

CHARACTERS

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|---|--------------------------------|
| IRENE Karapasha, | 16 (Act One) and 32 (Act Two) |
| QUINN Lindsay, | 16 (Act One) and 32 (Act Two) |
| JAY (Dhananjay) Malik, | 15 (Act One) and 31 (Act Two) |
| GREG James, | 22 (Act One) and 38 (Act Two) |
| NICOLE Zervas, | 16 |
| SARA Lindsay, | 29 (voice only) |
| A WAITRESS , KATJA (voice only) | all played by the same actress |

SETTING

act one: The Arkwright College July Program, a pre-college program

Arkwright College, Deep River, VT

act two: Minuit House, a luxury hotel, and other locations, 16 years after **act one**

New York, NY

*You wanna know me?
Well, what's to know?
Do I amuse you
When the night is slow?
Do your eyelids ever close
Caught spirits in your waking woes?
—Wild Nothing, "Nocturne"*

*The days whispered and shouted
And everything counted
The signs were around
We looked, so we found
Been seeking a pattern
None of it mattered
Watching the sky
Cycling by
Through windows of our past lives
—Wye Oak, "Plains"*

eight.

An acting studio. Nicole, seated on a chair, holds and sometimes strokes a large pillow (standing in for the head of her sleeping boyfriend, Ian) and emotes in an inconsistent British accent.

NICOLE

Ian. Ian are you asleep? (beat) Bloody well good you are, all the good I am to you when you're awake. (whispers) Ian. Ian, I know I'm not half good enough for you. Oh, I have looks, for now, but I know what's in me, and it's cruel and angry and spiteful. I'm trying to be good to you, I bloody am, but I didn't make myself this way, and I (too flat on her accent) can't...(corrects herself) *can't* seem to...

Beat. She tenderly, gently, kisses "Ian's" hand, replaces it carefully across his body.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

I'll let you fall asleep before me every night when we live together, I will. So I can do this. So I can fill your dreams with all the love I (carefully) *can't* give you when we're awake.

She pats the pillow, suddenly feels ridiculous about it, laughs.

NICOLE (CONT'D)

(out, and out of character)

I'm so sorry, Katja! Can I do it again without the pillow?

nine, parts one and two.

Night. A distant corner of the End of the World; an unkempt bench, the shadows of trees. Irene, on the bench, flicks her lighter, looking up at the sky through a clearing. Quinn, with his notebook, enters. Having interrupted each other's attempt at solitude, they look at each other. After an awkward moment, Quinn thinks something needs to be said.

QUINN

The stars are...they're really out tonight.

Irene smirks, half-rolls her eyes.

QUINN (CONT'D)

What?

IRENE

You could look up at stars like this almost every night if you wanted to. You and me are from small places, Quinn. We're meant to run to brighter lights, away from the stars.

QUINN

I dunno. If we run, we'll miss this, eventually. Future, bright lights me already regrets that current me never learned any constellations.

IRENE

(pointing upward)

Cassiopeia. Ursa Major, of course. And Orion, the hunter.

QUINN

That was way too quick.

IRENE

They're up there. Just...not necessarily where I pointed. (beat) The future is going to be great. I'll live in Brooklyn, if I don't end up settling in Paris. Depends how much I like my junior year abroad there, of course.

QUINN

Of course. Bien sûr.

IRENE

What?

QUINN

You don't speak any French?

IRENE

No. That's, like, the point of going to Paris. (beat) Wherever I end up, I know I'm gonna struggle. I might even have to model.

Quinn laughs.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Or be a barista in an independent coffeeshop, or tend bar at some forgotten joint where all the customers will be men and all the men'll call me sugar. It won't be easy. As I'm, like, bouncing checks and fleeing apartments in the middle of the night and even missing my mom and my shitty hometown for no good reason, I know I'll be asking myself, "Iris, is it really worth it?" But, it will be. It will be a beautiful life.

QUINN

You've got it all planned out.

IRENE

It's not a plan. It's an idea. You don't have one?

QUINN

No. I'm just...enjoying myself right now, for the first time in forever. That's all I know. I keep having these dreams...they've very real. Like, they're just days in this July that didn't happen.

IRENE

What?

QUINN

Days that could have happened, y'know? Like, it'll be acting class, but we're working on a different script...or we're in the common room, but we're playing *Uno*.

IRENE

Why would we *ever* not be playing *Batman Forever*?

QUINN

I don't know. Dream logic.

IRENE

What about me?

QUINN

You're there as much as you are here. Though you are slightly nicer in my dreams.

Beat.

IRENE

They sound like super-boring dreams.

QUINN

I'm just expanding the time. When July is over, I'm back to...I dunno. To a small island. To my own head. I have less to go back to than you.

IRENE

You'll be fine. Just stay in the lighthouse another two years, and college will solve all your problems.

QUINN

Two years. (beat) Have you ever thought of suicide?

IRENE

What? No. (beat) I mean, when I was really depressed, sometimes I'd think of dying in, like, a car accident, painlessly...but I never thought of doing it to myself. Took too much initiative. (beat) You haven't.

QUINN

(holding out the scar on his left forearm)

"Why do you deny things you don't know?"

IRENE

No. Quinn/

QUINN

Sorry I lied, before. But, see, it's nowhere near my wrist, I was only...testing what would happen. And then I didn't have the courage to play it out, either. I told my parents the lie I told you, with the tree branch. They didn't ask any questions.

IRENE

When was this?

QUINN

I dunno. February?

Irene hits Quinn in the chest.

IRENE

Don't you (hits him again) fucking do that. Don't you (hits him again) ever fucking do anything like that again. You have books to write and places to explore and...your life isn't just your fucking stupid teenaged *now*, okay? (grabs Quinn's hand, hard) Say you won't.

QUINN

I won't.

She kisses him. Beat. Both look surprised.

QUINN (CONT'D)

That was an actual kiss.

IRENE

I know.

QUINN

Does that/

IRENE

I don't know. Just...stay normal.

QUINN

I've never been normal. How do I start? What did that/

IRENE

QUINN, I don't know. My lips moved themselves, like a Ouija board. Let it breathe.

Pause. They sit on the grass; Irene rests her head on Quinn's lap.

QUINN

I saw my own handwriting the other day.

IRENE

I've seen it too. It's really bad, like a secret code.

QUINN

No, not like...I saw what looked just like my handwriting, on the wall of the phone booth of my dorm, okay? *My* handwriting, scrawled on a wall of a place I'd never been before. Isn't that crazy?

Irene laughs.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Hey, this is *meaningful*. What, you think I'd just make this up?

IRENE

Of course you didn't make it up. It was just someone else's handwriting is all.

QUINN

You have no sense of magic.

IRENE

It is magic that there is someone else in the world, let alone New England, with handwriting as bad as yours. Why does it have to *mean* something? What did it say? (no reply) You told your story. What did the writing say?

QUINN

“Call your mother.”

IRENE

And did you? (no reply) After all that, you didn't even listen to your future past self?

QUINN

I don't understand how I can like you when you're so intentionally irritating so often.

IRENE

You irritate me too. I'm in irritation with you. We're in a state of passionate irritation. (looks up at the stars) You're right. It is a really beautiful night. I think/

Her thoughts are stopped by Quinn, who boldly kisses her and gets on top of her.

IRENE (CONT'D)

Easy! You're gonna give me grass stains.

Quinn rises to his knees.

IRENE (CONT'D)

I didn't say stop. Let's...let's...make love. (laughs) Do people really say that without laughing? It doesn't matter. I mean it. Don't fuck me. I've been fucked. Make love to me, Quinn. I don't think I've ever had that.

QUINN

Irene...Iris, I've never made love or fucked.

IRENE

I know. (kisses him) But you'll know the difference. You pay attention to things. (lying down) All that said, don't be afraid to yank my hair.

QUINN

Does that *mean* yank your hair, or/

Irene gently puts her hand on Quinn's lips, silencing him.

IRENE

Just come here. There's nothing to fear.

Scene fades out as Quinn lowers his lips to hers.

After a extended darkness, lights fade up. Irene, blank-faced, is buttoning her shirt; Quinn, happy, has a cigarette in his hand. They don't face each other, although Quinn sneaks glances at Irene's inscrutable face. A moment passes like this. Quinn puts the cigarette over his ear.

QUINN

I want to smoke but it seems, y'know, cliched. To smoke right after sex.

Quinn picks up the lighter from off the grass, lights his cigarette. Unnoticed by Quinn, Irene starts to silently cry.

QUINN (CONT'D)

But most cliches exist for a reason, right? (inhales with pleasure, coughs a bit, exhales) Can't believe I let you get me hooked. (semi-sings, from Wilco's "Misunderstood") "Cigarettes taste so good...but you're so misunderstood..." I am noticing your silence, by the way. I can fill it up, it's fine, but I wanted you to know I noticed. I really only blabber like this when/

Quinn finally notices that Irene is crying.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Hey, Iris, what's wrong? (no reply) Iris/

IRENE

STOP calling me that!

Irene grabs Quinn's cigarette, smokes.

QUINN

Okay. Irene, then. Fine name, always liked it. Irene? Can you tell me what's wrong?

IRENE

Nothing.

QUINN

Nothing. That's...nice to hear, but random crying might constitute a problem too.

IRENE

I wish you could talk less right now. Fewer words, smaller words. (beat) Tomorrow's Sunday. I'll go to church. The only nearby one is Unitarian, but only me and Catholic God need to know I'm having Catholic thoughts and making Catholic prayers.

QUINN

What are you praying for?

IRENE

We can't do that again.

QUINN

Did I do something wrong? (beat) You can't do this. You can't just *dump* your guilt on me.

IRENE

I'm not/

QUINN

It's not fair.

IRENE

It's not! I'm sorry! But I can't make it fair! (almost breathlessly) I'm sorry I got caught up in your words and the stars and this place and the feeling that maybe this is a Special July and we're all Special young people when we're really here because your parents were worried about you and I was afraid I wouldn't survive another summer lifeguarding and fighting with my mom. (breathes) I'm sorry I let my guard down long enough to let all the fucking magic in and let you in...it was so unfair to you.../

QUINN

Please stop.

IRENE

But the moment you rolled off me and told me you loved me, again, it was like...like the curtain fell, right off the rungs. I don't even feel guilty. Just stupid.

QUINN

You're not stupid.

IRENE

I wasn't/

QUINN

You're being stupid now, but that's because...I don't know why! I don't know what you're doing or how real this place is, or if it's changed you, but I know how I feel about you. That is real, no matter why we're here. You can't just...knock that away.

Quinn touches her hand. She moves it away.

IRENE

I know what you think this month means to you/

QUINN

Don't do this.

IRENE

But you won't always be so isolated...so alone. I'm not special either/

QUINN

You don't get to decide that.

IRENE

Someday you'll struggle to remember my name. And sure, you'll remember me, eventually, but only because you never forget your first. (beat) It's really late. I'm going to get another warning. We'll talk about this, okay?

QUINN

Why? About what? There's nothing real here, right?

IRENE

Quinn!

Quinn storms off. Irene breathes, looks up at the stars.

ten.

One of the two theaters of the Deep River Cine. Quinn and Jay, holding a giant bag of popcorn, seated before a movie. Jay points at the screen.

JAY

Brad Pitt.

QUINN

Jay...a three-year-old could get that. Movie scrambles aren't supposed to be difficult.

JAY

I know. But I got it before you did. I won.

QUINN

I wasn't...(beat) Do you think I could pull off "Q?" You know, like, as a nickname?

Beat. Jay laughs wildly.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Okay. "No" would've worked.

JAY

Q is the Omar Epps character from *Juice*. Or the dude with the devices from the Bond flicks. Q sounds like...like a man of mystery. You're not that. You're...you're Quinn.