

SCIENCE FAIR THE MUSICAL

A screenplay musical

By Tracy Held Potter

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FADE IN:

EXT. DAIRY FARM - DAY

Voices of the HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR sing the reverent melody of,
"Alice Hamilton High."

From behind the fog, a COW muzzle snatches a luscious tuft of
grass. The cow chews.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (O.S.)
(singing)
ALICE HAMILTON HIGH!

And chews.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
YOUR MAJESTIC REDWOODS STAND TALL,

The cow shakes off a FLY buzzing near her eye.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
REMINDING US TO REACH FOR THE SKY

A large, moist poop pops out of the cow's butt and plops onto
the ground.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
AND TAKE ON THE WORLD WITH PRIDE,

The cow walks away from the steamy pile of dung.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
THANKS TO ALICE HAMILTON HIGH!

A buzzing fly lands on the poop.

EXT. ALICE HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL, CA - DAY

An instrumental of "Alice Hamilton High" introduces a modern
high school with bright colors, dramatic angles, and large
windows residing along a redwood-lined coastal cliff in
Northern California.

The HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR wears maroon and white cardigans and
matching pants as it hums on the school steps.

Car doors click open as TEENAGERS with colorful backpacks
spill onto the campus.

KAITLYN "KATIE" CARTER (17), a contemporary hippy wearing a dress, leggings, and a stuffed backpack, stands beaming at the school, singing her power ballad, "Senior Year."

KATIE
(singing)
SENIOR YEAR IS FINALLY HERE!

She twirls around, arms outstretched, as students flood into the building, knocking into her.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I'VE CLIMBED TO THE TOP OF THE
CHAIN.
MY JOY FOR LEARNING CAN NOT BE
CONTAINED,

A bird is caught in the branches of a bush. Katie sees the bird and frees it. It flies far into the sky.

KATIE (CONT'D)
BECAUSE IT'S MY--

She smiles at the free bird and runs into the school...

INT. ALICE HAMILTON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

KATIE
SENIOR--!

As soon as Katie steps into the hallway, the music shifts to blaring rock music. The hallway pulsates with blue lights.

Disoriented, Katie makes her way through the crowds of STUDENTS plunging forward and drawing their bodies back in never-ending chorus lines encircling ...

EMMA (18) and MARLON (18), a.k.a. Em & M, the school's stylish power couple. Eyes painted with glittery make-up and carrying mics, they sing the rock song "Em & M Rule the School."

EM & M
(singing)
IT'S THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
AND THERE'S JUST ONE RULE:

ENSEMBLE
(singing)
EM & M DEFINE WHAT'S COOL!
EM & M DEFINE WHAT'S COOL!

Em & M show off spectacular, acrobatic dance moves.

Emma crosses to the top of the stairs which become enveloped in theatrical smoke. When she gets to the top, she stops and turns.

EMMA
(crooning)

EM
AND
M.

Pause for dramatic effect.

Katie is mesmerized.

EMMA (CONT'D)

RULE
THE

Emma draws out the last word in the longest run ever.

EMMA (CONT'D)
SCHOOOOOOOOL!

Massive cheers. Confetti. Smoke. Bell Rings.

Katie stands in the hallway. The only sparkles are from "Welcome Back!" banners drenched in glitter. Students hurry around her.

LYRIC LAM (17), Katie's best friend, an Asian American girl with a nose piercing, approaches with her hemp satchel.

LYRIC
Katie!

Lyric and Katie hug.

LYRIC (CONT'D)
Senior year! Are you the most
excited?!

KATIE
Um, yeah! I can't wait to start our
science fair project!

Em & M throw plastic bottles into the trash and walk away, laughing and oblivious.

Katie scowls. She digs the bottles out of the trash and moves them to the recycling bin.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Was that so hard?!

In unison, Em & M turn toward Katie.

EM & M
Excuse us?

KATIE
How hard is it to throw your
bottles in the right bin?

EMMA
We don't have time to worry about
recycling.

MARLON
We have competitions to win.

EMMA
Clubs to run.

EM & M
A school to rule!

Katie stares them down.

KATIE
Real scientists care about the
environment.

MARLON
Are you challenging us?

LYRIC
Katie, maybe you should calm down.

EMMA
You might want to listen to Lyric.
She seems like the brains in your
friendship.

KATIE
You can't waste our Earth Mother's
precious resources and call
yourselves scientists!

MARLON
Oh, really?

Marlon steps aside to reveal a display case with a framed
photo of Em & M holding last year's Science Fair trophy.

KATIE
One science fair trophy--

EM & M

Three!

KATIE

--doesn't make you scientists!
Science doesn't come from a
contest: it comes from your heart.

All the students in the hall stop what they're doing to watch Katie. Katie sings a jazzy and earnest "Science is in My Heart."

KATIE (CONT'D)

(singing)

WHEN THE REALITIES OF LIFE GET
TOUGH
I'M TEMPTED TO GIVE UP AND SAY,
"ENOUGH!"
I HIDE IN MY BOOKS, I GO INTERNAL.
CAN I FIND THE ANSWERS IN THIS
JOURNAL?

She walks to the end of the hallway, pushing the doors to ...

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

A sunny, open-air courtyard with small shrubs and wooden benches.

KATIE

YES, I CAN!

An ethnically diverse group of LAB SCIENTISTS wearing white lab coats and large lab goggles, floods the courtyard, dancing in front of and around Katie with beakers containing colorful liquids.

KATIE (CONT'D)

SCIENCE HAS THE ANSWERS.
SCIENCE HAS ALL THE KEYS.

Scientists hand Katie clipboards with papers that she signs and pushes back to them.

KATIE (CONT'D)

CURING FATAL CANCERS,
PROTECTING THREATENED TREES.

IF I READ ALL THE PEER-REVIEWED
PAPERS
AND INCORPORATE THEIR HYPOTHESES,

Katie jumps to the ground and brings a dying ENDANGERED PANDA back to life.

KATIE (CONT'D)
MY LIFE SUDDENLY HAS A PURPOSE:
I BECOME ONE WITH SOCRATES!

EMMA
SCIENCE ISN'T ABOUT WHAT YOU GIVE
UP,

MARLON
IT'S NOT ABOUT CHANGING THE WAY YOU
LIVE,

EM & M
SCIENCE IS UNDERSTANDING HOW THINGS
WORK

KATIE
AND LEARNING SO THAT YOU HAVE MORE
TO GIVE!

LYRIC
WHAT GOOD IS KNOWLEDGE YOU FAIL TO
USE?
IF YOU KNOW SOMETHING, YOU MUST
SHARE THE NEWS!

KATIE & LYRIC
WE ARE RESPONSIBLE TO OUR PLANET.
WE CAN'T DISCARD THINGS HOWEVER WE
CHOOSE.

Lab scientists unify their movements, walking in rings around the singers.

EM & M
WE KNOW A THING OR TWO ABOUT
SCIENCE,
AND YOU'RE FAILING TO SEE A MAJOR
TRUTH:
JUST BECAUSE WE SHARE A LOVE OF
FACTS
DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN TELL US WHAT
TO DO.

EMMA
SCIENCE ISN'T ABOUT PROTESTING
THINGS,

MARLON
OR DEPRIVING YOURSELF OF
POSSESSIONS,

EM & M
IT'S ABOUT GAINING UNDERSTANDING
AND UNRAVELING NATURE'S LESSONS.

WE'RE THE TOP SCIENTISTS AT THIS
SCHOOL,
AND THERE'S NO ROOM FOR EITHER OF
YOU.

MARLON
SO WHY DON'T YOU CLIMB DOWN OFF
YOUR STOOL
AND FIND SOMETHING ELSE TO DO?

KATIE/EMMA/MARLON/LYRIC
SCIENCE IS BIGGER THAN ALL OF US,
AND GATHERING KNOWLEDGE SETS ME
FREE.

Scientists lift giant textbooks above their heads.

KATIE/EMMA/MARLON/LYRIC (CONT'D)
GALILEO, MADAME CURIE AND
DESCARTES,
BECAUSE OF THEM, SCIENCE IS IN MY
HEART.
SCIENCE WILL ALWAYS BE IN MY HEART.
SCIENCE WILL ALWAYS BE IN MY HEART.

Emma gets in Katie's face. Lab scientists are gone.

EMMA
I don't know if you've noticed, but
we've won the science fair three
years in a row.

MARLON
And we're planning for a four-peat
streak.

EMMA
So maybe you should be asking us
what being a real scientist is.

Em & M pull magazines from their backpacks and make a show of
dropping them in the trash before walking away.

KATIE
How can they be so popular when
they're so mean?

LYRIC
How can two people win at
everything?

The girls look at a glass display case with homecoming crowns and a framed portrait of Em & M wearing the crowns.

KATIE
They're inhuman.

Katie looks at the portrait of Em & M from the science fair.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I'm going to win the Science Fair
this year if it's the last thing I
do.

Bell rings.

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASSROOM - DAY

Rows of students sit beneath colorful foam molecule models dangling from the ceiling.

Katie and Lyric sit near the front, watching MR. KAPLAN (50s), their jaded teacher.

MR. KAPLAN
I'm Mr. Kaplan, and we'll be
enjoying a thrilling year of
chemistry together.

Katie daydreams in front of posters of the Periodic Table of Elements and Albert Einstein sticking out his tongue. She sings the pop rock song "I Am Going to Save the World."

KATIE
EVERY DAY, I READ THE NEWS ON MY
FEED:
CRIME, POVERTY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL
DEGRADATION,
HOW CAN WE LIVE IN A WORLD WITH
PROBLEMS LIKE THESE?
MOTHER EARTH MUST BE REALLY
DISPLEASED.

BUT I'M GONNA CHANGE THINGS!

INT. FANTASY LAB - DAY (KATIE'S FANTASY)

A high-tech lab with bright lights and shimmering metal lab bling. Katie wears a couture lab coat that could pass for a cocktail dress. She dances with an entourage of lab assistants wearing hot pants and cropped tops.

KATIE
 WHEN I GROW UP,
 I AM GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD!

I'LL GET A PH.D. AND SHAPE NEW
 LEGISLATION.
 I'LL SOLVE ALL THE PLANET'S
 PROBLEMS, ONCE AND FOR ALL.
 I'LL SHOW PEOPLE THE VALUE OF
 LIVING SIMPLY
 WITH INTEGRITY SO THAT OTHERS MAY
 SIMPLY LIVE!

WHEN I GROW UP,
 I AM GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD!

I'LL CLEAN THE WATER SO IT'S SAFE
 FOR FISH TO SWIM
 POLLUTION WILL BE ANCIENT HISTORY.
 I'LL PROMOTE HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING
 AND ABOLISH ALL DISCRIMINATION.

EXT. COSTA RICA - SAME (KATIE'S FANTASY)

Katie and her dance crew wear curve-hugging brown workshirts
 with khaki safari short-shorts and scarves tied on the side
 of their necks while dancing in the rainforest.

KATIE (CONT'D)
 MIGRATING BIRDS WILL STILL HAVE
 HOMES TO MIGRATE TO.
 POLAR BEARS WILL STILL HAVE SEALS
 TO HUNT FOR FOOD.

Large turtles crawl to the ocean from the beach.

KATIE (CONT'D)
 EVERYONE WILL RECYCLE, REDUCE,
 REUSE,
 AND THAT HOLE IN THE OZONE WILL BE
 SEALED UP FOR GOOD.

The dancers follow Katie with notepads and pens as she rides
 into the sea on a giant turtle.

KATIE (CONT'D)
 WHEN I GROW UP,
 I AM GOING TO SAVE THE WORLD!

BACK TO PRESENT

Mr. Kaplan distributes handouts.

DYLAN DAVIS (17), a boy so good looking he could be in a pop boy band, turns to pass back the handouts to Katie. He catches her eye and smiles.

Katie panics. She knocks over her books and spills kombucha all over herself.

CLASSMATE, sitting in the row next to Katie, pulls away from her.

CLASSMATE
Ew, what's that smell?!

KATIE
It's kombucha.

CLASSMATE
Smells like butt.

Katie raises her hand. Mr. Kaplan turns from his textbook to Katie.

MR. KAPLAN
Yes, Miss ...?

KATIE
Carter. Katie Carter. May I use the restroom?

MR. KAPLAN
This is why we don't allow drinks in the classroom. Take the hall pass.

Classmates snicker. Next to the door, Katie grabs a large plastic erlenmeyer flask with a key dangling from it. Bell rings.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Students flood the hallways, make out at lockers, rush to classes, or just stand around texting.

INT. LUNCHROOM - DAY

Students cram into old-fashioned folding cafeteria tables, gnashing at their food. Sunlight streams in through massive picture windows.

Katie and Lyric elbow their way through the room as other students come and go. They look at each other and sigh.

TRASH AREA

Lyric and Katie stand in a high foot traffic area near large, overflowing trash cans.

Lyric's ballet flat sticks to the floor.

LYRIC

Gross!

FOOTBALL PLAYER 1 throws a mostly full milk carton towards the trash.

The milk carton hits Katie and milk drips down her shirt.

KATIE

I'm vegan!!

FOOTBALL PLAYERS

(sarcastically)

Sorry!

FOOTBALL PLAYERS hoot and laugh. Lyric is horrified.

KATIE

Yuck.

The floor is dirty, so Katie holds her backpack between her legs. She pulls out a reusable cloth bag and waives it at Lyric.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Guess who has wheat grass! One shot or two?

Lyric sniffs around and pinches her nose.

LYRIC

Make mine a double.

Katie passes the shots.

KATIE

Bottoms up!

They down their bitter shots.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Hey, are you ready to go over our Life Plan charts? I updated mine last night.

Katie pulls a complicated diagram out of her backpack that says "Life Plan."

KATIE (CONT'D)

I think I ultimately want to get my Ph.D. in conservation biology, so I want my undergrad to focus on environmental science...

Lyric nibbles from a palmful of granola.

KATIE (CONT'D)

What about you?

LYRIC

Yeah, that sounds great.

KATIE

So, in terms of progress goals, the first thing we need to do is get into really good colleges. And I think winning the science fair is going to be key to getting an amazing internship for the summer.

Lyric looks around the cafeteria.

Football Players have fun goofing off.

LYRIC(O.S.)

Uh-huh.

A COUPLE smiles and holds hands across the lunch table. Their faces almost touch.

KATIE (O.S.)

I'm leaning toward fracking--both topical and relevant.

Lyric gazes at the couple.

The couple kisses.

Lyric's eyes are wide and sad. She turns to Katie.

LYRIC (O.S.)

Katie? I don't know how to say this ...

KATIE

We don't have to do fracking, but I think it has really great potential--

LYRIC

I can't be your partner this year.

KATIE

What?

LYRIC

I'm working with someone else on the science fair.

KATIE

What are you talking about? We were this close to winning last year!

LYRIC

I know.

KATIE

You're my best friend!

LYRIC

I know! I didn't mean to--

KATIE

How do you accidentally get a new partner for the science fair?!

LYRIC

It wasn't an accident--

KATIE

This is our senior year! *Fracking!* We'd win for sure! How could you get another partner?!

Lyric can't face Katie anymore.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Well? Who is it?

LYRIC

Max.

KATIE

Max?

Lyric raises her eyebrows and tries to smile.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Max Chen? Why isn't he working with Antonio?

LYRIC

He graduated early and now he's going to MIT.

KATIE

Oh. Well, that makes perfect sense:
ditch your best friend for half of
last year's third place team.

LYRIC

There's more to it than that.

KATIE

Like what?

LYRIC

We're kind of ... dating.

KATIE

What?! You got a boyfriend over the
summer and you didn't tell me?!

LYRIC

You knew that we were seeing each
other over the summer.

KATIE

No, you just said you were
volunteering at the zoology museum
together. That's not the same as
"seeing each other."

LYRIC

We didn't make it official until
this morning.

KATIE

Oh yeah? And when did you decide to
be science fair partners?

LYRIC

(quietly)

Last week.

KATIE

Last week?! And you didn't tell me
until now?!

LYRIC

I'm sorry.

KATIE

You got a boyfriend?

LYRIC

Yes.

KATIE
This is just like what happened
with Jennifer.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Lyric and Katie walk potted tomato plants down the hallway.
They see JENNIFER (16) and SCIENCE PARTNER, a teenage boy,
making out against the lockers.

KATIE
Hey, Jennifer. How's your water
pollution project coming along?

Jennifer comes up for air.

JENNIFER
My what?

KATIE
Your science fair project.

JENNIFER
Oh ... right. We're too busy for
science.

Jennifer smiles at Science Partner and they make out more.

KATIE
But ... we're the Three Amoebas!

BACK TO PRESENT

LYRIC
This is nothing like that. I'm
sorry, Katie. I didn't know the
best way to tell you. I have to go
meet Max to talk about our project.

KATIE
Of course.

LYRIC
Talk to you later?

KATIE
Sure.

Lyric walks away.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Science will always be more
important than boys!

A bunch of students dump their lunch trash into the overflowing garbage can and, as they walk away, the trash collapses into a landslide onto Katie's legs. Katie shrieks.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Katie walks up to a beveled glass door inscribed with the word "Library" and a paper sign reading "Science Club" taped to the glass.

The door opens to ...

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

A library full of the best-looking nerd boys in California.

Katie basks in the presence of towering shelves of books. She walks by ...

Male chemistry nerds wearing T-shirts with science puns, computer nerds with numerous electronic devices, and science fiction geeks with long hair and goatees. They all smile from tables and bookcases at Katie as she marches down the aisle. Katie doesn't notice them.

She sets her stuff at an empty table, plugs headphones into her laptop and listens to a podcast of "Fresh Air" as she proofreads her college application.

EXT. KATIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Katie walks past an old Chevrolet with a bumper sticker of a monkey that says "Jesus didn't monkey around with humans." Inside the car, FLORENCE BARRINGER (70s), the nosy neighbor, scrutinizes Katie.

Katie's front yard is packed with overflowing tomato cages, corn, and tall, colorful chard leaves punctuated by protest signs staked into the dirt reading "No to GMO!," "Frack No!," and "Fur is Fer Animals!"

Katie plucks a tomato and eats it as she squeezes by the refrigerator on the walkway.

INT. LIVINGROOM - SAME

The livingroom is accented with all values of beige, cream, and brown.

Katie removes her shoes in front of a framed photo that says "Baby's First Protest" and features of photo of Baby Katie, MOM (40s) and DAD (40s), wearing colorful dashikis, blocking a logging truck.

KATIE
Why's the refrigerator--?

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Mom and Dad unplug small appliances and pack them into boxes.

KATIE
Are we moving?

MOM
No, we're not moving, silly!

KATIE
Then what's with all the boxes?

Mom wraps the toaster cord in a tidy coil.

Dad waves around an electric can opener.

DAD
We're giving up electricity.

KATIE
What?

Mom finishes packing boxes and starts folding plastic bags that were drying on the plastic bag tree.

MOM
There's a new movement dedicated to
having zero impact on the
environment. It's called No Living.

Dad unplugs the microwave.

DAD
Brilliant.

Katie grabs the microwave and cradles it in her arms.

KATIE
But why can't we just use
electricity from renewable
resources?

DAD
Because no source of energy is
completely free of negative impacts
to the environment.

MOM
Solar panels are toxic.

DAD
Wind turbines kill birds.

KATIE
But--

Mom washes the three ceramic netti pots on the counter.

DAD
What happened to your clothes?
Katie's leggings and skirt are smeared with ketchup stains.

KATIE
It's ... school lunch.
Mom tugs at Katie's leggings and smells one of them.

MOM
You were eating ketchup?! Do you
know how many GMO's are in those
things??

DAD
You have to be careful, Honey Bear--
 Frankenfoods are everywhere!

KATIE
I know that, I--

DAD
Can you hand me the microwave?
Katie clutches the microwave tighter.

KATIE
No! You can't! I need this!

DAD
Sunflower, don't be ridiculous.

MOM
Our electricity is going to be shut
off in an hour.

KATIE

I don't care! You can't have it!

Katie storms off with the microwave.

DAD

Were we like this when we were teenagers?

MOM

Probably. I was a cheerleader.

Dad holds up the coffee maker.

Mom reaches for the coffee maker, bites her lip, and then nods her consent to pack it. She looks away as ...

Dad packs the coffee maker. A packing tape roller screeches over the flaps of the box, sealing it shut forever and ever.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

The emaciated kitchen has dirty, empty pockets of space where the refrigerator, toaster, microwave, and coffee maker once lived.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Photos of Katie and Lyric are pinned everywhere. Katie's digital alarm clock, computer, and cell phone remain charging in front of a wall of to do lists and calendars.

The microwave is plugged in and propped up on a chair.

Katie types an essay on her computer while she takes bites from a pizza pocket.

The lights flicker. The sound of the power draining out of the appliances overtakes the room. Katie gasps.

The room is silent.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Katie types on her computer and strains to read her book using the reflected light of her monitor.

INSERT: KATIE'S COMPUTER

The power indicator blinks red. The screen flickers and goes black.

KATIE
NOOOO!!!!

EXT. KATIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Between the dark shadows of a bush, a small mouse drops a piece of bread and scurries away.

INT. KATIE'S KITCHEN - SAME

Katie rifles through drawers lit by the night sky until she finds a candle and matches.

She lights the candle and sings a ballad, "First World Problems."

KATIE
(singing)
OH, I GET IT. I REALLY DO.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Katie glides through the hallway with her candle.

KATIE
I FIGHT FOR CLEAN AIR BECAUSE
MOTHER EARTH NEEDS ME TO.

BUT I'M FINDING IT'S RATHER HARD
TO BE PLAYING THE ROLE OF HER
SECURITY GUARD
WHEN MY WORLD IS FALLING APART.
OH, HOW CAN I STOP THE HEMORRHAGE
OF MY BLEEDING HEART?

Katie passes a shelf with a staple gun, thumb tacks, and other flyering/postering supplies.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I'M ALWAYS PICKETING AND JOINING
DEMONSTRATIONS

Katie flips through a scrapbook of articles from past protests with her family.

KATIE (CONT'D)
TO FIGHT FAMINE, TRAFFICKING, AND
DEFORESTATION.
AND THEY'RE ALL REALLY IMPORTANT
THINGS TO DO,
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)
BUT SUDDENLY I HAVE MY OWN
PROBLEMS, TOO:

Katie tries in vain to turn on her phone.

KATIE (CONT'D)
THE INTERNET TAKES MORE THAN A
SECOND TO LOAD
AND I HAVE SO MUCH STUFF THAT MY
CLOSETS EXPLODE.
I WANT MANGOES AND STICKY RICE BUT
THEY'RE OUT OF SEASON,
AND PEOPLE AROUND THE GLOBE SUFFER
FOR "BETTER" REASONS.

Katie's face glows through the window, lit by the candle.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I RECOGNIZE MY SENSE OF
ENTITLEMENT,
I'M JUST A PRODUCT OF MY
ENVIRONMENT.
MY TROUBLES AREN'T ALL THAT
AWESOME.
AND YET I STILL HAVE FIRST WORLD
PROBLEMS.

SO MANY MANY ... FIRST WORLD
PROBLEMS!
OH, I HAVE SO MANY FIRST WORLD
PROBLEMS!

Katie pushes the buttons on her phone to no avail. She cries.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Birds chirp outside. Dad holds the phone and spins apples in a bowl.

MOM
Dad picked apples this morning.

Mom leans toward the window, holding her mug against the glass.

KATIE
Just apples for breakfast? What am
I supposed to bring for lunch?

MOM
You could make a kale salad and
bring some rice cakes.

Dad nods and makes a thumbs up.

DAD
Yes! I want to cancel my family's
mobile phone plan.

KATIE
Dad, no! Don't!

MOM
Shhh ... he's been on hold for half
an hour.

KATIE
He can't take my phone away!

Mom inspects her mug.

MOM
Solar tea? It's rather delicate.

DAD
(to the phone)
Do you know how many toxins are
emanating from our phones?

Dad scribbles something on a newspaper.

DAD (CONT'D)
Great, I'll call your supervisor
shortly.

Dad hangs up the phone.

KATIE
Dad! I need my phone--

DAD
It looks like we're stuck for the
duration of our contract.

KATIE
Phew.

DAD
But don't worry, I'll try to get
around this.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Katie winds her way through the crowded hallway, her eyes
scanning from side to side until she spots ...

An available outlet.

Katie rushes up to the outlet and plunges a power strip into it. She races to plug in all of her devices: cell phone, laptop, and battery charger.

Lyric and MAX CHEN (17), the kid who wears pressed button-down shirts in high school, walk toward Katie, not seeing her.

MAX

Here's one: We don't allow faster than light neutrinos in here, said the bartender. A neutrino walks into a bar.

Lyric laughs, touching Max's chest.

Katie jumps up.

LYRIC

Ohmygawd! I didn't see you there.

KATIE

Sorry. You won't believe what my parents are doing!

Katie notices Max.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Max.

Lyric turns to Katie, revealing hickies all over her neck.

LYRIC

What's up?

KATIE

My house doesn't--

Katie watches Lyric gazing at Max.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I mean, I just wanted you to know that I already found another science partner, too.

LYRIC

You did?! That's great!

KATIE

Yeah.

LYRIC

That was so fast--I was worried you might not find one.

KATIE

Ha. Right. So ... do you two want to study together during lunch or something?

MAX

We have a meeting with Mr. Kaplan.

LYRIC

Sorry, Katie. We have to request a special machine for our project. See you later?

Lyric and Max hold hands and start walking away.

KATIE

Hey, I don't have electricity at my house. Can I come over and charge some stuff?

LYRIC

I'm busy tonight--let's do it tomorrow!

Bell rings. Katie checks her devices: all of them are still in the red zone.

INT. CHEMISTRY CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Kaplan glues foam molecules back together, but they won't stick. Katie approaches. She sees an outlet.

KATIE

Is it okay if I charge my phone in here?

Mr. Kaplan doesn't look up.

MR. KAPLAN

No. School-wide policy.

KATIE

Oh. Um, Mr. Kaplan? I wanted to sign up for the science fair, but I don't have a partner.

MR. KAPLAN

You need a partner.

KATIE

I know, but everyone else is paired up with someone and I really need to win this year.

In the hallway outside the classroom door, Dylan, wearing a leather jacket, talks to a small group of GIGGLING GIRLS, including ELLA BARRINGER (16), Florence's perky granddaughter. She hangs on every word Dylan says.

Mr. Kaplan nods towards Dylan.

MR. KAPLAN

Why don't you ask Dylan Davis? He doesn't have a partner.

KATIE

Dylan?

Katie turns to see Dylan saying something that makes all of the girls laugh.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I can't work with him.

MR. KAPLAN

Why not?

KATIE

Well, if I'm being perfectly honest, he's too good looking.

MR. KAPLAN

Pardon?

KATIE

I find his appearance to be distracting and I need to be able to concentrate on my work.

MR. KAPLAN

Miss Carter, this type of discrimination will not be tolerated at Alice Hamilton High School.

KATIE

Mr. Kaplan, I--

Mr. Kaplan stands and points at a framed photo of scientist Alice Hamilton.

MR. KAPLAN

It's this kind of mentality that prevented countless women from contributing to the sciences. Fortunately for us--

Mr. Kaplan gestures towards a portrait of Alice Hamilton.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

Alice Hamilton was as fierce as she was perspicacious and she became a pioneer in the field of toxicology despite navigating a minefield of sexism.

Mr. Kaplan walks down a wall of framed photos, including portraits of Galileo, Darwin, Emilie du Chatelet, George Washington Carver, Madame Curie, Carl Sagan, and Mae Jemison.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

There was a time when women couldn't even get research positions.

KATIE

I didn't--

MR. KAPLAN

Our choices create the basis of our character, Miss Carter. I suggest you seek out Mr. Davis and get to know him as a human being and not just an ... object!

Mr. Kaplan searches for a book, grabs one, then finds a bigger one and slams that book on the table. He turns away from Katie, crossing his arms across his chest.

The photo of Alice Hamilton stares at Katie.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

You may go.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL HILLSIDE - DAY

A lush, grassy cliff with majestic redwood trees overlooks the ocean. Romantic acoustic guitar music flutters in the air.

A fluffy bunny hops in front of Katie's ankle-boot. She marches towards the music until she's close enough to see ...

Dylan's hair blowing dreamily in the wind as he strums his guitar.

Katie sighs and shakes her head in disappointment.

Dylan croons the ballad "A Love Song."

DYLAN
(singing)
I FEEL SOMETHING THAT'S NOT SO EASY
TO SAY,
BUT IF I LET MY FEARS GET OUT OF
THE WAY,
THEN I WOULD TELL YOU HOW MUCH YOU
MEAN TO ME.

Monarch butterflies flitter from out of nowhere.

KATIE
Just stab my eye with a fork
already!

Katie barges towards Dylan.

Dylan notices Katie, smiles and sings directly to her.

DYLAN
THE WAY YOUR HAIR FALLS TO ONE
SIDE,
THE WAY YOU LOOK AWAY SO I CAN'T
SEE YOUR STARRY EYES.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MANY TIMES I
HAVE TRIED
TO LET YOU KNOW MUCH YOU MEAN TO
ME.

They gaze at each other for a long moment, Katie horrified and Dylan oh-so-dreamy.

KATIE
I heard you're looking for a
partner for the science fair.

DYLAN
Don't you already have a partner?

KATIE
Not anymore. It's not a reflection
on me ... I just don't have the
right chromosomes.

DYLAN
I think your chromosomes are just
fine.

KATIE

Thanks. So, are you still looking for a partner? For the science fair? Not life or anything. Obviously. Cuz I'm only 17.

Katie rolls her eyes at herself.

DYLAN

Yeah, that'd be great. I'm about to go on a site visit. You want to come?

The ocean waves sparkle behind Dylan. An eagle soars in the background.

KATIE

Really?

DYLAN

The project is sustainable energy-- is that okay?

KATIE

That's perfect.

EXT. DAIRY FARM - DAY

Katie's hands cover her nose and mouth. Katie mumbles through her hands.

KATIE

Are you serious?

Cows are sprinkled around the lush, hilly farm. Dylan scoops up a cow paddy with a large shovel and holds the poop end toward her.

DYLAN

The fuel of the future!

She turns away.

KATIE

I just didn't expect these to be so ... fresh.

Dylan dumps the paddy into a dirty plastic bucket.

DYLAN

Hey, if this works, then maybe you
wouldn't have to steal other
people's electricity to charge your
phone.

Katie turns, embarrassed. They sing the musical theater-esque
song "Cow Farts" as Dylan continues scooping cow poop.

KATIE

(singing)

EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE GIRL
IT'S BEEN MY DREAM TO CHANGE THE
WORLD,
FOR THE BETTER!

DYLAN

Me, too. Except not the girl part.

Dylan winks at Katie.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

WHEN YOU THINK OF SUSTAINABILITY,
WHAT'S THE PERFECT SOLUTION THAT
YOU NEVER SEE?

KATIE

EATING FOODS THAT ARE LOW ON THE
FOOD CHAIN?

DYLAN

YES ... BUT ALSO NO.
NO MATTER WHAT WE DO,
WE ALWAYS END UP WITH MORE THAN WE
NEED,
WE HAVE TO CUT WASTE AND USE
EVERYTHING,
WHICH MEANS THE SOLUTION IS ...

Dylan runs off towards the other cows.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

BIOMETHANE ENERGY!

Katie chases after him.

KATIE

DO WE HAVE TO DO OUR PROJECT ON COW
FARTS?

Dylan hugs and pets the cows.

DYLAN
BIOMETHANE CAN COME FROM MANY
THINGS.
COW DUNG YES, BUT NOT JUST THAT.
IT CAN COME FROM ANYTHING THAT
DECOMPOSES:
FRENCH FRY OIL, SOUR GRAPES, EVEN
WILTING ROSES.

Katie avoids stepping on poop.

KATIE
I SEE THE APPEAL OF USING COW POO,
BUT DID YOU CONSIDER SOMETHING ELSE
WE COULD DO?

Katie steps on a goopy pile of poop and tries to wipe it off
on the grass.

DYLAN
LIKE WHAT?

KATIE
WAVE POWER IS PRETTY STRONG,
IT CAN GENERATE ENERGY ALL DAY
LONG.

DYLAN
TOO EXPENSIVE!

KATIE
YES, BUT COW FARTS?
YOU'RE REALLY ATTACHED TO THIS IDEA
OF WORKING WITH COW FARTS?

DYLAN
NOT COW FARTS--

KATIE
HORSE FARTS, SHEEP FARTS, DOG
FARTS?

DYLAN
ANYTHING ORGANIC THAT DECOMPOSES!

KATIE
I really don't know about this.

Dylan scoops up poop with his shovel.

DYLAN
IN THE THIRD WORLD,
BIOGAS IS THE FUEL OF THE PEOPLE
WITH THIS FUEL WE COULD BUILD A
(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 CATHEDRAL
 OF SUSTAINABLE ELECTRICITY!

Dylan tries to dump the poop from his shovel into the buck that Katie's holding, but it lands on her shoe.

Dylan doesn't notice.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
 ONE MAN'S POOP IS ANOTHER MAN'S
 FERTILIZER!
 ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S
 ELECTRICITY!
 ONE MAN'S--

Katie tries in vain to clean her shoe.

KATIE
 Okay, I get.

DYLAN
 So you'll help me?

Dylan's eyes sparkle.

Katie sighs.

KATIE
 Yeah, I guess so.

DYLAN
 OKAY, THEN LET'S DO THIS ...
 TOGETHER!

They side-hug, holding each other's shoulders.

KATIE & DYLAN
 BIOMETHANE CAN COME FROM MANY
 THINGS:

KATIE
 BRANCHES, LEAVES AND OTHER
 DEBRIS FROM STREAMS.

KATIE & DYLAN
 IT CAN COME FROM ANYTHING THAT
 DECOMPOSES.

DYLAN
 WE'LL GET SOME MASKS TO PROTECT OUR
 NOSES.

KATIE & DYLAN
BIOMETHANE ENERGY!
THE FUEL OF THE FUTURE!
BIOMETHANE ENERGY!
HOORAY FOR BIOMETHANE ENERGY!

Cows disperse. Katie and Dylan catch a whiff of something and fan their noses.

DAIRY FARMER (50s), a woman with dirty work boots, sidles up to the pair.

DAIRY FARMER
You two ready?

Dylan and Katie nod.

Katie pats a cow and gives it a kiss before following the farmer and Dylan. Cow dirt or hair have gotten stuck to her lips, so Katie keeps wiping her mouth to get rid of whatever that was.

INT. FARM DIGESTER ROOM - SAME

Inside a wooden shelter with a dirt floor, Katie and Dylan explore the primitive digester. Dairy Farmer walks around the large device. She taps the metal contraption.

DAIRY FARMER
Not much to look at, but she gets the job done.

DYLAN
How does it work, exactly?

DAIRY FARMER
We collect the cow dung from the stalls over there and dump it into a giant bin on the other side of this wall.

She opens the door between them and the bin so they see what looks like a giant portable swimming pool with a lid.

DAIRY FARMER (CONT'D)
It's an anaerobic process, so we have to make sure no oxygen gets in.

Dylan stands very close to Katie as he leans over to see the contraption.

DAIRY FARMER (CONT'D)

It sits there for a while and all of the methane gas rises out of the turds--sorry, cow dung--and hangs out in this receptacle until it gets processed through our convertor to make electricity.

KATIE

And you use this to power your farm?

DAIRY FARMER

Yep.

KATIE

Do you think this would work for residential or commercial use?

DAIRY FARMER

Well, all the dairies in our region are required to use this system to cut down on waste, but even with all my cattle, we just generate enough power for the farm. Maybe if you supplemented it with other things ...

Dylan gazes at Katie writing down notes. He spots something on the floor and picks it up.

DAIRY FARMER (CONT'D)

I don't know. Maybe. The problem has more to do with creating an infrastructure. It takes a lot of work to set up this system, but once it gets running, it's pretty easy.

KATIE

But if I wanted to make something like this and say, power a cell phone, that'd work?

DAIRY FARMER

Sure.

KATIE

Sweet!

Katie smiles at Dylan. He puts something in her hand and winks at her as he follows Dairy Farmer to the next room.

Katie sees that it's a metal cow tag imprinted with the number one.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Mom and Dad wash clothes in large basins. Katie tries scrubbing her stained leggings with glycerin soap.

KATIE

I don't think this is going to come out. What happened to our detergent?

MOM

We made this soap ourselves out of vegetable oil. The least you could do is try it.

Katie rolls her eyes.

KATIE

Hey, is it okay if we set up our science experiment in the backyard? There isn't enough space at school.

Dad wrings out a towel drenched in water.

DAD

Sure, whatever you need, Strawberry Scone.

Mom hangs clothes up on the line, but the weight of the water makes the line sag and fall to the ground.

MOM

We may need a stronger clothes line.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

The neighbors' houses are illuminated by lights in the trees, electric chandeliers, and massive flat screen televisions.

Katie's house is pitch black. The tomato cages look spooky and ominous in the darkness.

Knock at the front door.

INT. FOYER - SAME

Mom answers the door to Florence wearing a sweater vest. She carries a large wrench and a flashlight.

MOM

Hello, Florence. May I help you?

FLORENCE

Your lights are out!

MOM

I know--we had the electricity shut off.

FLORENCE

You and Gary having financial problems?

MOM

Oh, no! We're protesting the exploitation of resources to power unnecessary devices.

FLORENCE

What you should be protesting is the misinformation about God's good works.

MOM

Um, no thank you.

FLORENCE

It's a safety hazard, you know.

MOM

Excuse me?

FLORENCE

Vagrants! Criminals! Anyone can sneak around your bushes and all that crap you have piled up in your yard when it's dark.

Mom glances over Florence's shoulder at ...

EXT. FLORENCE'S HOUSE - SAME

More like a detention facility, Florence's house is surrounded by barbed wire fences and not a single leaf of landscaping. The building glows with security lights and cameras. Two aggressive DOBERMANS bark.

INT. KATIE'S FOYER - SAME

MOM

We've lived here for 17 years and never had a problem with criminals. Cloying neighbors, on the other--

FLORENCE

Your house is a hotspot for terrorist rats! My granddaughter's living with me, and it's my job to protect her.

MOM

I don't really think ...

FLORENCE

Oh, I get it. You're selling drugs!

MOM

What?

FLORENCE

I should've known. You're growing marijuana.

MOM

No! Florence, we're not--

FLORENCE

I've got my eyes on you!

Florence's eyes get wider and crazier than seems human.

Mom flinches.

EXT. KATIE'S FRONT YARD - SAME

Florence heads home, surveying the dark parts of Katie's yard with her flashlight as she goes.

EXT. FLORENCE'S FRONT YARD - SAME

Ella stands at the doorway.

ELLA

Granny! Your police spotter is going off!

Florence shuffles across the street.

FLORENCE

Coming!

EXT. KATIE'S FRONT DOOR - SAME

Mom shakes her head and closes the door.

INT. LYRIC'S BEDROOM - SAME

Katie finishes plugging in her phone, laptop, and microwave. She puts a frozen pizza pocket in her microwave from home and starts it. Lyric watches as she wraps a scarf around her neck.

LYRIC

You know, we have a microwave.

KATIE

It's sentimental. What's with the scarf?

Lyric makes sure her hickies are covered.

LYRIC

My mom. You know how she is about boys.

She brushes her hair in front of a mirror plastered with buttons that say "Slow Food," "Rats Have Rights," "Green Party," and the Darwin fish symbol.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

Your parents are so cool. They want to recycle, and they're not freaked out about you getting a boyfriend.

KATIE

I actually have the opposite problem. I just want to focus on school and they keep wanting me to "expand my horizons," and they keep telling me about their intimacy workshops.

LYRIC

Lucky.

KATIE

So ... did I tell you about my partner for the science fair?

LYRIC

No, who is it?

KATIE

Dylan Davis.

LYRIC

Nice! I guess you'll be "expanding your horizons" after all!

KATIE

Yeah, right. He wears leather.

LYRIC

Ooh, a bad boy. So you're fracking?

KATIE

No! I just said--

LYRIC

Fracking. Your science fair project.

KATIE

Oh. Right. No, Dylan wanted to work on sustainable energy, which is probably better because it's solution-oriented.

LYRIC

(distracted)

You know, I miss working with you, but I have to say that working with Max is really great.

KATIE

"Working." Right.

The microwave beeps and Katie beams. She takes out the super hot pizza pocket with a napkin and breathes it in.

KATIE (CONT'D)

(blissful)

Pizza pockets ... Hey! Is it okay if we watch "America's Top Scientist?!"

LYRIC

Uh, *yeahhh!*

INT. CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

The lab is made up of black tables with high, narrow shelves hovering above the center.

Mr. Kaplan talks to students wearing goggles and experimenting with chemicals.

Katie and Dylan stand with their own set of beakers. Katie removes a smoothie in a mason jar from her backpack.

KATIE

Um, I got you a present.

DYLAN

Oh yeah?

KATIE

Yeah, it's a banana almond oatmeal smoothie.

Dylan opens the jar and smells it.

DYLAN

That's really nice--I didn't really eat breakfast this morning, so--

He takes a swig.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Hey, that's pretty good!

KATIE

Yeah. I know people are scared of vegan things so I try to only give people stuff from the recipes I know are good.

DYLAN

Thanks!

Dylan keeps drinking and turns back to his work.

KATIE

Um, I kind of feel dumb saying this, but ...

DYLAN

What is it?

KATIE

I mean, we don't have electricity at my house, so I had to soak the almonds and the oatmeal and grind it all by hand. I just wanted you to know that I put a lot of effort into it. It wasn't like, "Oh, let me do this quick thing."

DYLAN

Wow. Okay. Yeah, thanks for telling me that. I definitely wouldn't have realized the significance otherwise. Thanks, Katie.

KATIE

(pleased)

You're welcome.

They lock eyes for a few moments.

DYLAN

Hey, I'm going to grab the scale real quick.

KATIE

I can get it--

DYLAN

(smiling)

I got it.

Katie looks up as Dylan walks over to the supply closet.

KATIE

Okay.

She admires his stride, the way he smiles at everyone he passes and the way they smile back, the way he taps on the tables he passes.

She keeps following him with her eyes until she knocks stuff off the table, including Dylan's leather jacket which falls on the floor.

Katie instinctively reaches to pick up the jacket, but pulls back before she touches it. She stares at the jacket and tries to pick it up one more time, but she just can't do it. She turns and pretends it isn't there.

Dylan returns, picks up his jacket, and tosses it on the table. Katie watches him with the corner of her eye.

DYLAN
I miss anything?

KATIE
Nope.

Katie looks over at Ella studying a small white LAB MOUSE.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I don't think people should be
allowed to use live animals.

DYLAN
You'd rather she kill it first?

KATIE
No!

DYLAN
It was a joke.

KATIE
I don't joke about those kinds of
things.

Katie squirms in her shirt.

DYLAN
Are you okay?

Katie wears disposable gloves and retrieves a chunk of
decomposing produce with a pair of tongs.

KATIE
It's my clothes--we dried them on
the line and now they're really
hard and scratchy.

She carefully places the slimy clump onto a dish on a scale.

KATIE (CONT'D)
And my pants are still kind of
damp.

Dylan checks out the back side of Katie's pants while she
marks the weight in her notebook. Ella sits at the other end
of the room and glares at Katie and Dylan.

DYLAN
I'll bring in the manure tomorrow.

KATIE

I was actually thinking we could just skip the manure and focus on generating biogas from plants.

DYLAN

But we already collected buckets of it.

KATIE

I know. I just think that in the longterm, it's better if we don't use animal byproducts.

DYLAN

Why not? They're already pooping. It would just sit around otherwise.

KATIE

Using animal byproducts ensures that animals will continue being exploited.

Mr. Kaplan approaches Katie and Dylan. He looks at the plastic bag.

MR. KAPLAN

Lunch?

DYLAN

Only some of it.

KATIE

We're measuring methane gas emissions from leftover produce.

MR. KAPLAN

Tell me what you're doing.

The experiment involves three pieces of glassware: on the left is a narrow-necked beaker, in the middle is a larger beaker with water, and on the right is a smaller jar with a wide mouth.

Katie transfers the goop from the tray to the first beaker and seals it with a tapered, black rubber topper.

KATIE

We're sealing off this beaker so that all of the gas that comes out of the composting produce goes into the middle beaker.

Dylan connects the beakers with tubes and traces the path the

gas will travel.

DYLAN

After the gas goes from the first beaker to the second, the gas displaces the water from this beaker into this one.

Katie indicates an imaginary change of water level with her hand.

KATIE

We can measure the gas output by seeing how much the water level has changed.

MR. KAPLAN

Looks good. Why are you using produce and not manure to generate methane?

Dylan looks at Katie.

KATIE

Because produce, especially fruit, has more acids, which we think will decompose faster and therefore release methane faster.

DYLAN

But mostly because Katie is vegan and didn't want to use animal byproducts in the experiment.

Mr. Kaplan raises an eyebrow.

KATIE

And we really think the produce will be at least as effective.

MR. KAPLAN

Since you're performing an *experiment*, perhaps you could *test* your ideas.

Katie looks at Dylan, who shrugs.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

You only have to take my advice if you care about winning the science fair.

Mr. Kaplan walks away, revealing a wall full of photos of Em & M and their winning science fair projects, including a self-driving car that they "drive" while reading books.

KATIE

But I'm *vegan* ...

Katie's face drops like a clump of decomposing tomatoes.

EXT. FARMERS MARKET - DAY

Sun shines on the outdoor farmers market. White canopies house colorful bins of produce.

Mom and Dad tow a wagon with fresh produce while carrying clipboards full of petitions. Katie walks alongside.

KATIE

I'm going to get a Mediterranean wrap.

TREE

Lyric and Max cuddle under a tree. Max focuses on his laptop and Lyric studies pages from a stack of science journals.

LYRIC

According to the Journal of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, the addition of *O. acuminata* extracellular product with plant growth hormones will provide excellent induction and elongation in cotton.

Max raises an eyebrow at Lyric and then grins.

MAX

Phenomenal!

Lyric and Max become a raging ball of pheromones and saliva. They yank themselves away from each other and quickly take some notes. They make out more until ...

Katie walks up with a falafel sandwich wrapped in foil. She has a clump of hummus on her face.

KATIE

Hey, guys!

Max's hand is mysteriously hidden by Lyric's blouse.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Oh!

Max and Lyric adjust themselves.

LYRIC

Hey ... Katie. What's going on?

Lyric notices the hummus and pretends to wipe food off the side of her mouth to cue Katie. Katie catches the cue and wipes her face.

KATIE

Just hanging out with my parents.

Mom and Dad collect signatures from other Farmers Market patrons on their clipboards.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Do you want to hang out later? My cell phone battery keeps dying and none of the teachers will let me charge my phone in class, so I don't know if you left me any messages?

LYRIC

Oh, yeah ... sorry. Max and I have been super busy with our science fair project. Hey, did you hear what Em & M are doing for the science fair?

KATIE

No, what?

MAX

Synthetic diamonds!

KATIE

Really?! How do you do that?

LYRIC

I'm not sure, but however they do it, they need a lot of electricity. The school needs to file a request to increase wattage to the lab because of how much power it's going to take.

KATIE

That's so wasteful!

MAX

They're going to waste a lot of time cutting through red tape is what they're doing. It took forever just to get permission for the particle gun, and we already had one in the district.

KATIE

Particle gun? Wait. Isn't that what they use for genetic engineering?

Max is focused on his phone.

MAX

Yeah, it's awesome.

LYRIC

I know what you're thinking, but our project is the good kind of GE. We're changing the structure of cotton cells so the cotton threads grow already colored, eliminating the need for toxic dyes in textiles.

MAX

Cutting edge, baby!

Max winks at Lyric.

KATIE

Since when do you condone genetic engineering??

Max and Lyric hold hands.

LYRIC

Since I learned the difference between responsible and irresponsible GE.

KATIE

There's no such thing! What about all of those petitions against GMOs?

LYRIC

This is totally different. We're getting rid of pollution and making the environment cleaner, not worse.

KATIE

What if your cells spread into the environment?

MAX

We're integrating a suicide vector so they can't spread without a coded host.

KATIE

Is this even *legal*?

A farmer's market PATRON picking carrots glances at them.

MAX

The technology is so new that there aren't really any regulations. Especially here in the U.S.

KATIE

Ah-ha! So it *is* unethical!

LYRIC

Katie, you're not listening.

KATIE

You're *high school students*! You can't mess with genetics!

MAX

Sure we can.

KATIE

This goes against everything you believe in.

LYRIC

This project is totally consistent with my desire to make the world a better place.

KATIE

Yeah, "one meal at a time." Every building block is supposed to feed the larger mission.

LYRIC

Katie, not all GE is the same. Not all of it is bad. This project is--

KATIE

You can find any research to justify what you want to do.

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

But you can't give up on your own beliefs and values. You know what this makes you? A sell-out.

LYRIC

I am not a sell-out!

Katie sings "Sell-Out" in the style of classic punk rock.

KATIE

(singing)

YOU USED TO HAVE MORALS,
YOU USED TO HAVE BELIEFS
THAT YOU DEFENDED FROM THE BOTTOM
OF YOUR HEART.
BUT NOW YOU HAVE A BOYFRIEND--

LYRIC

Max has nothing to do with this.

KATIE

AND EVERYTHING'S UNDONE,
BECAUSE YOU'RE A SELL-OUT!
A SELL-OUT!
A NASTY, SCABBY, FORMER HIPPIE
SELL-OUT!
WHAT ABOUT THE PETITIONS?
WHAT ABOUT THE PROTEST SIGNS?

Lyric starts packing her belongings.

KATIE (CONT'D)

DID YOU FORGET THAT YOU CARED AT
ONE TIME?
BUT NOW YOU HAVE THIS BOY
WHO SEEMS TO HAVE GREAT SKIN,

Max shrugs and smiles as he acknowledges the crowd forming around them.

KATIE (CONT'D)

BUT WHAT GOOD IS THAT WHEN
YOU'VE BECOME A SELL-OUT?

LYRIC

THAT'S ENOUGH!
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING
ABOUT.
I CARE SO MUCH ABOUT THE
ENVIRONMENT
THAT I'M WILLING TO SACRIFICE MY
IGNORANCE FOR THE SAKE OF IT.
IF YOU CARED ABOUT THE WORLD AT
LARGE

(MORE)

LYRIC (CONT'D)
YOU WOULDN'T ACCUSE ME OF THE
THINGS YOU CHARGE.

KATIE
YOU'RE MAKING EXCUSES FOR STRAYING
FROM THE PATH,

LYRIC
YOU'RE STUCK IN YOUR OWN WORLD,
JUST DO THE MATH:
ONE SOLUTION DOESN'T SOLVE ALL THE
WORLD'S WOES,
BUT THIS SCIENCE PROJECT IS THE ONE
I CHOSE,
AND YOU SHOULD RESPECT MY CHOICES,
BECAUSE WE--

KATIE
SORRY, MAGGIE THATCHER, I COULDN'T
HEAR ANYTHING YOU SAID,
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE A SELL-
OUT!
A SELL-OUT!

Lyric shakes her head and turns away.

KATIE (CONT'D)
ALL I HEAR IS THE RAMBLINGS OF A
SELL-OUT!

Lyric faces Katie.

LYRIC
You're being a real piece of
detritus.

KATIE
It's because of Max, isn't it? You
just want to go along with anything
he does!

LYRIC
For your information, it was my
idea to use GE, because I think
it's the best solution for the
problem.

KATIE
Is this so that he'll like you? You
don't have to lose yourself to have
a boyfriend.

LYRIC

You have no idea what you're talking about. You don't want to get past your own limited ideas of how the world is supposed to work? Fine. But don't take it out on me!

Lyric storms off.

MAX

Now I can see why she didn't want to work with you anymore.

Max follows Lyric. A judgemental swarm of FARMERS MARKET PATRONS stare at Katie.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Katie makes a bee-line to the refrigerator, but throws her hands up at the refrigerator hole.

KATIE

Argh!

She collapses into the hole and cries.

MOM (O.S.)

Katie? Are you home?

Mom and Dad roll the wagon full of farmers market goodies into the kitchen.

MOM (CONT'D)

Why'd you run off? They were giving away free samples of crimini mushrooms.

DAD

What's the matter, Meer Cat?

KATIE

Lyric hates me.

MOM

Oh, that's not true.

Dad removes a large jar of pink kombucha from a cabinet. It has a mushroom-like thing floating at the top of it.

DAD

Kombucha?

Katie shakes her head "no."

KATIE

It turns out that Lyric is a total sell-out.

MOM

Nooo...

KATIE

Her science fair project is about genetic engineering!

Dad spits out his drink.

MOM

You're joking, right?

DAD

Wait, is it about what's wrong with genetic engineering?

KATIE

No. They *like* GE. Ever since she got a boyfriend, it's like she's a different person.

MOM

Oh, honey.

DAD

Genetic engineering in the high schools. Do you want us to protest at your school?

KATIE

No!

DAD

We have lots of signs. I have a couple of hours tomorrow afternoon.

MOM

Or we can talk to your principal.

KATIE

I don't think that'll help.

DAD

Well, here's some kombucha. Your mom and I are going to test the walls for lead. And if you change your mind, I'm always up for a good sit-in.

Doorbell rings. Katie huddles in her refrigerator hole.

MOM
If that's Florence, pretend we're
not here.

DAD (O.S.)
Katie!

Dad walks in with Dylan carrying a large plastic bin.

DAD (CONT'D)
There's a young man here for you.
Your mother and I are going to be
upstairs if you need anything.

MOM
(whispering to Katie)
Do want to borrow our kama sutra?

Katie rattles her head "No!" as she scrambles up. Dad winks
at her and Mom gives a thumbs up as they leave.

DYLAN
What should I do with this?

KATIE
Follow me.

Dylan notices dust and crumbs all over the back of Katie's
pants as she leads him outside.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Dylan and Katie adjust the large digester made out of a cut
plastic trash bin and a sealed tube. Dylan looks at the
printed directions.

KATIE
So I can actually hook this up to a
stove or something and have *cooked*
food?

DYLAN
That'd be the idea. *Eventually*.

Katie bounces with glee.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
I haven't seen someone so excited
about cooking on a stove since my
dad and I did the Muir Trail.

KATIE

You guys did the John Muir Trail?!
I was reading about that, but
didn't think I could handle hiking
for three weeks straight. Then
again, I guess it's a lot like
living here.

DYLAN

Yeah. Maybe we can go hiking
sometime.

Katie smiles for a moment too long. She grabs a small compost
bucket and hands it to Dylan.

KATIE

Here's some source material!

DYLAN

Oh, thanks.

Dylan pokes around the compost and starts throwing apple
cores and unused kale stalks into the digester. He pulls out
a brochure.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

What's this?

The dirty, wet brochure is titled "Creation Science" with an
image of Jesus wearing lab goggles.

KATIE

That's my neighbor. She has very
strong beliefs.

DYLAN

Must be the water on this street.

Dylan throws the brochure back in the compost bin and throws
all the produce waste into the digester.

KATIE

What's that supposed to mean?

DYLAN

It's a joke. Because your family
doesn't use electricity.

KATIE

What's wrong with that?

DYLAN

Nothing. Well, you can't power any
of your appliances or take hot
showers.

KATIE

We just care about our impact on
the world.

DYLAN

Hey, I didn't mean anything. We all
get obsessive about stuff.

KATIE

You just called me obsessive and
said I was like my crazy neighbor.

DYLAN

I just said you had strong beliefs.

KATIE

Like my crazy neighbor.

DYLAN

What just happened? I was only
making a joke. I think it's really
cool that you're so committed to
your beliefs.

KATIE

You do?

DYLAN

Yeah.

Dylan walks up to Katie. He sings the love song, "You Had Me
at CH4."

DYLAN (CONT'D)

(singing)

IT'S NOT EVERYDAY I FIND SOMEONE
LIKE YOU.

KATIE

OBSSESSIVE?

DYLAN

COMMITTED AND CARING
AND FULL OF CONFIDENCE.

KATIE

(spoken)

I'm not sure about the

Dylan brushes Katie's hair with his fingers.

KATIE (CONT'D)
(singing)
CONFIDENCE PART.

DYLAN
WHEN OTHER PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT
GRADES
YOU LOOK PAST THAT AND ASK THE HARD
QUESTIONS.
HOW DO MY ACTIONS AFFECT EVERYONE
ELSE?
AND WHAT CAN I SACRIFICE TO BUILD
THE WORLD I WANT TO LIVE IN?

Katie's eyes are locked on Dylan.

KATIE
THAT PART'S PRETTY TRUE.

DYLAN
PROTECTING OUR PLANET
IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF YOUR MIND.
WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS
IS MORE PEOPLE OF YOUR KIND ...

Dylan's face gets close to Katie's. He closes his eyes, about to kiss her.

Katie takes a step back.

KATIE
Uh, I don't think we have enough
here to run the digester. Do you
have anything else we can use?

DYLAN
No. Maybe we can try to collect
stuff from the cafeteria tomorrow?

KATIE
Cool. Well, I guess we're all set
for today.

DYLAN
Then I guess I should go ...

KATIE
Yeah.

Dylan starts packing his stuff.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Hey.

Dylan turns around, hopeful.

DYLAN

Yeah?

KATIE

Do you think you could give me a
ride somewhere?

DYLAN

Sure.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EVENING

Dylan's truck pulls up into the lot. Katie gets out and basks
in the street lights. Dylan approaches her.

KATIE

Sometimes it's nice to feel
unnatural light on my skin.

Dylan laughs and escorts Katie into the Food Co-op.

INT. FOOD CO-OP - SAME

Surrounded by wicker baskets of produce, Katie shoves all
sorts of packaged cookies and treats into her shopping
basket.

DYLAN

It's like you're packing a bomb
shelter--in Candy Land.

KATIE

Oh, it's a lot like that.

Katie freezes and turns to Dylan.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Will you share a sorbet with me???

EXT. PARKING LOT - SAME

Katie and Dylan eat out of a pint of mango sorbet. Katie
groans with pleasure.

KATIE

This is the best night of my life.

Dylan smiles.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Soon to be topped by our winning
the science fair in May.

She grins and keeps eating.

EXT. KATIE'S HOUSE - SAME

Dylan and Katie pull up to her house. Katie looks over at him and smiles. He smiles back.

DYLAN
That was fun.

KATIE
Yeah.

Dylan starts leaning toward her ...

But Katie has already turned and opened her door. She grabs two overflowing canvas bags of food from the truck.

KATIE (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Thank you!

DYLAN
Anytime. Call me if you need
anything else.

Katie glares at Dylan.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Or throw a rock at my window or
something.

Katie smiles. Dylan drives off and Katie sneaks into the backyard with her bags. Florence watches her from across the street.

INT. KATIE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

Mom, Dad, and Katie sit around the small table. The light is getting dim.

Katie pushes her dish away.

MOM
Not hungry?

KATIE

Not really. Aren't you guys getting tired of eating kale all the time?

MOM

We added lemon tonight.

KATIE

Yeah, but don't you want something else? Don't you miss having veggie burgers?

DAD

Stevia Bear, you know how we feel about eating food that has to be cooked.

MOM

Maybe we can plant some red peppers--that'll add some zing.

KATIE

Did you guys ever eat meat?

Mom and Dad sit upright.

DAD

Why do you ask?

MOM

Is Dylan pressuring you ... to eat meat?

KATIE

What? No. I'm just wondering. I mean, you two weren't always vegan, were you?

Mom and Dad fidget.

MOM

I did eat chicken ... once.

Dad looks shocked.

MOM (CONT'D)

It was an accident! I ordered a salad and didn't realize that it had chicken on it. I mean, chicken on a *salad*? Who does that?

KATIE

What was it like? Did you feel sick afterwards?

MOM

Actually ... no, I felt fine. I
felt a little more ... satiated
than normal.

Dad glares at Mom.

MOM (CONT'D)

She's 17! I'm not going to lie to
her.

KATIE

Did you ever eat meat, Dad?

DAD

I don't think this is appropriate
conversation for the dinner table.

Dad eats in silence, leaving Mom and Katie uncomfortable.

INT. KATIE'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Katie sits on her bed. The room is lit only by the
streetlights outside.

LYRIC'S VOICEMAIL (V.O.)

Hey! This is Lyric's voicemail.
Leave a message and I'll get back
to you. Your body is your temple!

KATIE

Hey! I was hoping to talk to you
... my phone battery's running low.
Maybe we can talk at school?

The phone shuts off and the screen on Katie's phone goes
black.

Katie hugs her knees for a moment and then gets up. She
shouts to her parents in the other room.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'm going to the library!

INT. LIBRARY - EVENING

Katie works on her laptop inside the bright library. The
LIBRARIAN (55+), a woman wearing a large jeweled peacock pin,
places chairs upside down on the tables around her.

LIBRARIAN

The library closed ten minutes ago,
Hun.

KATIE

I know--I'm just trying to finish
submitting my college applications.

Librarian purses her lips. Katie packs up all of her charging
devices.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

Katie fixates on notes in her binder while walking through
the crowd. She bumps into a student who's standing in the
middle.

KATIE

Excuse me ...

Em & M stand in the middle of a ring of students, holding
hangers with bikinis and shorts. The PRINCIPAL, overdressed
for the occasion, presents Em & M with a pair medals.

PRINCIPAL

In honor of your fine work
organizing the development of the
Alice Hamilton Waterpark.

Students clap. A photographer snaps shots of Em & M with the
principal.

KATIE

We're in a drought! That project is
a huge waste of resources!

Everyone turns and glares at Katie.

Defiant, Katie pushes past the students blocking her way, but
she trips on an inflatable pool filled with water and
floating toys. Everyone laughs, except Em & M who just look
smug. The photographer snaps a photo of Katie.

EXT. KATIE'S BACKYARD - DAY

Katie knits while Dylan attaches the tube from the digester
to a small burner. Katie holds up her knitting.

DYLAN

You giving that to a niece or
something?

KATIE

No, it's a penguin sweater. I'm donating it to a penguin rehabilitation center.

DYLAN

Penguins don't need sweaters--they live in the snow.

KATIE

I know. They put these on stuffed animals for their fundraisers.

Katie puts her knitting down and looks at the burner.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Do you think this is really going to work?

DYLAN

It should.

Katie squeals and picks up a package of veggie burgers.

KATIE

I'm going to eat hot food in my own house!!!

Dylan smiles.

DYLAN

You want to do the honors?

Katie turns a knob on the burner. It lights. Katie shrieks and jumps up and down.

KATIE

We did it! Mom! Dad! Come out here!

Mom and Dad come racing out of the kitchen.

MOM

What is it??

KATIE

Look! We can cook food!

Mom smiles but Dad grimaces.

DAD

That's great, Koala Bear, but we're still boycotting unnecessary fuel use.

KATIE

But ...

MOM

(to Dad)

Honey ...

DAD

When you kids are ready, we have
dessert--fresh lemon water, with
mint!

Mom's smile goes away, and she follows Dad inside the house.

DYLAN

That was strange.

Katie frowns.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

You want me to help you with that?

KATIE

Sure.

Katie hands Dylan the veggie burgers and he tosses them onto
a frying pan. The burgers sizzle.

EXT. KATIE'S FRONT YARD - EVENING

Dylan unlocks the door to his truck and is about to get in
when Ella bounces up to him.

ELLA

Hi, Dylan!

DYLAN

Oh, hey, Ella. You scared me. What
are you doing here?

ELLA

Oh, I live across the street.
You're working with Katie on your
science fair project?

DYLAN

Yep. Just wrapping up for the
night.

ELLA

So are you two, like, dating or
something?

DYLAN

Well ...

ELLA

Because if you're not--

Ella runs her hand down the front of Dylan's jacket.

ELLA (CONT'D)

--I'm looking for a date for the
Christmas Dance at my church.

Dylan removes Ella's hand.

DYLAN

That's really nice of you, but I
think I'm busy.

ELLA

But you don't know when it is.

DYLAN

It's around Christmas?

ELLA

Uh-huh.

DYLAN

Yeah. Busy.

Dylan gets into his truck and starts the engine.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

See you at school.

Dylan drives off.

INT. DYLAN'S TRUCK - SAME

Dylan glances at Ella through his rearview mirror. She stands
with her arms crossed.

INT. CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

Katie pets a white mouse in a cage.

KATIE

Don't worry. When this project is
over, I'll save you.

Katie walks over to Dylan and their experiment. He smiles at
her and she smiles back.

DYLAN

You ready?

Katie nods as she puts on disposable gloves. Similar to the first experiment, Katie retrieves a chunk of cow dung from a white bucket ...

KATIE

This is so disgusting.

... and places it on a metal tray.

Dylan records the weight in a notebook. He then transfers the dung into a beaker with a little bit of water.

Katie swirls around the dung with the water until it all dissolves into a thick, brown fluid. Katie looks like she might vomit.

DYLAN

You want me to do this part?

KATIE

I got it.

They seal the beaker and connect it with tubes, exactly the same way that the first experiment was set up.

HECKLER, a jock-type, sniffs Dylan and then Katie.

HECKLER

You two eat a bunch of burritos today?

DYLAN

We're measuring methane gas emissions.

HECKLER

From your butt?

HECKLER smells around and makes a face before walking off.

DYLAN

Hey, the hiking club is taking a trip to Monterey this weekend.

KATIE

Oh, I thought we were going to set up the burner so I could power my phone with the biomethane?

DYLAN

Right. Maybe I can over this
afternoon and do it?

KATIE

Really?! That would be so great!

DYLAN

And then you'd be free to go to
Monterey this weekend?

KATIE

Yeah, I think so.

They smile again and get back to their work.

Katie gazes at Dylan as he types on a graphics calculator.
Even his nails are perfect. Katie's nails are filthy. She
gazes back at Dylan.

EXT. BARN - DAY (KATIE'S FANTASY)

Katie is dressed in a simple brown dress and apron. Dylan,
dressed like a dirty farm boy, milks a cow with a wooden
bucket. He looks up at Katie and smiles as he walks out of
the barn.

KATIE

Farm boy!

Dylan stops and turns. Katie looks around.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Hand me that bucket.

He slowly walks toward Katie and hands her the bucket of
milk. They gaze at each other as their faces get closer and
closer ...

BACK TO PRESENT

DYLAN

That's weird.

KATIE

What is?!

DYLAN

It looks like the cow dung is
releasing a lot more methane than
the plant matter--there's a
difference of 30%.

KATIE

How is that possible?

DYLAN

It actually seems kind of obvious if you think about it. The cow already broke down a lot of the material by digesting it, so there's just less to do to free the methane molecules.

KATIE

Maybe there's a leak in the one with plant matter.

DYLAN

These are airtight.

KATIE

But I want to use plant material for power!

DYLAN

Why wouldn't you want to use the one that works better?

KATIE

Because I'm *vegan*.

DYLAN

So you just want to waste a really effective, environmentally responsible fuel source because you like to eat tofu dogs?

KATIE

I just don't think people should be locking up and killing animals for food.

DYLAN

Well, they are, so why not make the most of it? The cows are going to poop anyway.

Katie pretends to analyze figures in her notebook.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Katie! This is a science project. What's the point of being a scientist if you don't want to acknowledge the truth?

Katie looks Dylan in the eye and starts singing the jazzy and emotional, "I'm Always Right (So You Must Be Wrong)."

KATIE
(singing)
LOOK HERE: I'VE RESEARCHED THIS
ISSUE,
AND I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

Katie presents her tub of compost.

KATIE (CONT'D)
THERE'S NO REASON TO EXPLOIT THOSE
COWS
WHEN MY COMPOST CAN DO THE JOB.

DYLAN
IT'S NOT JUST THE MANURE
THAT WE'RE ARGUING ABOUT:
IT'S THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCIENCE
AND THE INTEGRITY OF OUR WORK.

Katie gets in Dylan's face.

KATIE
TRUST ME: I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING
ABOUT.

Dylan stands firm.

DYLAN
AND SO DO I!

Katie backs up and parades around the lab, like she owns the place.

KATIE
CLEARLY, YOU DON'T, BECAUSE
OTHERWISE
WE WOULDN'T BE STANDING HERE NOW.
I'M OFFERING A BETTER SOLUTION:
ONE THAT WORKS AND PROTECTS THE
COWS!

Dylan follows after her.

DYLAN
YOU'RE BEING STUBBORN,
IGNORING CRITICAL FACTS.
YOU'RE BEING STUBBORN,
IGNORING CRITICAL FACTS.

Katie cradles a science text book in her arms.

KATIE
I DIDN'T WANT TO SAY THIS,
BUT YOU'RE GIVING ME NO OTHER
CHOICE:
I'M ALWAYS RIGHT,
SO JUST LISTEN TO MY VOICE.

DYLAN
WHAT?

KATIE
IF I'M ALWAYS RIGHT,
AND IT'S TRUE THAT I AM,
IF I'M ALWAYS RIGHT,

Katie slams the textbook on a table next to Dylan.

KATIE (CONT'D)
THEN YOU MUST BE WRONG!

DYLAN
I DON'T THINK SO.

KATIE
YOU'RE WRONG!

DYLAN
I DON'T THINK SO.

KATIE
YOU'RE WRONG!

DYLAN
I DON'T THINK SO.

KATIE
WRONG!

Katie strides over to the emergency eyewash station.

KATIE (CONT'D)
THE TIMES I'VE MADE A MISTAKE
COULD BE COUNTED ON MY TOES.
MARK THIS IN YOUR BOOK,

Mr. Kaplan uses body language to distance Katie from the eyewash station. She complies as she sings.

KATIE (CONT'D)
IT'S A FACT THAT EVERYBODY KNOWS.

Katie walks in front of a massive cabinet of lab glassware.

DYLAN
 YOU'RE REALLY BEING OBNOXIOUS,
 I'M GOING TO CALL YOU OUT:
 SCIENCE ISN'T ABOUT YOUR EGO,
 IT'S ABOUT REMOVING ALL DOUBT.

A STUDENT opens the glassware cabinet and proceeds to collect several flasks.

KATIE & DYLAN
 I RESEARCHED THIS QUESTION.
 I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

Student collects a few more flasks and is having trouble holding them all.

KATIE
 WE'RE NOT GOING TO EXPLOIT THE
 COWS!

DYLAN
 THEY'RE NOT BEING EXPLOITED!

KATIE
 I WON'T DO SOMETHING THAT CONFLICTS
 WITH MY MORALS,
 AND YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE MY
 MIND.

DYLAN
 YOU'RE BEING UNREASONABLE, SHORT-
 SIGHTED.
 IS FAILING OUR PROJECT WORTH YOUR
 STUBBORN APPROACH?

KATIE
 I'VE DONE THE RESEARCH,
 I KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

Student tries to balance the collection of flasks. Dylan tries to stay clear of student.

DYLAN
 I'VE DONE THE RESEARCH,
 I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING
 ABOUT.

KATIE
 THE FACTS REMAIN THE SAME:
 I'M ALWAYS RIGHT,
 SO YOU MUST BE WRONG!

Student tries to walk around Katie, but she's standing in the way.

KATIE (CONT'D)
WRONG! WRONG!

Student plows by Katie.

WRONG!

Katie's arms knock over all of the flasks in a momentous CRASH.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I'm so sorry!

Student tries to clean up the glass.

Mr. Kaplan appears with a utility broom and dustpan.

MR. KAPLAN
Stand back! Safety hazzard!

Student glares at Katie. Katie backs up.

DYLAN
I've been to the farms--I know how they're treated. I happen to like hamburgers. Does that make me a bad person?

Katie avoids eye contact.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
It's hard to be partners with someone who won't talk to me.

KATIE
Fine.

Katie gets up and packs her stuff.

DYLAN
What time should I come over to hook up the generator?

KATIE
Don't bother. I'll do it myself.

DYLAN
Do you even know how to set it up?

KATIE
I can read directions. It's not like you've done this before, either.

DYLAN
This is my project, too.

KATIE
Why don't you go and eat a
hamburger?!

Katie marches out the door.

Mr. Kaplan looks up as he sweeps.

MR. KAPLAN
Remember to pick up your paper on
the way out!

Katie grabs a paper with her name on it and storms out.

DYLAN
You're being really immature for a
scientist!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Katie looks at the paper with a red B+.

KATIE
B-plus?! I've never gotten a B!

Katie stops.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Dylan is distracting me!

Students snicker as Katie walks down the hallway. She checks
her clothes. Did she sit on something?

A crowd of laughing students gathers around a live cow in the
middle of the hallway.

The cow is wearing a sign that says "Farty Katie Carter."

Katie walks up to the cow.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Who did this?!

She turns and students laugh, but nobody steps forward to
answer her.

KATIE (CONT'D)
This is animal cruelty!!!

Students laugh hard and point at Katie and the cow. They make loud farting noises.

Katie pets the cow.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Are you hungry? Thirsty?

Students guffaw as she escorts the cow down the hall with a leash. Katie removes the sign from the cow.

On the back of Katie's shirt, someone taped another sign: "For safety, stand 10 feet back at all times."

Ella smirks as Katie walks by. Ella holds a roll of tape behind her back.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Katie escorts the cow along manicured lawns.

A car drives by and the PRESCHOOLER in the backseat points at the cow as the car rolls along.

The cow stops to chew lawn grass. Katie tries to pull it away. The cow chews. She tries to push it. The cow chews.

Em & M drive by in a shiny convertible, blasting heavy metal beats. Emma applies make-up from the passenger's seat.

EXT. KATIE'S BACKYARD - SAME

Vines hover over the biomethane digester. The cow emerges from behind a bush and chews tall, fuzzy grasses.

Katie consults printed instructions and tries to hook up a black box generator.

Katie sings the torch song "Science Has all the Answers (Except the Ones I Want)."

KATIE
(singing)
I WAS TOLD THAT I COULD FIND THE
ANSWERS
IF ONLY I KNEW WHICH QUESTIONS TO
ASK.
BUT I'VE PUT MY FAITH IN SCIENCE,
AND I'VE PUT MY LIFE ON HOLD,

She cradles the generator.

KATIE (CONT'D)
 SO WHY WON'T SCIENCE ANSWER THE
 QUESTIONS
 THAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW?

INT. CHEMISTRY LAB - SAME

Lyric and Max work on their experiment, shooting particles into cells with a particle gun. She watches Max and then gazes at Katie's experiment.

LYRIC
 THERE'S A RIGHT AND A WRONG WAY TO
 DO THINGS
 THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD LAYS OUT THE
 RULES.
 AND THAT'S GREAT FOR TESTING A
 THEORY,
 BUT RELATIONSHIPS NEED DIFFERENT
 TOOLS.

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - SAME

Dylan noodles around with his guitar.

DYLAN
 IF LOVE COULD BE WEIGHED ON A SCALE
 OR EXAMINED ON A MICROSCOPE'S
 SLIDE,
 I WOULDN'T BE SO AFRAID TO SHARE
 IT,
 AND I WOULDN'T KEEP TRYING TO HIDE.

INTERCUT KATIE/LYRIC/DYLAN

KATIE
 HOW CAN I BE HAPPY
 AND STILL ACCOMPLISH THINGS IN
 LIFE?

LYRIC
 HOW CAN I ACHIEVE MY DREAMS
 AND MINIMIZE THE SACRIFICE?

KATIE
 ARE WINNING A SCIENCE FAIR
 AND BEING SUCCESSFUL
 THE ONLY DREAMS WORTH HAVING?
 OR CAN I DO SOME OF THOSE THINGS
 AND STILL MAKE SOME ROOM FOR
 (MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)
LOVING?

Dylan flops onto his bed.

Katie sits on the ground, near the generator. She tugs on the cow tag with a number one hanging off of it.

Lyric turns away from Max and crosses her arms.

KATIE, LYRIC, DYLAN
SCIENCE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS
EXCEPT THE ONES I WANT.

The cow walks up to Katie. Katie hugs her.

KATIE
SCIENCE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS
EXCEPT THE ONES I WANT.

INT. DYLAN'S BEDROOM - SAME

Dylan lies in bed with his guitar. His phone buzzes and lights up, but he ignores it.

INSERT: DYLAN'S PHONE

A list of unread texts with photos of CUTE GIRLS attached to them: "Wondering what you're up to ..." "do u have plans 2morrow?" "Thought of you ..." "R U 2 dating?"

Dylan turns off his bedroom light.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Katie is huddled in a ball at the base of the school's front doors. The fog has rolled in and the sun has just risen. CUSTODIAN, a burly dude, walks up with keys.

CUSTODIAN
You're here early. Even the
principal doesn't show up at this
hour.

Katie holds up her computer.

KATIE
I don't have internet. Or
electricity.

Custodian unlocks the door.

CUSTODIAN
You have a power failure on your
block?

KATIE
Something like that.

Custodian holds the door open for Katie.

CUSTODIAN
I'll let you into the library.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Custodian flicks the lights on, one section at a time. Katie walks down the aisle, admiring the books and touching the empty desks.

KATIE
Do you know that I've had fantasies
of having the library all to
myself?

CUSTODIAN
Well, you've got another half hour.
Enjoy it.

KATIE
Thank you!

Custodian walks out the door and it swings shut.

Katie plugs in her electronic devices. While everything loads, she goes to the "new books" section and runs her hands along the covers. She picks up a book on women scientists and flips through it.

KATIE (CONT'D)
This will be my reward for doing a
good job on the science fair.

She hugs the book and goes to her seat.

LATER

Katie scrolls through websites on her computer.

COMPUTER SCREEN INSERT: Photos of rivers in China dyed blue, purple, and red.

KATIE (CONT'D)
(concerned)
Oh my goodness ...

EXT. CHEMISTRY LAB - DAY

The lab is quiet and empty, except for Katie sitting at her lab table. Katie's experiment is laid out in front of her. All of the plant material now looks like a dark blob of smoosh. Katie yawns as she makes notations in her lab notebook.

Lyric walks into the room; her cadence slows when she notices Katie.

LYRIC
Good morning.

Katie hides her notes.

KATIE
Hey.

LYRIC
How's your project going?

KATIE
Lousy. And it's too late to change partners.

LYRIC
What's wrong with Dylan?

KATIE
What's not wrong with him? He eats meat ... he can't stand that I'm right ... and he's really hard to be around.

LYRIC
(playing along)
What a jerk. He always seemed so nice to me. But I guess you can't trust musicians.

KATIE
Right? Hmph.

LYRIC
He probably only cares about drugs and sex. He probably doesn't even know what sustainable energy is.

KATIE
Well, that's not ...

LYRIC

It's better that you don't hang
around a guy like that.

KATIE

He's actually not *that* bad ...

LYRIC

And you said yourself that he can't
handle being wrong. I mean, if a
guy can't appreciate the beauty of
facts, even if it compromises his
perception of how the world should
be, then what good is he? I mean,
what kind of a person does that?

Katie holds her stomach.

KATIE

Oh no ...

LYRIC

What's the matter?

KATIE

I just have this terrible feeling
...

Lyric holds Katie's shoulders.

LYRIC

What is it?

KATIE

I feel like I'm ...

KATIE (CONT'D)

(sniffling)

Not right about something!

She cries on Lyric's shoulders.

LYRIC

There, there.

KATIE

I'm such a doofus!

LYRIC

You're not a doofus. You're just
human.

Katie sobs.

KATIE

I was researching your GE thing online, because I wanted to talk you out of doing it, but then I saw all these pictures of rivers in China turning purple and blue because of the dyes they use to make textiles. And then I was researching genetic engineering and it seemed like you actually ... weren't going to destroy the world.

LYRIC

Wait, are you apologizing to me? Wow. Let me just enjoy this for a minute.

She leans back and takes in the moment.

She sits up.

LYRIC (CONT'D)

By the way, this is good practice for another apology that you need to make.

KATIE

What are you--?

LYRIC

Dylan called me and told me the whole thing.

KATIE

He called you?

Katie shakes a fist.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Cell phones!

Lyric nods.

KATIE (CONT'D)

(groaning)

I hate being huuuumaaaaan....

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The football field rests at the base of a large canyon between two hills.

Dylan's hair is flowing in the wind *again*.

Katie stands at the base of the bleachers and marches towards Dylan. She's winded by the time she gets to the top and stumbles as she crosses over to Dylan.

KATIE

Hey!

Katie continues stumbling toward Dylan until she reaches him, out of breath.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I ... don't think that I should apologize for my beliefs--and I would never apologize for them even if it were the socially-respectable thing to do--but I recognize that I'm not as effective at science when I don't have the benefit of another intelligent person to collaborate with.

Dylan says nothing.

KATIE (CONT'D)

And, also, I don't think you're a bad person for eating hamburgers. And--

Katie takes a deep breath.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I think you have a valid argument for using cow manure as our source material.

Katie looks like she just lost the Olympics.

DYLAN

Thanks.

Katie pulls a tuner out of her pocket.

KATIE

I'm not done.

She blows into the tuner and sings "A Song for Dylan."

KATIE (CONT'D)

DYLAN, YOU'RE A COOL GUY
AND I THINK YOU'VE TRIED
TO BE A GOOD PARTNER
FOR THE SCIENCE FAIR.

I'M SORRY FOR BEING WEIRD
(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)
I JUST HAVE FEARS
OF MAKING MISTAKES,
THAT'S WHY I DISAPPEARED.

BUT YOU'RE SUCH A NICE BOY
WITH GREAT HAIR AND LOTS OF JOY
IN YOUR HEART,
AND YOU'RE SMART.

WILL YOU STILL BE MY PARTNER
FOR THE SCIENCE FAIR?

Katie looks at Dylan who raises an eyebrow and cracks a smile.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Will you be my partner again?

DYLAN
Are you going to storm off and not
talk to me?

KATIE
Ummm... probably not?

DYLAN
It's really hard to work with
someone who won't communicate with
me, no matter how cute she is.

KATIE
You already got a new partner?!

DYLAN
Huh? No ... I was talking about
you.

KATIE
Me? Wait ... what?

DYLAN
Don't act like you don't know
everyone thinks you're cute.

KATIE
I'm pretty sure nobody thinks that.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (DYLAN'S FLASHBACK)

A long row of HANDSOME BOYS lines up against the lockers, smiling at Katie and saying, "Hey, Katie!," "Hi!," "You want to hang out after school?" as she speedwalks by, her face buried in a shabby hardcover copy of "Silent Spring."

BACK TO PRESENT

DYLAN

I've liked you since the third grade.

Katie is too stunned to speak, though she tries.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I thought you agreed to talk again?

KATIE

I'm trying--I swear!

Katie smiles. Dylan gives her a hug. Katie doesn't really know what to do at first, but then figures it out. She squeals.

EXT. KATIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Red police lights swirl around the darkened front yard of the Carter house.

EXT. KATIE'S SIDEWALK - SAME

Katie walks up to her house, red lights flash across her face.

EXT. KATIE'S FRONT YARD - SAME

POLICE OFFICER 1 points a flashlight at Mom and Dad while POLICE OFFICER 2 takes notes of the interrogation with a notepad. Florence, wearing a dark sweatshirt with a creepy eyeball graphic and the words "I'm Watching You," stands behind the officers.

DAD

I already told you--

Police Officer 1 points the light right in Dad's eyes.

DAD (CONT'D)

--there's no illegal activity here!

Florence clamors over the officers.

FLORENCE

Lies! Then why did you divert all of your electricity for your meth lab?!

Katie rushes up.

MOM
Meth lab?

KATIE
What's going on?!

Florence points to Katie.

FLORENCE
That's her! The one making the
methamphetamines in the backyard!

Florence begins dancing, with a large emphasis on movements that involve pumping her elbows up and down. She dances up to the Police Officers and sings a burlesque song called "Don't Make Meth In Your Backyard!"

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
(singing)
IN THE OLDEN DAYS,
THINGS WERE DIFFERENT.

She dances away ...

EXT. STREET - SAME

Florence dances on the street with her fortress of a house in the background.

FLORENCE
WE COULD PLAY ON THE STREET

She picks up a ball and kicks it.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
ALL DAY AND ALL NIGHT.
BUT TIMES HAVE CHANGED
AND OUR STREETS AREN'T SAFE,

EXT. FRONT YARD - SAME

Florence dances up to Officers, Mom, Dad, and Katie.

FLORENCE
AND EVEN OUR NEIGHBORS HAVE
SOMETHING TO HIDE!

She prances toward the back yard.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE!

MOM
Stop! You can't go back there!

Mom chases after Florence.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

The pathway is overgrown with vines and branches. Police Officer 1 follows Florence with a flashlight, with Dad, Katie, and Officer 2 just behind.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Florence tap dances around the backyard, getting her bearings.

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE - SAME

Dad trips on something and falls.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

Florence finds the methane generator and stands in front of it, blocking it from view.

Everyone else runs to the backyard. Dad almost knocks over one of the Officers.

Florence holds a pose and slowly shifts into a strangely seductive belly dance.

FLORENCE
YOU CAN'T HIDE.

She wiggles up to one of the Officers.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
IT'S SO TEMPTING
OH SO TEMPTING
TO TAKE THE EASY WAY OUT

She shimmies up to Dad.

FLORENCE (CONT'D)
BUT WHEN THINGS GET ROUGH,
YOU HAVE TO BE TOUGH
AND DON'T START SELLING METH!

DAD
Nobody's selling meth!

Florence shimmies backwards to the biomethane containers.

KATIE
That's my science fair project!

FLORENCE
YOU'VE GOT SOME PROBLEMS
GIGANTIC PROBLEMS
BUT YOU CAN'T SOLVE THEM WITH
DRUGS!

Florence starts pulling at the generator.

KATIE
What are you doing?!

FLORENCE
I'M SAVING MY NEIGHBORHOOD!

Florence yanks parts off the generator.

KATIE
Nooo!!!!

OFFICER 1
What's in that thing?!

Everyone starts smelling the stinky biomethane source materials. Officer 2 plugs his nose.

OFFICER 2
What *is* that?!

KATIE
It's biomethane gas!

OFFICER 1
Mrs. Barringer! Get away from the receptacle. Everyone, evacuate!

Officer 2 escorts Katie, Mom, and Dad away.

Officer 1 drags Florence away.

EXT. FRONT YARD - SAME

The red police car light is still swirling around.

Dad pulls twigs out of his sweater.

DAD
We really need to maintain that
walkway.

Officer 2 calls into his walkie talkie.

OFFICER 2
We need to investigate a gas leak.

MOM
You can search our house if you
want, but I assure you that there
are no illegal drugs.

Mom takes a card out of her pocket.

MOM (CONT'D)
We do have a small quantity of
medicinal herbs for my sleep
problems.

Florence resists the officers' restraints.

FLORENCE
My granddaughter said you had meth,
and she would never lie!

KATIE
Ella. They ruined my project!

EXT. STREET - SAME

Officer 1 pushes Florence into the back of the police car.
She glares at the Carters as Officer 2 drives the car away...
she pumps her arms up and down.

EXT. FLORENCE'S HOUSE - SAME

Ella stands behind the livingroom window and draws the shades
closed.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

The sun has just risen as Katie and Dylan try to reassemble
the generator, but some of the parts are too loose.

KATIE
Now what are we going to do???

DYLAN

We have a lot of data already. We can supplement with journal research. I think it'll be okay.

KATIE

Why would she do this?!

Dylan takes a deep breath.

DYLAN

I think Ella's jealous of you.

KATIE

Me? Why would anybody be jealous of me? She's the tennis champion. She was the homecoming princess. I mean, it's true that I'm superior in math and physics, but I only came in second in the science fair last year, so I don't get it.

DYLAN

Let's just say that she gave me signals.

KATIE

Whatever that means. At any rate, our digester is ruined and now I don't have anymore electricity. Again.

DYLAN

Hey, you know what? I discovered this other renewable source of electricity.

Dylan gives Katie a hug. She smiles.

KATIE

This is nice. But I can't cook food with this type of energy.

DYLAN

It's true.

Dylan grabs his guitar.

KATIE

(teasing)

Are you going to "serenade" me?

DYLAN

Yeah.

Katie takes a seat on the floor in front of him and smiles as if she's expecting a joke. His body is a little stiff as he sings the love song, "A Song for Katie."

DYLAN (CONT'D)
(singing)
EVERY TIME YOU PASSED ME IN THE
HALL,
I WANTED TO MAKE A TELEPHONE CALL
THAT WOULD BRING YOU TO ME,
BEAUTIFUL GIRL OF MY DREAMS.

Katie smirks and she rolls her eyes in fun.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
THE WAY YOUR HAIR FALLS TO THE
SIDE,
THE LAUGHTER IN YOUR STARRY EYES.
CAN'T COUNT HOW MANY TIMES I TRIED
TO LET YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN TO
ME.

Katie's attention vacillates between Dylan's strumming and his mouth and voice, which becomes more earnest. The cow comes out to watch.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
YOU MEAN BILLIONS OF PLANKTON IN
THE SEA,
MILES OF RAINFORESTS AND TREE
MONKEYS.
THE EARTH, THE SKY, AND ALL THINGS
IN BETWEEN,
IF YOU WERE AN ANT, YOU'D BE THE
QUEEN.

Katie looks at Dylan as if she's seeing something for the first time. Dylan hits his groove.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
THE WAY THAT YOU BOYCOTT THINGS YOU
DON'T LIKE,
THE WAY YOU GO ON PROTEST HUNGER
STRIKES.
NOW THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO
HIDE,
SO YOU GOTTA KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN TO
ME.

Dad comes out of the back door, carrying a small bucket of compost. He stops when he notices Dylan singing.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

OH, KATIE:
YOU KNOW YOU'RE THE CRUST, THE
MANTLE, THE CORE.
ALL THINGS ABOUT YOU IS WHAT I
ADORE.
AND THERE'S JUST NO WAY I COULD
LOVE YOU MORE.
AND THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN TO ME, OH
KATIE.

Dylan croons on a vowel for a few moments. Dad rolls his eyes.

KATIE

Maybe hot food is overrated.

Dylan sets his guitar down and waits for Katie to make the next move. Mom steps out the back door to call Dad back in, but he holds his finger to his lips.

KATIE (CONT'D)

You wrote that for me?

Dylan nods. Katie jumps into his arms and kisses him. The cow walks away and hides. Mom . Dad releases a cracked smile.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Not bad for my first kiss.

DYLAN

Not at all.

KATIE

What's a tree monkey?

DYLAN

You know, a monkey that hangs out
in a tree.

KATIE

Right.

They kiss some more. Mom and Dad slip back into the house.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LAB - DAY

Katie and Dylan walk into the lab, holding hands, as Emma flees, crying. Marlon chases after her.

KATIE

What was that about?

Dylan shrugs.

DYLAN

Everyone's anxious about the science fair, I guess. Let's hurry up and see if we can reconcile our data.

They sit at their desk and pull out notebooks and calculators.

KATIE

Dylan?

DYLAN

Yeah?

KATIE

Thanks for being my partner. You know, for the science fair.

DYLAN

Hey, don't go distracting me with your feminine ways--I've got a science fair to win.

Dylan winks. Katie smiles back.

Lyric watches from the back of the room and smiles, too.

INT. KATIE'S KITCHEN - EVENING

The kitchen glows with light. Coffee percolates. Mom pulls mugs down from the cabinet. Dad shoves the refrigerator back in place.

Katie walks in.

KATIE

What's going on???

Mom finishes pouring coffee into her mug.

MOM

The electricity's back!

KATIE

What happened?!

MOM

Your dad and I had a talk and realized that his paternal status was being challenged by your new relationship with Dylan and he was passive-aggressively--

Dad sidles up to Mom.

DAD

Your mom and I had a long talk, and we realized that both of us had forced No Living into our home without making sure it was the best thing for you first.

MOM

We got so caught up in the excitement of being on the fringes of a movement again that we forgot to take your needs into consideration.

DAD

And we didn't even really consider using the resources we had in our own backyard.

MOM

Literally.

Mom and Dad lean together so their foreheads touch, and they smile.

KATIE

Wait. You mean you're going to power the house with biomethane?

DAD

We're going to try!

MOM

I talked to a contractor and it looks like it'll take a month or two to set up a generator that will work for the whole house. So, in the meantime, we're temporarily back on the grid.

Katie squeals. They all hug. The microwave beeps. Mom retrieves a plate of steaming hot pizza pockets and hands them to Katie.

KATIE
(swooning)
Pizza pockets?!

EXT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

Students load in their science experiments, including giant cardboard displays, aquariums, and projectors.

Katie and Dylan set the large digester from her backyard onto the ground near the gymnasium double-doors.

DYLAN
You got it? I need to move my truck.

KATIE
Yeah.

Dylan gives Katie a quick kiss on the lips. She gazes at him as he gets back into the truck. He keeps smiling at her as he backs out of the loading area.

Max approaches with a large box of supplies.

MAX
Someone had a change of heart about dating.

KATIE
Hi, Max. Where's Lyric?

MAX
She's inside setting up the projector.

KATIE
A projector! We should've thought of that.

MAX
It was Lyric's idea--I really lucked out with her.

KATIE
Yeah.

MAX
There was something I wanted to give you.

Max fishes a brochure out of his pocket.

MAX (CONT'D)

I heard about what Ella did to you
and thought you might want this
anti-bullying brochure from my
church.

KATIE

Church?

MAX

Yeah, we have a lot of programs,
but this is the one that I'm most
involved with.

KATIE

You go to church? But you're so
into science.

MAX

The world is a big place with
infinite questions and almost
infinite possible answers.

Max hands Katie the brochure.

MAX (CONT'D)

Good luck today.

KATIE

Thanks. You, too.

INT. SCIENCE FAIR - DAY

Techno pop music bounces around the gymnasium which has been transformed into a Science Fair. Students walk by with various science fair projects, including a painted volcano, a metal pendulum, and dead and living ficus trees. All the students sing and dance the pop song "Science Fair" as they build their exhibits.

BIOMETHANE BOOTH

Dylan and Katie set up their duct-taped biomethane digester in front of their table.

ENSEMBLE

(singing)

SCIENCE FAIR!

Katie props up a cow stuffed animal onto the blue plastic tablecloth.

KATIE
WHERE YOUNG RESEARCHERS COME
TOGETHER

DYLAN
TO SHOW OFF THEIR INTELLECTUAL
WARES.

LOUDSPEAKER ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(spoken)
The judges will begin touring the
exhibits in five minutes.

Katie and Dylan give each other a big hug.

Lyric and Max, wearing matching lab coats, smile at Katie and Dylan as they walk by.

ENSEMBLE
SCIENCE FAIR!

ROBOT BOOTH

Two ROBOT SCIENTISTS, female 16 year old students wearing glasses and matching plaid shirts, practice getting their robot to grab a spatula.

ROBOT SCIENTISTS
A PLAYGROUND WHERE THE SLIDES AND
SWINGS
ARE PRETTY BOOTHS AND HIGH TECH
THINGS.

BEER BOOTH

Two jocky BEER SCIENTISTS, male 18 year old students, fill a row of beer steins with Cheetohs, Mountain Dew, M&M's, and other consumables next to a mic.

ENSEMBLE
SCIENCE FAIR!

Beer Scientist 1 dumps a bunch of Cheetohs in his mouth.

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)
WHERE IT'S WHAT'S UNDERNEATH THAT
MATTERS,

SYNTHETIC DIAMOND BOOTH

Em & M, wearing matching shiny black and silver jumpsuits, polish their display of sparkling synthetic diamonds on headless mannequins.

ENSEMBLE
IF WHAT'S UNDERNEATH ARE REPEATABLE
PATTERNS.

Em & M look at each other and sigh with disappointment.

MOUSE BOOTH

Ella puts her white mouse in a cage decorated like a gingerbread house. The mouse nibbles on the candy decorations.

ENSEMBLE (CONT'D)
SCIENCE FAIR!

GENETIC ENGINEERING BOOTH

Lyric and Max adjust a powerpoint slideshow set between stylish color posters of seductive models posing in just bluejeans.

LYRIC & MAX
WHERE FLAWED THEORIES ARE SENT AWAY
AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES ARE ON
DISPLAY.

Lyric and Max and Katie and Dylan look across the aisle at each other.

ENSEMBLE
SCIENCE FAIR!

WHERE RESULTS ARE ANALYZED AND
REPORTED
AND CAREFUL OBSERVATION IS
REWARDED.

LOUDSPEAKER ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(spoken)
Scientists to your stations.
Judging commences now.

Three JUDGES, adults wearing suits, walk to each of the booths as the students stand forward in front of their booths.

ENSEMBLE

SCIENCE FAIR!
SCIENCE FAIR!
SCIENCE FAIR!

Katie and Dylan hold hands and smile at each other.

LATER

The science fair is packed with adults and students.

Mom and Dad scan the hall until they discover Katie's table.

BIOMETHANE BOOTH

Katie plays with the stuffed cow. Dylan strums chords on his guitar.

Mom and Dad walk up.

MOM

That's embarrassing. Why did they even bother showing up?

DAD

I think it's a show of respect to the other students.

KATIE

What are you talking about?

MOM

Those kids who tried to make the synthetic diamonds.

KATIE

Em & M? What happened?!

DAD

Well, they couldn't do it!

KATIE

What are you talking about? How did you hear about that?

MOM

One of the other moms was gossiping about it. Apparently, they spent too much time building this swimming pool or something.

DAD

Hubris! It was hubris. High school students making synthetic diamonds for a science fair? Give me a break.

LOUDSPEAKER ANNOUNCER

And now Mr. Kaplan will announce the winners of the Sixteenth Annual Alice Hamilton Science Fair ...

Katie and Dylan stand together, holding hands.

KATIE

(whispering to Dylan)
Maybe we have a chance now!

Dylan smiles and squeezes her hand.

INTERCUT AREAS WITHIN THE SCIENCE FAIR

Max stands and prays. Lyric fidgets.

The wooden podium is decorated with streamers and a vase of flowers. Mr. Kaplan stands at the podium and holds a card.

MR. KAPLAN

Third place for this year's science fair is ... The Effects of Sugar on Lab Mice.

Ella holds up her little mouse, kisses it, and raises a lollipop.

Katie rolls her eyes.

Mr. Kaplan grins and refers back to his card.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

The runner-up for this year is ...
Chore Robot.

The Robot Scientists embrace each other in front of the robot now wearing an apron that says, "Barefoot and Programmed." The robot swivels with a frying pan in one "arm" and a duster in the other.

Mr Brown gives the girls a thumbs up and looks back at his card. He squints and holds the card up to the light. He smiles.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)

The winners of the two \$15,000 scholarships are ...

Mom looks at Dad and mouths, "\$15,000??" Dad shrugs.

Lyric stands with her eyes closed and fingers crossed. Max is still praying.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Cell engineering!

Lyric and Max jump up and down, hug, then make out for too long.

Katie's face drops as she watches Lyric and Max going up to the podium in the distance.

Mr. Kaplan presents Lyric and Max each with two oversized cardboard checks of \$15,000 from Samonto Corporation.

Mr. Kaplan claps while Secretary, wearing a sharp, pink suit, hands him a card. Mr. Kaplan raises the card to the light.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Ah-ha ... it looks like we have an
Honorable Mention award this year
for the Biomethane Project!

Mr. Kaplan claps. The rest of the room is silent. And then, Ella makes a farting sound. The room erupts in laughter and more students make loud, fake farting sounds.

MR. KAPLAN (CONT'D)
Okay, okay--that's enough!

Katie looks around in horror, clutching her stuffed cow. Mom, Dad, and Dylan stand by Katie.

Lyric steps up to Mr. Kaplan's mic.

LYRIC
What kind of a school is this?!

Everyone quiets and watches Lyric. Ella is particularly horrified.

LYRIC (CONT'D)
We're contaminating our water and
air trying to generate electricity
for no reason! Have you even seen
the biomethane project? You should!
Because you might learn a thing or
two about what science is.

Students turn and look at Katie and Dylan.

Max stands next to Lyric and speaks into the mic.

MAX

I know what everyone's thinking:
cow farts? What kind of a project
is that? But the truth is, they're
not actually collecting cow
"farts," they're collecting cow
excrement!

Katie and Dylan exchange a look of shared fear.

LYRIC

You know what? We don't know what
we're talking about. Katie! Dylan!
Why don't you two come up here?

Mr. Kaplan shakes his head "no," but Dylan grins and pulls
Katie to the podium. Mom and Dad cheer.

KATIE

I know that people like to joke
about our project, because of,
well, butts and things. But we're
running out of fossil fuels and
because of that, we're going to war
and innocent people are dying.

The audience is rapt.

KATIE (CONT'D)

For what? So we can check our
status updates in real-time?

An AUDIENCE MEMBER puts away her cell-phone, embarrassed.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'm not saying give up on social
media--I'm saying let's power our
tools responsibly.

DYLAN

Yes! And every one of us can get
off the grid by using biomethane
gas. We have instructions for
making generators in your own
backyard. Let's get off the grid!
Get off the grid!

DYLAN & KATIE

Get off the grid!

DYLAN, KATIE, LYRIC, MAX

Get off the grid!

EVERYONE

Get off the grid! Get off the grid!

Lyric leads the room in whooping and clapping.

People make their way to the biomethane table and Katie, Dylan, Mom, and Dad field an onslaught of questions.

Ella fights the flow of traffic and bursts out the gymnasium doors.

Lyric leans up to Max.

LYRIC

I didn't know you were an activist--

MAX

I learned from a beautiful and powerful woman named Lyric Lam.

Lyric melts and they kiss on the stage.

Em & M walk up to Katie and Dylan and shake their hands.

EM & M

Congratulations.

KATIE

(surprised)

Thanks.

DYLAN

Sorry your diamonds didn't work out.

MARLON

Go big or go home, right?

Em & M hold hands and walk over to Lyric and Max.

KATIE

How come they weren't mean?

DYLAN

Good sportsmanship. You can't be that popular if you're mean to everyone, Katie.

Katie pauses.

MONTAGE - KATIE'S MEAN MOMENTS (FLASHBACK)

- Katie stares Em & M down.

KATIE
Real scientists care about the
environment.

- Katie sing-screams at Lyric at the farmers market.

KATIE (CONT'D)
YOU'RE A SELL-OUT!

- Katie yells at Dylan in the science lab.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Why don't you go and eat a
hamburger?!

BACK TO PRESENT

Katie holds up the anti-bullying brochure.

KATIE (CONT'D)
I'm the bully!

Dylan gives her a hug.

DYLAN
Everyone makes mistakes. The
important thing is that we learn
from them.

KATIE
How did you learn to be so nice?

DYLAN
It's because I'm popular.

KATIE
You're popular because you're so
nice.

DYLAN
That, too.

They kiss.

Katie looks around at all of the people surrounding her. She
beams.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR ROOM - DAY

High School Choir stands on risers wearing their uniforms.
They sing "The Scientific Method" in earnest.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR
 EVERY SCIENTIST KNOWS
 THAT THE HUMAN LIBRARY GROWS
 WITH RELEVANT RESEARCH.
 THE LIBRARY GROWS THROUGH RESEARCH.

SENIOR PROM PHOTO MONTAGE

- Katie and Dylan do a silly dance.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
 FORMULATE A QUESTION.
 ESTABLISH THE HYPOTHESIS.

- Max kisses Lyric's neck near a fancy water fountain. Lyric looks surprised to see the camera.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
 GENERATE A PREDICTION,
 THEN GO TEST YOUR HYPOTHESES.

- Couple photo of Katie and Dylan.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
 ANALYZE THE DATA.

- Group photo of Katie and Dylan next to Lyric and Max.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
 IT'S THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

POST-GRADUATION PHOTO MONTAGE

- Katie and Dylan shake hands with the Governor of California behind a podium with the Seal of California.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
 ALWAYS BE OBJECTIVE,
 THEN QUESTION ALL OF YOUR
 QUESTIONS.

- Katie and Dylan point to a residential meter with the word "biomethane" on it.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
 DON'T TRUST YOUR ASSUMPTIONS.
 JUSTIFY ALL OF YOUR THEORIES.
 THE KEY TO HAPPINESS:
 IT'S THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD.

- Katie and Lyric stand in front of Sather Tower at UC, Berkeley wearing and tugging at their matching "Cal" T-shirts.

HIGH SCHOOL CHOIR (V.O.)
THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD!

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GARDEN - DAY

The elementary school garden is decorated with flags of children's drawings of vegetables and flowers. Katie and Dylan help a group of children build a biomethane digester in the school.

Cow, wearing a daisy lei, chews on the nearby lawn and poops. A bunch of children point and laugh and cheer.

Katie and Dylan smile and kiss. The children make faces.

Cow moos.

FADE OUT