



**Sample Pages from
Pressure**

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PRESSURE

A DRAMA IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Pressure

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Characters

5M+11W, Plus Ensemble

Male

Kyle
Alex
Dave
Father

Female

Penny
Tera
Mrs. Keely
Sarah
Ally
Sam
Mother
Mama
Georgia
Amy

Offstage Voices

The Mob
Penny's Dad
Penny's Mom

Setting

High School Hallway, Outside the Cafeteria, Various Houses.

Author's Note

The pace of this play is very important. Separate locations should be shown through lighting, rather than props and scenery.

There is a black stage. We hear voices whispering and hissing out of the darkness.

MOB: Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on. Pressure.

A blue spot comes up very slowly on a crowd downstage centre. We see that there is a crowd of people. Their hands move like claws and they are packed tightly together.

MOB: Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on. Pressure.

There is a pause.

MOB: Come on, come on, come on, come on pressure. Pressure. Can't lose my grip. Fingers. If I should slip. Head up. Can't keep my... Can't keep my... Can't keep my... Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on, Penny!

PENNY is standing in a spotlight upstage left. She is a very high strung, uptight girl. She dresses very preppy, very neat, very Wall Street.

PENNY: I get up at 5 in the morning. Sometimes I have to finish my homework, sometimes I have to get to the pool 'cause I'm on the swim team. I've got all sciences and maths this year. Gotta have Math and Science! There's the students council meeting at lunch and right now I'm swamped with the formal being this week. I'm the head of the formal committee. I volunteer at the hospital after school and I work most nights, at a Laundromat. I usually get to bed at around 2 o'clock in the morning. Then I get up at 5.

The spot fades. Our focus shifts to a spot upstage right where KYLE is standing. KYLE marches to his own drum. He dresses in second hand clothes and in dark colours.

MOB: Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on, Kyle!

KYLE: *(trying to convince himself)* I want to be a doctor. I want to be a doctor. I want to be a doctor. I want... to be... a stunt man! I want to be a stunt man in the movies. Yeah, jumping off buildings. Four, Nine, Twelve stories. Flaming like a human torch from a twenty-story building while I'm being shot at from all sides. Pow! Pow! Pow! I want to be a... *(he pauses as he comes back to earth)* damn.

The spot fades. Our focus shifts back to the upstage left spot where ALEX is now standing. ALEX is

very poor. He is happy to have clothes on his back, whatever they look like.

MOB: Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on, Alex!

ALEX: My grandfather was a storyteller. He sit by the fire and tells stories of Belarus. Great wars. Great struggle. "This is the very place where the Prince of Polotsk Usiaslau tore by as a wolf from Dudutki to the Nemiga!" My father tells, he used to tell about struggle all around us. No running water. No electricity. Nothing left. We come to this country 2 days ago. Mama says I am now the man of the house. I have seen what happens to the man of the house. I would rather stay a boy.

The spot fades. Our focus shifts to the upstage right spot where TERA is now standing. TERA is fashion conscious. She wears whatever she thinks is going to make her popular.

MOB: Come on. Come on. Come on. Come on, Tera!

TERA: My parents dragged us halfway across the country last summer with no warning. I couldn't even say good-bye to my friends. My new school is so huge; there are so many people. I hate meeting new people. I always say something completely stupid. Always. I made a pact with myself in September. I will meet new people and I will not look like an idiot. A totally exhausting waste of time. I'm looking at two more years of being a high school nothing.

The spot fades.

MOB: Pressure. Can't lose my grip. Fingers. If I should slip. Head up. Can I keep my... Can I keep my...

There is the sound of a school bell ringing. Lights come up on a very busy high school hallway. People move from one class to the next. KYLE and SARAH see each other from either end of the hall and call out to each other. SARAH comes from a very strict family. She likes the thrift store look too.

KYLE: Sarah!

SARAH: Kyle!

They run towards each other, meet centre stage and air kiss.

KYLE: Just the person I'm looking for.

SARAH: Where's my hat?

KYLE: In my locker. Where are my sunglasses?

SARAH: Right here. (*She waves them in front of his face. KYLE goes to reach for them.*) Not till I get my hat.

Two girls pass by and wave at KYLE. They ignore SARAH.

GIRLS: (*in unison*) Hi Kyle.

KYLE: Ladies. (*he bows and continues to watch them as they go past*)

SARAH: I wouldn't do that.

KYLE: I'm just looking.

SARAH: I wouldn't do that either.

KYLE: They'd never go out with me anyway.

SARAH: Jenny Thatcher is already going out with a guy who is three times your size. If he caught you "just looking" he'd punch you into next week.

KYLE: He already has.

SARAH: What? (*TERA walks by with her head down*) Hey Tera! Tera! (*she waves a hand in front of TERA's face*) Hello!

TERA: Huh? What?

SARAH: Don't forget about formal committee. We start decorating today.

TERA: I won't. I'll be there.

SARAH: Sure. And don't forget the balloons.

TERA: No problem!

SARAH turns back to KYLE and continues their conversation. TERA stands there for a couple of seconds, but when she realizes they don't really want to talk to her she slinks away.

KYLE: No rules floor hockey. Jenny Thatcher's boyfriend whacked me on the back so hard with his hockey stick. Do I look like a ball? Whack! Right between the shoulder blades. I couldn't breathe for five minutes.

SARAH: That's horrible.

KYLE: And who does Mr. Weckman yell at? Me. "Get up, Gibbon! He hardly touched you!" I'm a pancake and I'm getting in trouble.

SARAH: Don't sweat it. Jenny Thatcher's boyfriend can hardly spell his own name.

KYLE: Well, I'm one up on him! Come to the mall with me.

SARAH: I have class. So do you.

KYLE: What's your point?

SARAH: Kyle.

KYLE: Sarah. Come to the mall.

SARAH: No.

KYLE: Why? (*tries to take his sunglasses back*)

SARAH: Not till I get my hat back! I can't skip class because I'll get caught and the school will call my dad who will have a fit on my head. I've already missed my curfew twice 'cause of you. My dad is just itching for something major.

KYLE: One class.

SARAH: No.

KYLE: Please?

SARAH: No.

KYLE: It will do you good.

SARAH: How's that?

KYLE: If you don't skip at least one class a year you'll become a bitter old maid who lives with 12 cats. You'll call them your children, and you'll work part-time picking the lint off of high school library books.

SARAH: Our librarian is a perfectly normal woman.

KYLE: You mean Conan?

SARAH: And I know for a fact that she has no cats.

KYLE: Does she have multiples of any animal life form?

SARAH: Fish.

KYLE: Ah ha! Fish are even worse!

SARAH: Go to class.

KYLE: Maybe I will, maybe I won't. But you won't catch me picking lint for a living.

PENNY and MRS. KEELY enter. When MRS. KEELY sees KYLE he starts to call him.

MRS. KEELY: Kyle!

KYLE: (to SARAH) See you later.

MRS. KEELY: Kyle! I have to talk to you!

KYLE: (calling as he leaves) Can't stop Miss. I've got class!

MRS. KEELY: That's what I want to talk to you about! That boy. I'm sorry Penny, what were you saying?

PENNY: It's about the test.

MRS. KEELY: You just finished writing it. Give yourself a little time to get worried.

PENNY: But I know I didn't do well. Is there going to be a make-up?

MRS. KEELY: Nope. That's it till the exam.

PENNY: Some of the problems... I got confused... I need to get a good grade.

MRS. KEELY: I'm sure you did fine.

PENNY: When are you going to mark them?

MRS. KEELY: This week.

PENNY: When?

MRS. KEELY: Don't worry Penny. You'll be just fine. I'll see you in class alright?

PENNY: (to herself) Great.

GEORGIA enters on the run (in high heels) holding PENNY's math book.

GEORGIA: Penny! Penny! You forgot your textbook.

PENNY: Thanks.

GEORGIA: How'd you do on the test?

PENNY: Oh, I don't know.

GEORGIA: I did awful. I didn't study at all.

PENNY: You never study. I was up all night.

GEORGIA: How can you do that! *(she pulls out a compact to check her makeup)* If I don't get eight hours of sleep, I'm a basket case. My metabolism goes completely mental.

PENNY: What a shame.

GEORGIA: Very discombobulating. Hey! I heard we're both up for the same scholarship.

PENNY: We are?

GEORGIA: Yeah, I wasn't going to apply but my boyfriend said I should. He says I just got a way with numbers. See ya.

GEORGIA bounces off. PENNY stares after her. She takes out her math book and flips through some pages. She studies the book for a few minutes before shutting the book in frustration and exiting. While this goes on, DAVE crosses to TERA and taps her on the shoulder. She has her nose in a book. DAVE should act like a real nice guy. Don't make him sound like a snake. Let the words speak for themselves.

DAVE: Hey. *(TERA does not respond)* Hey there. Hello? Anybody there?

TERA: Oh, hi. Hi. I'm sorry I was just... Hi. Oh! Hi, Dave.

DAVE: You know who I am.

TERA: Of course I do. I never miss a game. I love basketball. Number 77!

DAVE: I haven't seen you around before.

TERA: I'm new here this year. And this school is so huge so you...

DAVE: I know everybody worth knowing. Tasha, right?

TERA: Tera.

DAVE: Right, Tera. I got something to ask you Tera.

TERA: Sure, Dave, anything you like.

DAVE: I'm probably too late. A pretty girl like you would have a dozen dates to the formal lined up.

TERA: Not me. I mean I get to go, 'cause I'm on the committee and it's more like work than anything 'cause I have to wear a fancy dress to hand out punch to... you weren't just asking me out to the formal were you?

DAVE: Sounds like you think the whole thing is a waste of time.

TERA: But I don't have a date. I would feel completely different if I had a... wait. Wait. The formal is this Friday. Tickets have been sold out for months. I should know. Thanks for the offer but...

DAVE: But I already have the tickets.

TERA: You're kidding.

DAVE: Does this look like a joke to you? (*holding out tickets*) I always buy them early. That way I can spend my time looking for that extra special girl.

TERA: Extra special?

DAVE: Do you want to go?

TERA: I... can't believe... I mean... yes. Yes. I'll go. I'll go. I would love to go.

DAVE: I'll pick you up at 7:00. Make sure you're ready. I'm always on time. You don't mind if we share the limo with some friends of mine do you?

TERA: A limo? I've never been in a limo.

A bell rings. DAVE starts to move away.

DAVE: So I'll see you around.

TERA: See you. Around. Like on Friday. At the formal. With me. I can't believe Dave Laberge just asked me to the formal!!! Wheeeee!!

She exits, bumping into ALEX who is studying a joke book. ALLY enters from the opposite side with a bag of streamers. She watches ALEX, who is shoving his book under an arm and trying to tell a joke. ALLY is extremely intelligent and likes to be different.

ALEX: One man says: I meet a man with wooden leg named of Smith. Two man says, Second man says, what is name of other leg? (*tries to say the last line differently*) What is name of other leg? What is

name of other leg? Very good. Very good. *(He goes back to reading the book. He reads out the next joke very slowly.)* A man walks into a bar. He is holding a duck under one arm and a watermelon...

ALLY: Excuse me.

ALEX: Ah ha! Live person! You! Be audience. Come here. *(he strides over takes her hand and starts to drag her across the stage)* I try not to strike the mud with my face.

ALLY: What do you think you're doing? Who are you?

ALEX stops whirls around and sticks out his hand. When she doesn't shake it he picks up her hand and shakes it.

ALEX: Hello. My name is Alex. I am in your country one week. Who are you?

ALLY: My name is Ally. I have lived in this country for sixteen years. What are you doing?

ALEX: Learning jokes.

ALLY: What for?

ALEX: Learn jokes. Make friends. Loved by all.

ALLY: If only it were that easy.

ALEX: That is not a pound of raisins. Very important to have friends. I tell you joke, we be friends?

ALLY: Depends on the joke.

ALEX: Why did the elephant cross the road?

ALLY: Why?

ALEX: It was stapled to chicken. *(he falls over in hysterical laughter)* Ha! Ha! My favourite joke. Why you no laugh?

ALLY: How come you're starting school now? It's the end of the year.

ALEX: I know. I know. Start for real in September. Now I am sucking everything up. Big vacuum. I am... I am... what is the word?

ALLY: You're learning the language?

ALEX: Big Vacuum. Learn Language. Make Friends. Get Job.

ALLY: Aren't you getting a little ahead of yourself? A job? You've only been here a week.

ALEX: Must get job for summer.

ALLY: Why?

PENNY enters. She is holding a clipboard and calling offstage.

PENNY: Take those napkins to the back table. I'll be there in a second.

ALLY: I gotta go. It was very nice to meet you Alex.

ALEX: Very nice to meet you Ally. I see you tomorrow. Tell you more jokes.

ALLY: I think you need better jokes Alex, if you want to make friends.

ALEX: New jokes! Better jokes! Ok! Ok! You got it! I do not kick at cabbage!!

ALLY: Alex? Alex!! Wait! Wait!

ALEX takes off. ALLY starts to go after him but is pulled back by PENNY.

PENNY: Allison did you bring the streamers?

ALLY: Yes.

PENNY: Let's get going. We've only got five days to pull this off.

SAM and TERA enter. TERA is holding a large box.

SAM: And he asked you out. Just like that.

TERA: Yeah.

SAM: You haven't said one word to him all year.

TERA: Nope.

SAM: You are so lucky.

PENNY: You're still on the committee Tera, just because you have a date doesn't mean you get out of your duties.

TERA: I know.

PENNY: Ally where did you get these streamers?

SAM: (*pulling TERA aside*) Don't worry about her, I'll cover for you.

TERA: Thanks.

SAM: Well who knows, you two might really hit it off.

PENNY: All right ladies, let's get organized. Sam did you pick up the invoice from the office?

SAM: *(she rummages through her knapsack, finally producing the paper)* I can't believe we have to have the formal in our crummy cafeteria. Mr. Challis is so cheap.

ALLY: It will look nice.

SAM: It smells like garbage.

PENNY: It will look fine. Tera, you picked up the balloons?

TERA: 4 zillion black and white balloons.

PENNY starts to open the box while the conversation continues.

ALLY: Who are you going with Tera?

SAM: Only the star basketball player. Only the cutest guy in school.

ALLY: Dave Laberge.

TERA: You know him?

ALLY: My brother does.

PENNY: *(pulling out a couple of balloons)* These are supposed to be black.

SAM: You are so lucky.

PENNY: Tera, these balloons aren't black; they're navy. I ordered black.

TERA: Don't look at me. I just picked them up.

PENNY: I don't believe this! I'll have to go call the Party Place. Tera, you and Sam start on this arch. Ally you go to the tissue paper flower table. Ben will tell you what to do. And Sarah... where's Sarah?

ALLY: Haven't seen her.

PENNY: Do I have to do everything here? None of you seem to realise... if and when she shows up, send her to napkins. I'll be back as soon as I can. Let's move people, time is ticking. *(she exits)*

TERA: She's a robot.

SAM: (*imitating PENNY*) Time is ticking.

TERA: I always feel completely useless whenever she's around. I just know she's going to re-organize everything we do to these arches.

SAM: (*imitating PENNY*) I'm going to decorate the cafe all by myself, cook the food, be the DJ, dance all the dances, clean up and still be home in time to walk the dog, paint the house and put in a sprinkler system.

During the above speech PENNY starts to enter the space. She overhears SAM. She slips back offstage when the speech is done. No one sees PENNY.

ALLY: If anyone can change the cafe into a black tie affair, she would be the one to do it. Tissue paper calls! (*she exits*)

SAM: So what are you going to wear?

TERA: I was a bridesmaid at my cousin's wedding and we got to wear these really cool... there's Sarah. (*SARAH enters with AMY behind her. SARAH is gesturing to TERA.*) What? What?

SARAH: Come here.

SAM: What does she want?

TERA: I don't know. I'll be right back. (*to SARAH*) What's the matter?

SARAH: (*introducing the two to each other*) Tera, Amy. Amy, Tera. Where's Penny?

TERA: She's cleaning up a crisis. She sent you to napkins. What's going on?

SARAH: (*pointing at AMY*) She wants to talk to you. (*she exits*)

TERA: Hi.

AMY doesn't answer.

TERA: Ok. Is there something wrong? Am I supposed to know you?

AMY doesn't answer.

TERA: Ok. Look I'm kinda busy right now so...

AMY: You're going to the formal with David Laberge.

TERA: Yeah. How did you..? Boy, news travels fast.

AMY: I wasn't going to say anything but it's not right. I saw you talking together. I saw him pull out the tickets. I saw you talking together. He asked you this afternoon.

TERA: That's right.

AMY: I... have to talk to you. About Dave.

TERA: You're not his girlfriend are you? Aw man... I knew this was too good to be true.

AMY: I am not his girlfriend.

TERA: Does he have a girlfriend?

AMY: No. Look. I have to... I went to the formal with Dave last year. It was... You shouldn't go with him. He's trouble, you should stay away.

TERA: Why? Did he dump you or something?

AMY: No. Yes.

TERA: Which is it?

AMY: It's both. I mean... It's a game. You shouldn't go, can't we just leave it at that?

TERA: No. No. I don't even...

AMY: I know it sounds bad but I'm telling you...

TERA: Amy. I'm new here. I have had a pretty rotten year and this is the first time something really nice has happened. Why are you trying to ruin it?

AMY: He'll pick you up in a limo. And it will be really fun at first, his friends will be there and everyone will be making jokes. Only none of his friends have dates. And everything will stop being fun when Dave pulls out a bottle. I... We... We never made it to the formal.

TERA: That's not true. I don't believe... He said he picked me out special. I have never heard anything like this about David Laberge.

AMY: You're new. You said it yourself.

TERA: I think you're jealous.

AMY: I'm trying to help you.

TERA: By ruining my first formal.

AMY: Just ask him. Go ahead. Ask him if he's going to drink before the formal. I gotta catch my bus.

TERA: If he did something so bad, why didn't you tell anyone?

AMY: Everyone thinks the world of Dave Laberge. He's a star. He's going to school in the States. I'm a nobody. I said yes. *(she exits)*

SAM: What was that all about?

TERA: I don't know. Nothing I guess.

PENNY: *(entering with clipboard)* The balloons will be here tomorrow. We'll just have to re-organize the schedule. Come on you two. I need everyone on tissue paper. Let's get moving. Time is... Let's go.

As the lights crossfade to the spotlight, we can hear voices from offstage.

MOB: Pressure. No matter what it takes. Can't be the one and only person who breaks. Can't be the person who makes mistakes. Don't make. Don't make.

ALEX is bringing a bowl of soup to his mother who is sick in bed.

ALEX: Privitannye.

MAMA: Speak English, Alex.

ALEX: I brought you soup.

MAMA: I am not hungry.

ALEX: You must eat. Chicken noodle. Big noodles. Big chickens.

MAMA: Your English is not improving. I told your father many times he should teach you. "Later." he said. Always later. Now...

ALEX: Eat soup.

MAMA: It is not homemade. I can smell it is not homemade.

ALEX: I am not a good cook like you.

MAMA: You make this?

ALEX: I open can. One spoonful please.

MAMA: No.

ALEX: One spoonful.

MAMA: No.

ALEX: Open mouth.

MAMA: I am not a child! I can feed myself! (*she has a terrible coughing fit*)

ALEX: I will leave it. It is very hot. You let cool.

MAMA: Alex. Did the girls eat?

ALEX: Two cheese sandwiches each. Two big bowls of soup, handmade by Alex. Now they are jumping in pj's.

MAMA: Jumping into their pj's.

ALEX: Yes. I learn new jokes. My friend Ally teach me. By September I have this English all licked up.

MAMA: Something like that.

ALEX: You eat soup. You get strong. I go.

MAMA: Alex... Papa would have been so proud of you.

Crossfade to right side of the stage where KYLE sits with his MOTHER and FATHER. They are reading a letter from their elder son Peter.

KYLE: Can we go now please?

FATHER: Almost finished.

KYLE: It would have been faster to take the bus.

MOTHER and FATHER laugh together and then they give a sign in unison.

KYLE: Can we go?

MOTHER: Don't you want to read Pete's letter? This one is a real treasure.

KYLE: No.

FATHER: He is so funny. I can just see the cadavers lying there on the table.

MOTHER: He is going to make a great doctor.

FATHER: Who knew dead bodies could be so entertaining?

KYLE: Are we done? I told my friends I'd meet them 5 minutes ago.

MOTHER: Actually Kyle, before we head out...

FATHER: Kyle we need to have a chat.

KYLE: Now?

MOTHER: I think so dear. We've been putting this off.

KYLE: Can't it wait?

MOTHER: I don't think so dear.

KYLE: What did I do?

MOTHER: Oh no, it's nothing like that.

FATHER: No, no son, not at all.

MOTHER: It's just that... We... Your father and I... we want to talk to you about university.

KYLE: Oh no.

FATHER: Yes.

KYLE: I've got at least two more years of high school.

FATHER: Kyle, we want you to keep your options open.

KYLE: I swear I know everything I need to know.

FATHER: It's not too soon to start making choices.

MOTHER: Peter started thinking about where he wanted to go when he was just about your age.

FATHER: Made the final decision much easier.

MOTHER: We just wanted to open a discussion.

FATHER: Peter and I had many a fight over the details.

MOTHER: Create a dialogue.

FATHER: Thrashing it out over which school was giving the best scholarship.

MOTHER: Debate and Dispute. Spat and Spar.

FATHER: Sometimes a whack of cash isn't the best route to go. You have to look at the benefits from all sides.

MOTHER: So what do you think?

KYLE: Am I going to get a ride to the mall or not?

Lights fade. Voices are heard in the dark.

MOB: Come on, come on, come on, come on, Pressure.

A school bell rings. Lights come up full on the school hallway. It's another busy day. SARAH and KYLE enter from opposite sides of the stage.

KYLE: Sarah!

SARAH: Kyle!

KYLE: Sarah!

SARAH: Kyle!

They run towards each other and air kiss.

SARAH: Where's my hat?

KYLE: In my locker. Where are my sunglasses?

SARAH: Right here. (*KYLE goes to reach for them*) Not till I get my hat.

KYLE: Do you get the feeling we've done this before?

The two exit together. MRS. KEELY enters and PENNY is close behind.

PENNY: I'm really sorry Mrs. Keely.

MRS. KEELY: Don't worry. It happens to the best of us.

PENNY: I never fall asleep in class, never.

MRS. KEELY: I realise that. You're a very consistent student Penny.

PENNY: I've been so busy this week.

MRS. KEELY: We'll just let it go alright?

PENNY: I really appreciate that... (*she gets bumped and her papers go flying*) Hey! Watch where you're going! (*she bends down to pick the papers up*)

MRS. KEELY: Here let me help. (*she picks up several papers and realises that they are drawings*)

ALEX and ALLY are on the other side of the stage. ALEX is teaching ALLY a folk dance.

ALEX: You are shredding up the Liavonikha!

ALLY: Wait, wait, how about this? (*she demonstrates the step*)

ALEX: Ally, some people go to forest. Some gather wood.

ALLY: What is that supposed to mean?

The focus shifts back to PENNY and MRS. KEELY.

MRS. KEELY: Penny these are wonderful.

PENNY: They're just drawings. I doodle sometimes.

MRS. KEELY: These are more than just doodles. Your art teacher must be very impressed.

PENNY: I can't take art.

MRS. KEELY: Why not?

PENNY: I have to take sciences and math. I take the minimum number of arts course and I have to take drama because it always helps to be a good speaker. I don't have room for art.

MRS. KEELY: Sounds like you have it all figured out.

PENNY: Can I have my drawings back please?

MRS. KEELY: Why do you have to take Science and Math?

PENNY: That's where the future is.

MRS. KEELY: Says who?

PENNY: Everybody.

MRS. KEELY: Penny, if I could draw like this, I'd chuck all my math books out the nearest window.

PENNY: You can't get by only doing the things you like. I... You won't get anywhere.

MRS. KEELY: But why spend your life doing something you don't want to do?

PENNY: Can I have my drawings back? Please?

MRS. KEELY hands them to PENNY as the next scene starts. They walk in separate directions. PENNY looks at the drawings. She rips them up and crumples them into a ball as she exits. As this is going on, SAM and TERA walk from stage left to right.

SAM: Do you want to come over to my house?

TERA: Sure.

SAM: If we have to make those stupid flowers, we might as well do it together. We can watch TV.

TERA: That would be great.

SAM: It's too bad we didn't get to know each other before.

They exit. Focus shifts back to ALEX and ALLY.

ALEX: No, no, no. Back step step.

ALLY: Alex, people are looking at us.

ALEX: I teach them later. Ok. Now turn and turn and step step clap.

ALLY: This is too much work. I quit! I quit.

ALEX: Bah.

ALLY: You should come to the formal. Then you can see how people dance in this country.

ALEX: I have seen this dancing. Students in halls have only two dances.
One: stand still and just move head like so. (*he demonstrates*)
Two: move like cut up chickens. (*he demonstrates*) My grandfather would spit in eye of cut up chicken.

ALLY: Is he a dancer in your country... wait... Belarus!

ALEX: Belarus!

ALLY: Teach me something in your language.

ALEX: No. Must speak English. English, only English.

ALLY: So you can get a job.

ALEX: Learn English. Get job.

ALLY: You should just hang out this summer. Enjoy yourself.

ALEX: I need help my family. You work no? You have job.

ALLY: Just on the weekends.

ALEX: You help your family.

ALLY: No, I just buy clothes and stuff.

ALEX: Oh.

ALLY: Come to the formal with me Alex. You can help me serve punch. I'll sneak you in.

ALEX: When is this formal?

ALLY: Friday night.

ALEX: No. I must look after my sisters.

ALLY: Are your parents going out?

ALEX: My mama is ill.

ALLY: What about your dad?

ALEX: No time for dawdle talk. Must dance. Hey!

ALEX dances offstage and ALLY follows. Lights fade to a spot light. TERA is flipping a coin.

TERA: If it come up tails, I'll talk to Dave. If it comes out heads I'll just go to the formal and I'll have a good time and I won't worry. Tails. Two out of three. Tails. Tails. If it comes out tails, I won't talk to Dave and I'll just go to the formal and have a good... heads. I don't have anything to worry about. He did not ask me out to get me drunk and take advantage of me. *(she takes a deep breath and thinks about talking to DAVE)* Hello Dave! David. Dave. Can we talk?

DAVE enters to stand behind TERA so we can see him but he is not completely in the light. They don't look at each other. TERA faces straight out. TERA is not really talking to DAVE. She is imagining how the conversation would go.

DAVE: Sure.

TERA: Did you ask me to the formal so you could get me drunk and take advantage of me? No, no, no. *(she takes a deep breath)* Dave. I would like to know... Why did you ask me out?

DAVE: I like you, Tasha.

TERA: Tera.

DAVE: I like you Tera. You got something special.

TERA: That's it. You like me.

DAVE: And to get you drunk and...

TERA: No, no, no. David. Are you going to drink before the formal?

DAVE: Of course not.

TERA: No?

DAVE: Do you think I would want anything to ruin my time with you?

TERA: Good answer. If only I could be sure.

DAVE: You've got something special.

TERA: If it comes out tails, I'll talk to him for sure. If it comes out heads I won't and I'll go to the formal and have a good time. Tails.

Lights crossfade to a spot on the other side of the stage. PENNY is sleeping and having a fitful dream. We don't see any of the other voices who speak to PENNY in her dream, they stand just out of view.

VOICES: (*calling out at different times*) Penny... Penny... Penny...

MRS. KEELY: Penny it happens to the best of us.

VOICES: Penny... Penny... Penny...

PENNY'S MOM: How did the test go?

PENNY: I don't know.

PENNY'S MOM: I'm sure you did fine.

PENNY'S DAD: She better have done fine. I won't have any dead weight in this family.

VOICES: Penny... Penny... Penny...

GEORGIA: We're both up for the same scholarship!!!

VOICES: Penny... Penny... Penny...

PENNY'S DAD: Where did that extra 5% go? I won't have any dead weight!!

VOICES: Penny... Penny...

The following section is all said at the same time. All the characters repeat their lines building in volume.

VOICES: Penny, Penny, Penny, Penny,

PENNY'S MOM: I'm sure you did fine.

PENNY'S DAD: No dead weight!

MRS. KEELY: Happens to the best of us.

GEORGIA: The same scholarship!

Once this section reaches a crescendo, all voices and characters stop abruptly.

PENNY'S MOM: Penny! Penny!

PENNY wakes up suddenly.

PENNY: What! I'm awake! I'm awake.

PENNY'S MOM: Penny! Dinner's ready.

PENNY: I'm not hungry mom. I have to finish my homework. I'll eat later.

MOB: (*whispering*) Come on, come on, come on, Pressure.

The spot fades and the general light comes up. School bell rings. We are again in the busy hall. PENNY must have the test paper in her hand. GEORGIA comes and sits down beside PENNY.

GEORGIA: Hey Penny! How did you do on the test?

PENNY: How did you do?

GEORGIA: I got an A.

PENNY: You did? You didn't even study.

GEORGIA: What did you get?

PENNY: The same.

GEORGIA: Then what are you mad at me for? I heard we've got the two top spots for the scholarship. Guess we're still neck and neck! Maybe we'll have to fight for it! See ya!

MRS. KEELY walks by. GEORGIA exits.

PENNY: Mrs. Keely! Mrs. Keely.

MRS. KEELY: Yes Penny.

PENNY: You marked my... there is something wrong with my test.

MRS. KEELY: I don't think so Penny. I remember marking it.

PENNY: I only got a C.

MRS. KEELY: I was surprised as well.

PENNY: I studied all night.

MRS. KEELY: It's just one test Penny. You're doing well in the course.

PENNY: I can't get a C. I'm up for a scholarship.

MRS. KEELY: Perhaps you didn't properly review the material.

PENNY: I studied all night.

MRS. KEELY: I wonder if you're pushing a little too hard. Sometimes when things don't gel right away we have a tendency to...

PENNY: So you're not going to re-mark the test.

MRS. KEELY: Don't take that tone with me. Of course I'll have a look.

PENNY: Now?

MRS. KEELY: No. I'll do it on the weekend. You look tired. Are you alright?

PENNY: I'm fine.

Our focus shifts to SARAH and KYLE on the other side of the stage. MRS. KEELY leaves. PENNY sits.

KYLE: (*presenting the hat to her*) Da ta ta ta! One hat.

SARAH: (*ignoring the hat*) You weren't in Geography.

KYLE: What do I need to know about mountain in the Andes for? Am I ever going to go to the Andes? No. Waste o' my time.

SARAH: Humft.

KYLE: What's up with you?

SARAH: Nothing. Thanks for the hat.

KYLE: I'm gonna take off early. See you tonight.

SARAH: What about English?

KYLE: What about English.

SARAH: The test.

KYLE: Yeah, I didn't study so what's the point?

SARAH: Kyle! You can't do that. You're going to fail and then...

KYLE: No, no, no. I get enough of this at home all right?

SARAH: But you're going get kicked out.

KYLE: I'm not going to follow in the family footsteps so why bother?

SARAH: You don't have to be a doctor.

KYLE: That's right I don't. So stop bugging me! Sorry. I didn't mean to yell.

SARAH: It's alright.

KYLE: Just forget everything I said. Ok? Wait until you see my suit tonight. It will make you cry. And my moves. Don't forget my moves. *(he dances in a very dorky manner)*

SARAH: You are a dork.

KYLE: Takes one to know one.

SARAH: Well, your mother wears army boots.

KYLE: She likes wearing army boots. Your dad wears a rug.

SARAH: He does not.

KYLE: He's wearing road kill on his head.

SARAH: Get out of here.

KYLE: I was already leaving. See you tonight! *(he exits)*

SARAH: See you. *(PENNY looks up and sees SARAH)*

PENNY: Sarah! Sarah!

SARAH: Everything is all set. I'll be back at 5 o'clock ok?

PENNY: I can't go.

SARAH: What?

PENNY: I can't go to the formal. I... I have to study.

SARAH: Study for what?

PENNY: I can't go.

SARAH: You have to go. You're the only one who knows what's going on.

PENNY: I'll give you my clipboard. It has all my notes.

SARAH: No way. You can't dump this on me. You have to go. It'll be a disaster.

PENNY: It's already a disaster.

*PENNY sits down and hides her face in her hands.
SARAH comes to sit beside her.*

SARAH: Penny are you ok? You look really tired.

PENNY: I'm fine. Why is everyone asking me that?

SARAH: Penny, you've worked so hard. You can't miss the formal.

PENNY: No one would miss me.

SARAH: Penny.

PENNY: I'm not going to get my scholarship. I can't believe Georgia is going to get... What am I going to tell my dad? How am I going to tell him?

SARAH: It can't be that bad.

PENNY: How would you know?

SARAH: Ok. *(she gets up to leave)*

PENNY: Sarah. I'm sorry. I... I'm tired.

SARAH: It'll all be fine. You'll see.

PENNY: Sarah...

KYLE walks in.

KYLE: Hey Sarah where are my... Oops. Am I interrupting something?

PENNY: Forget it.

PENNY exits to the left. KYLE and SARAH exit to the right. The focus shifts to ALLY, SAM, and TERA.

ALLY: What are you going to say?

TERA: I don't know.

SAM: He's Dave Laberge. I can't believe you're doing this.

TERA: I know.

ALLY: It's the right thing.

SAM: I can't believe you're doing this.

TERA: I'm just going to ask him straight out. Otherwise I'm gonna lose my nerve and puke on his shoes.

SAM: You don't have to do this. He's Dave Laberge!

ALLY: It's the right thing.

TERA: You trust your brother?

ALLY: Paul says he's done this for the past three years.

SAM: Done what? Drink a little? Who cares if he drinks?

TERA: I care.

SAM: Don't be such a loser.

ALLY: It's not just that he... there he is.

TERA: There he is.

SAM: Oh my God.

DAVE enters. He and TERA meet centre stage. SAM and ALLY listen from the side.

DAVE: Hey Babe. Ready for tonight?

TERA: Someone, Amy, someone told me that you and Franco are planning to drink before the formal.

DAVE: Sure.

TERA: Oh. You are.

DAVE: Don't worry, I got some for you. I'm generous that way. I always share with my dates.

TERA: Oh. What if you get caught? You'll get suspended.

DAVE: I won't get caught. Besides Mr. Challis loves his winning team. Nothing to worry about.

TERA: What about me?

DAVE: Can't help you there babe. Unless you play basketball.

TERA: I don't want to drink. I don't want you to either. I want to have a nice time.

DAVE: You will. We're just gonna get the party started early.

TERA: I said I don't want to.

DAVE: That's the way it is sweetheart.

TERA: Then I guess... I don't want to go with you.

DAVE: What?

TERA: I guess I don't want to go with you.

DAVE: You don't. Well, that is just great. I've spent money on this you know. What am I supposed to do now? The formal is tonight. Tonight! Where am I going to find another date?

SAM: I'll go with you.

TERA: What?

SAM: I mean if Tera doesn't want to go. You need a date right? I'll go.

ALLY: What are you doing?

DAVE: What's your name?

SAM: Samantha. I got a dress. I'm all set.

DAVE: That's what I like. I'll pick you up at 7:00.

TERA: Sam.

SAM: I'll be ready.

DAVE: I thought you'd be up to an evening with me. But now that I think about it, you're not really that pretty. No, I can see the whole thing was a mistake. I don't want to be seen with a kid. See you around Tasha.

TERA: Tera.

DAVE: Whatever. Hey Sam. Want to walk me to my locker?

SAM: Sure.

DAVE and SAM leave.

ALLY: What a traitor.

TERA: I can't believe she did that. She just swooped in for the kill.

ALLY: You did the right thing.

TERA: Then why do I feel so awful?

MOB: Come on, come on, come on, come on, pressure.

Lights crossfade into spotlight on MOTHER and FATHER who are waiting for KYLE.

KYLE: I know I'm late for dinner but don't worry I already ate. I'm going over to Mac's ok?

MOTHER: Kyle, the school called me today.

KYLE: Oh yeah?

FATHER: Sit down.

KYLE: My friends are waiting.

FATHER: They can wait.

KYLE: I just can't leave them. They're sitting in the car.

MOTHER: 57 absences Kyle. You have been absent from school 57 times.

KYLE: Oh.

FATHER: Is this true?

KYLE: Do we have to talk about this now? Can't we do it in the morning? My friends...

FATHER: They can wait all night as far as I'm concerned.

MOTHER: I have not written notes for 57 absences.

FATHER: What do you do? Why aren't you in class? How did this go on without our knowledge?

MOTHER: Do you forge my signature? Do you have your friends writing notes for you? Is that the kind of friends you have?

FATHER: This is not acceptable. Not in the least.

MOTHER: We never had this kind of trouble with your brother. Never. What is going on Kyle?

FATHER: I want an explanation. I want an explanation for every one of these days.

MOTHER: Your brother did so well in school.

FATHER: You're not leaving this house till I get an explanation. You are grounded till the end of the year.

MOTHER: How could you do this to us?



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