our own faults. We don't need to say it.

HALLIE. It was just a game.

CALEB. Let her talk.

SIERRA. But a game like this isn't that fun. So why play? It will only hurt someone's feelings. I'm your friend because I like you. I take the good and the bad. And I hope you do the same with me. Cool?

CALEB. Cool.

HALLIE. Cool.

SIERRA. Cool. Now let's change the subject.

Scene 5

KYLIE. If you couldn't be a singer, what would you want to be?

BLAKE. I could be a lot of things, I think. Like a teacher, or a lawyer, or the president or a stay-at-home mom.

KYLIE. Seriously.

BLAKE. Why does it matter so much? Is it so important that I have my life mapped out in front of me? I don't have to have a career yet. *(Pause.)* Do you know what job you want to have?

KYLIE. No.

BLAKE. See, not important yet.

KYLIE. But I'm not just talking about what job you want when you're thirty. I want to know what you want to be?

BLAKE. What's the difference?

KYLIE. What kind of person do you want to be?

BLAKE. Oh.

KYLIE. What is it that drives you? What makes you special? What would make Blake different than every other singer? What do you believe? How far will you go to be happy? What even makes you happy? When people think about you, what do you want them to think?

BLAKE. That's a lot of questions.

KYLIE. Yeah. But I think you have to ask yourself a lot of questions to know who you are and what you want to be.

BLAKE. *(Pause.)* I don't have any answers. Do you?

KYLIE. Me neither. That's why I asked you.

BLAKE. Oh.

KYLIE. Yeah.

BLAKE. But do you really have to know. Do you have to know for sure?

KYLIE. Maybe you don't have to know every answer in black and white. But you have to have an idea of what you want to be. Right?

BLAKE. Yeah.

KYLIE. When you have an idea of what you want to be then that's what gives you direction.

BLAKE. I could use some direction.

KYLIE. Me too.

Scene 6

(MILES has a Large White Mocha and AMBER drinks Mango Green Tea.)

MILES. It's like nothing I've ever felt before.

AMBER. It was that special?

MILES. It was. Really. I don't know why though either.

AMBER. Wow.

MILES. Reading the words... it was like an amazing gift.

AMBER. That's sweet.

MILES. I mean I knew how she felt before she wrote me the letter, but it was just so magical or something, reading the words.

AMBER. OK. Now you're getting cheesy. Magical?

MILES. I don't care if it's cheesy. I mean, most of the letter is cheesy. She said that she didn't know what she would do without me in her life. And that I am what they call the perfect guy, at least for her.

AMBER. My god. This sounds like the sappiest letter ever written.

MILES. She called me handsome, and talented and strong. Can you believe that?

AMBER. I can't believe it.

MILES. I know. I can't believe it.

AMBER. Wow.

MILES. Yeah.

AMBER. But even though this letter is perhaps the most cheesy, sappy, cliché letter, you still like it?

MILES. I like it more than like. I love it.

AMBER. You really do?

MILES. I really do. The thing was that she handwrote all of it.

AMBER. Huh?

MILES. Handwriting it makes it so much more. In an e-mail or a phone call the things she said would probably have been really cliché, but a handwritten letter is different. It's like, a letter lasts longer, or something. I can pick it up a month from now or read it when I'm old and, I'll always get that feeling. Having a letter is like having a piece of the person.

AMBER. Now you're getting cliché.

MILES. When she wrote me that letter, she must have sat down for a good long time to think about what she wanted to say. She thought about how to phrase each sentence, to try and express her feelings. And all that time sitting and writing the letter she was thinking about me. Me. She was thinking about me. It's just so personal, ya know? And her handwriting's beautiful; actually it kind of flows and dances.

AMBER. It flows and dances?

MILES. Yes. It flows and dances.

AMBER. Her handwriting dances?

MILES. Right across the page.

AMBER. I need to see this letter.

MILES. I have it in my pocket. I've carried it with me for two days now.

AMBER. Well, let me see it. I think you are romanticizing this way too much.

MILES. Read it.

(MILES hands her the letter and she reads it; her expression changes.)

AMBER. It's such a heartfelt letter. And her handwriting does dance.

MILES. Yeah. And it dances for me.

Scene 7

NOAH. You are such an enigma.

RYANN. An enigma?

NOAH. An enigma.

RYANN. An enigma?

NOAH. Yes.

RYANN. An enigma. OK. An enigma

NOAH. I think you might be the most enigmatic person I know. In fact I think you are.

RYANN. Um, is that a good thing or a bad thing?

NOAH. It's just a thing. Not particularly good or bad either way.

RYANN. Wait, what's an enigma?

NOAH. Well, it's someone or something that is curious, inexplicable, or ambiguous, but mostly it's puzzling.

RYANN. Puzzling.

NOAH. More or less.

RYANN. *I'm* puzzling.

NOAH. You really are. It's not a bad thing though.

RYANN. If any one of us is an enigma, it's definitely not me.

NOAH. Are you actually implying that I'm an enigma?

RYANN. And then some! I think you might be the most enigmatic person I know. In fact I think you are.

NOAH. Why am I an enigma?

RYANN. What about you is not puzzling? What kind of kid calls their friend an enigma? I mean really.

NOAH. Well,

RYANN. You aren't like anyone else our age at all. No one uses words like that unless they're doing SAT prep. It's just not done.

NOAH. Oh.

RYANN. I may be a little puzzling now and then. But you are really weird. The average person would call their friend weird and that would be the end of it. You're just weird specifically because you use weird words like enigma. I mean seriously?

NOAH. I still think you're an enigma.

(Interlude: AMBER is doodling and MILES reads the letter again. BLAKE gets up to get another special of the day; SCOTT guesses it rights and he whistles. BLAKE sits down as EMMA walks in and begins to order. SCOTT whistles. MADISON rushes in frustrated and yells "Emma!" He doesn't get her drink right because she just orders water. EMMA and MADISON seat themselves in the open seats.)

Scene 8

KYLIE. How well do you think you know me?

BLAKE. What kind of a question is that?

KYLIE. I was just wondering.

BLAKE. I think I know you pretty well!

KYLIE. OK. OK.

BLAKE. We've been best friends since we were three, I know you better than anyone I bet.

KYLIE. We have been friends forever.

BLAKE. Right. So I know you. If anyone knows you, I know you.

KYLIE. OK.

BLAKE. Think about all the time we've spent together. Remember Play-Doh.

KYLIE. Play-Doh buddies to the end.

BLAKE. Remember when we dressed up your little brother like an elephant,

KYLIE. And we made him stand on the street corner and sing that song,

BLAKE. And we told him he couldn't have a popsicle until he got at least three dollars from people walking down the street.

KYLIE. What about when we kept your sister in a box!

BLAKE. Oh my gosh, I forgot about that! That was a great box.

KYLIE. She actually liked it!

BLAKE. What about Mrs. Gregory's class.

KYLIE. She was the worst. And Mr. Turner's class.

BLAKE. That was so much fun.

KYLIE. Remember the first day of seventh grade.

BLAKE. And the clothes we wore!

KYLIE. Remember the first day of high school,

BLAKE. We swore to stay best friends forever.

KYLIE. Yeah. We did.

BLAKE. We're still best friends, right?

KYLIE. We have so much of a past.

BLAKE. Right. We're still best friends.

KYLIE. How well do you think know me?

BLAKE. We've been best friends forever.

KYLIE. I'm not saying you haven't known me in the past. But in the two years since we made our pact. Do you think you still know me as well as you did when we were kids? Because I'm not sure I still know everything about you, like I used to.

BLAKE. I still think I know everything about you, whether or not you know me.

KYLIE. What's my favorite class this year? Who was the last person I had a crush on? What movie did I see most recently? Is my favorite color the same as it was in junior high?

BLAKE. Red.

KYLIE. Blue.

(KYLIE leaves and BLAKE is left alone. Long pause.)

Scene 9

EMMA. Why do I have to say the words?

MADISON. I don't know. You just do.

EMMA. But why? I mean why does it matter to David that I say the words?

MADISON. It matters. Maybe it doesn't matter to you, but clearly it matters. You have to lay things out on the table. If you don't,

things are unclear, and people can get hurt. You have to know. Ya know?

EMMA. But I think you can know without actually saying it. You don't have to define every relationship.

MADISON. But some people need that, they need the definition.

EMMA. Words don't always define things right, though. For me, the definition comes from my feelings. I know what I feel. I know when there's chemistry, and I know when there isn't.

MADISON. But he needs to know how you feel. You have to tell him.

EMMA. He knows how I feel. He has to know how I feel.

MADISON. Really?

EMMA. Sure. He can see my feelings every time I look at him. He knows.

MADISON. Well I'm sure David probably has an idea how you feel. Or he *thinks* he has an idea how you feel.

EMMA. Right.

(Pause.)

MADISON. But even if David thinks he might know, maybe he thinks he's wrong, maybe he has doubts about what he does or doesn't know.

EMMA. Why would David have doubts? I don't have doubts.

MADISON. It's not like everyone is a psychic. So since you can't read people's minds, you have to guess.

EMMA. But don't you think you can get vibes from people? I think that a lot of what we say isn't even in words. It's body language. And that's not a guess.

MADISON. Body language?

EMMA. Actions speak louder than words. So what's the point in saying it?

MADISON. You just have to say it sometimes.

EMMA. But why? David knows and I know. That's all there is to it.

MADISON. But clearly he doesn't know! You have to communicate.

EMMA. Words aren't the only way to communicate.

MADISON. Well of course they aren't the only way to communicate. Body language is important, but saying something makes it more real.

EMMA. All feelings aren't understandable.

MADISON. Right! So maybe you can't understand every feeling. That's why you have to label the ones that you do understand.

EMMA. Just because you don't label it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It's there whether you say it is or not.

MADISON. I guess.

EMMA. I don't need to say the words then.

MADISON. But why leave it up to chance? Why leave the feelings undefined and unrecognized?

EMMA. My feelings are recognized with or without words.

MADISON. But by saying the words, any confusion that could be there is eliminated.

EMMA. Feelings are feelings. There shouldn't be any confusion.

(Interlude: SIERRA has left CALEB and HALLIE's table, and ordered a muffin during this scene; now she goes to sit with MADISON and EMMA; she interrupts their conversation when she sits down.)

SIERRA. Hey.

EMMA. Hey.

MADISON. Hey.

SIERRA. So.

MADISON. So.

EMMA. So.

MADISON. So. I hung out with Jarred last night.

EMMA. You did?

SIERRA. She didn't. Did you?

MADISON. I did.

SIERRA. You did?

MADISON. Yeah.

SIERRA. Wow.

EMMA. Wow.

MADISON. Yeah.

SIERRA. Did he...

EMMA. He didn't. Did he?

SIERRA. Did he?

MADISON. He did.

SIERRA. He didn't!

EMMA. He didn't!

SIERRA. He did?

EMMA. He did.

MADISON. He did.

EMMA. Did he?

MADISON. He did.

EMMA. He did?

SIERRA. Wow.

MADISON. I know.

EMMA. Wow.

SIERRA. What did you do?

MADISON. What did I do?

EMMA. What did you do?

MADISON. What else could I do?

EMMA. You didn't.

SIERRA. You did?

MADISON. I did.

EMMA. I can't believe you did.

MADISON. I did.

EMMA. What would you do?

SIERRA. The same.

MADISON. Yeah.

SIERRA. Yeah.

EMMA. How could you?

MADISON. How could I? How could he?

SIERRA. Good point.

EMMA. I can't believe he did.

MADISON. I know.

SIERRA. He did.

MADISON. I know. I couldn't believe it actually happened.

SIERRA. Wow.

EMMA. Double wow.

MADISON. I know. He better not do it again.

Scene 10

(MILES' letter is laying on the downstage edge of the table. AMBER stops doodling.)

AMBER. I was thinking.

MILES. Yeah?

AMBER. I think I'm a white crayon.

MILES. Crayon?

AMBER. Yeah

MILES. Like the crayon little kids draw with? Crayola?

AMBER. Yeah. But the brand doesn't matter.

MILES. When it comes to crayons, brand definitely matters.

AMBER. Um, How so?

MILES. Crayola is superior. The generic brands aren't as bright. They're waxy. Weird texture. There's no comparison to a Crayola though.

AMBER. Crayola is fine. That's not what I'm talking about.

MILES. Well, what are you saying then?

AMBER. I feel like I'm the white crayon.

MILES. You feel like a crayon.

AMBER. Exactly.

MILES. OK then. OK. Can I ask why?

AMBER. I guess I always identified with the white crayon.

MILES. OK. I don't understand.

AMBER. It's just that the white crayon just sits in the box you know?

MILES. All the crayons are in the same box, Amber. All the colors are in the box.

AMBER. But the other colors get so much more action.

MILES. Action?

AMBER. Of course they get more action. Take a color like green. I wish I was green. Green is used in so many pictures. Green is used so often. Red is the same way. You use red for an apple, or a heart, or lips. Purple can be grapes, or flowers, or a sunset. Yellow, blue, brown, black, pink, anything, you name it! People use those colors all the time. A kid uses every crayon in the box—

MILES. Except white.

AMBER. Exactly. No one ever picks up the white crayon. It sits in its box, completely sharpened and ready to go, but it's destined to remain in the stupid box. No one needs it. It has no use.

MILES. But, people use the white crayon sometimes.

AMBER. Rarely though. Rarely. *(Pause.)* And besides, the white crayon is the crayon no one cares if they break. If they snap it in two, no big deal. It's not like they really need it to survive.

MILES. You really feel like the white crayon?

AMBER. Sometimes. When I think about it. Not always. But sometimes.

MILES. You don't have to be the white crayon forever. You can change. If you're destined to sit in the box, it's by your own choosing. Decide to be red. Decide to be orange. Decide to be hot pink, lime green, or macaroni and cheese, Just Decide to not be the white crayon.

(AMBER embraces MILES. Her arms are wrapped around him, and he sits not knowing what to do. He reaches for his letter but knocks it off the table. It floats to the floor.)

(Interlude: SIERRA excuses herself and leaves her muffin. She goes toward CALEB and HALLIE but hesitates; she turns back to MADISON and EMMA in indecision. She is so distraught she leaves the coffee shop.)

Scene 11

CALEB. Ya know what? I'm glad I know you.

HALLIE. Really?

CALEB. Definitely.

HALLIE. Thanks. I'm glad I know you too.

CALEB. Awesome.

HALLIE. Honestly, I don't know why anyone would want to be friends with me. It's like other people see things in me that aren't really there.

CALEB. I know what you mean.

HALLIE. Thanks?

CALEB. No. I don't mean that there isn't anything there. I mean that you don't see the things others see in you.

HALLIE. True.

CALEB. Yep.

HALLIE. What do you see in me?

CALEB. I dunno.

HALLIE. See, nothing to see.

CALEB. No. There's lots there. It's just hard to get it all out on command.

HALLIE. Oh.

CALEB. Could you think of all the things you like about me if I asked you this second?

HALLIE. I guess not. But if you gave me a second, I could.

CALEB. OK. Deal.

HALLIE. Deal.

(They sit for a few seconds, thinking.)

HALLIE. I like the way you are glad you know me.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

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