

DEAR ANNIE,

I HATE YOU.

(Pilot Script)

Based on that voice inside all our heads...

Shut up, Annie.

SAM (V.O.)

Life suddenly becomes very clear  
in the moments that tragedy  
strikes. And you - in the middle  
of it - get very, very quiet.

FADE IN:

EXT. FLASHBACK - LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

A silent scene: SAM, the flawed-yet-lovable protagonist of this story, has her eyes closed. Tiny droplets cling to her face. The sun glints off them. We watch as the wind blows soft, loose wet curls across her face.

In fact...maybe we can even hear the muffled sound of it rush past her ears.

Sam's face is child-like in this moving image and she is simultaneously more alive and at home in this moment than she has been in a long time. Open, loose, relaxed...free.

Very light piano music begins to play.

SAM (V.O.)

As if, somehow, between and in  
the middle of all the excitement  
and the fear and the terror of  
things...you've managed to find  
yourself a tiny little pocket of  
space that wasn't meant to  
exist...a very tiny cubbie. And  
in that tiny cubbie - in which  
the world has ceased to move -  
you've managed to find just  
enough time to take a  
breath...before plunging back  
into the ice cold water.

A slight hitch. Sam's eyes fly open - wide with excitement.

EXT. FLASHBACK - LAKE MICHIGAN - DAY

The sounds of the scene come crackling to life.

WAKEBOARDING SAM (20) - young, athletic, and energetic -  
wakeboards across a rarely smooth Lake Michigan day.

She smiles wickedly and kicks her heels hard into the water,  
flying far outside the wake.

INT. THE BOAT

Her family watches. Well, that's a lie. MOM (48) is the only one watching. The others are laughing and shouting at one another. MICAH (23), Sam's older brother with Down Syndrome, waves his arms. Signals for her to do a trick.

WAKEBOARDING SAM

(teasing)

No way Mister!

MICAH

Yes way! Come on!!

He pleads as Wakeboarding Sam playfully rolls her head back. Conceding, she flips the board around and preps for a jump.

She cuts through the water, back towards the wake--

SAM (V.O.)

And right as you begin to find comfort in this unexpected space in time...comfort, thinking: "it really is all going to be okay.."

Hits the wake and launches into the air--

--suspended for a moment...

SAM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...You fall flat on your fucking face.

--the board catches an edge on the landing. A jolt.

She hits the surface, hard. Falls flat on her fucking face.

BLACK OUT.

A voice fades in...

ANNIE (O.S.)

Sam. Saaam. SAM.

INT. NEUROSURGEON'S OFFICE - DAY

Distant talking is heard in the background.

ANNIE, a woman who bares a frightening resemblance to a grown-up, slightly battered version of "Little Orphan Annie", snaps her fingers repeatedly in front Sam's face.

Sam's POV: Annie's freckled face fills the screen. She snaps once more.

ANNIE  
(to Sam - in the  
camera's face)  
Pay attention.

She walks to the other side of the room where DOCTOR CLARK, a good-looking neurosurgeon with kind eyes, sits forward in his chair.

DOCTOR CLARK  
(continues talking)  
...I know this is a lot to take  
in and this is a strange decision  
to be making, especially at your  
age. But we've found ourselves in  
a very unique situation--

Annie leans down next to him. He doesn't react to her.

ANNIE  
(whispering)  
At least he's pretty.

Sam blinks and rubs the dark bags under her eyes. She clearly hasn't slept. She also has a bruised nose and swollen eyelid...but we'll get to that later.

DOCTOR CLARK  
(pauses)  
Sam...are you doing okay?

SAM  
Yeah. Sorry, I just--

Annie rests against the wall behind him and gives Sam an "I'm watching you" gesture. Crosses her arms.

SAM (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Please continue.

Doctor Clark waits for a moment.

DOCTOR CLARK  
(continuing)  
Well, the good news is that it  
doesn't require immediate  
action-- You don't have to get  
the surgery today!

He does a small laugh. It doesn't land. Clears his throat.

DOCTOR CLARK (CONT'D)

However, the longer we wait, the more potentially problematic it may become.

ANNIE

I'm sorry...did he just call me "problematic"?

DOCTOR CLARK

So we'll need to discuss course of action and, when you're ready, how to get it taken care of.

Annie straightens up. Defensive.

ANNIE

Hold up. What does he mean "taken care of"?

Sam tries to wave her off.

Annie struts over to Sam and plops down next to her. Or rather...squeezes herself into the same seat. Faces Doctor Clark. All ears. Like an A+ student.

Sam shifts, trying to move and struggling. She can't budge. She's stuck in the chair with Annie.

DAD (O.S.)

How soon?

REVEALS:

Sam's parents sit in chairs on either side of her. MOM (48) and DAD (also 48) are the perfect Midwest couple who are very out of their element here. It looks like an awkward parent-teacher conference. Or four children receiving detention.

DOCTOR CLARK

The sooner the better. Ideally? Within the month.

SIDEBAR:

Annie leans to Sam, whispering--

ANNIE

Find out what they're gonna do to me.

SAM

Not now.

Annie jabs Sam in the side. Sam gives her a sharp look.

ANNIE

(pleading)

At least see if we can push it  
til after Spring Break.

SAM

(under her breath)

No.

ANNIE

Come on! Sam!

Annie elbows Sam again. Sam elbows her back. Harder. The two begin to scuffle.

SAM

(shutting her down)

Stop!

DOCTOR CLARK

Sam, this is by no means a firm  
commitment, but it would be best  
to get a date down.

Sam nods and opens her mouth to speak and--

ANNIE

(warning)

If I go down, I'm taking you with  
me.

Sam snaps her mouth shut and stares ahead, horrified. Hitting the end of her rope, Sam turns to Annie and lunges. The two begin to scuffle.

Doctor Clark's POV: Sees Sam squirming and strangling her chair. Annie is not there.

Realizing his efforts will be fruitless--

DOCTOR CLARK

OK. That's OK. We can continue  
discussing specifics at a later  
date.

(closing his notes)

For now...do you have any  
questions for me?

Annie and Sam are now tangled up together. A mess of limbs.  
A beat.

DAD

Sam?

Another, more awkward beat.

Sam manages to pin Annie down and leans over to Dad. Gives him a look as if to say "I'm listening...what's up?"

DAD (CONT'D)

Did you have any questions for  
Dr. Clark?

A moment. Sam stares blankly and lets her grip loosen on Annie. Looks back to Doctor Clark.

MOM (O.S.)

Honey?

Sam turns now to MOM, still trying to catch up.

MOM

(to doctor;  
apologetic)

Sorry, she's not normally like  
this I swear!

Sam turns back to Doctor Clark. Opens her mouth to try to speak again and--

Annie pinches her in the ass.

Sam yelps in pain, lurches forward, and blurts out--

SAM

CAA--an we wait until after  
Spring Break??

Both parents groan, disappointed that this is their child's first response.

DOCTOR CLARK

(slightly thrown)

Um, sure. Let me check my  
calendar a second...

Doctor Clark clicks around on his computer. Everyone is quiet for a long time.



DOCTOR CLARK (CONT'D)

How about March 23rd?

Another beat as reality sinks in for the four across the desk...They nod for awhile.

Finally, one of them remembers their ability to speak.

DAD

(gulping air)

That sounds great. Thank you.

He stands and shakes Doctor Clark's hand.

DOCTOR CLARK

Any last questions, comments,  
concerns before we wrap up?

Mom and Dad shake their heads "no". Annie raises her hand.

Mom, Dad, and Doctor Clark begin to pack up their things.  
Annie heads for the door. Sam stays seated.

SAM

Umm...actually-- I do-- I do  
have, uh, have one more question  
actually.

Mom, Dad, and Doctor Clark sit, temporarily re-settled.

SAM (CONT'D)

Just...uh...how long do you think  
it will be until I can go back to  
school and soccer and stuff?

A moment. Doctor Clark looks to her parents, choosing his  
next words carefully.

DOCTOR CLARK

Well, um, the surgery requires a  
minimum of three weeks recovery  
post-op. So, in an ideal world,  
you could be back at school in no  
time...

(pressing on)

However, it's not a terrible idea  
to consider taking the rest of  
the semester off.

(addressing parents)

I'm sure you guys will want to  
discuss this further on your  
own...

Mom and Dad murmur in agreement. Sam disregards the exchange.

SAM  
(unflinching)  
I'm not taking the semester off.

DAD  
Sam, we can talk about this  
later.

Ignores him. Eyes stay completely focused ahead.

SAM  
(pressing further)  
What about soccer?

Mom and Dad brace themselves. They know the answer to this.  
She probably does too but needs to hear it out loud.

DOCTOR CLARK  
I'm so sorry, Sam. Soccer is  
probably off the table in the  
future.

Beat. Sam's heart breaks.

She leans forward and puts her face into her hands.

CUT TO:

48 HOURS EARLIER

EXT. SOCCER MATCH - MID GAME

Players move quickly around the field. Score is tied. Game is heating up.

A 2000's throwback pump-up song (like "Survivor" by Destiny's Child or "Stronger" by Kanye West) starts to play.

Fans cheer. Players hustle. Coach barks orders.

Whistle blows.

COACH  
(yells behind)  
Ipema!

EXT. SIDELINE

Sam is on the bench, sitting in the same bent over position we last saw her: head between her hands, knees bouncing.

Tired, sweaty, and anxious. Game resumes.

COACH (V.O.)

IPEMA.

Sam looks up, jumps to her feet and rushes to Coach's side. Eyes focused on the game ahead.

COACH

You good?

SAM

Yeah.

EXT. BLEACHERS

Sam sneaks a peak to the bleachers. She spots the SCOUT, a woman dressed in all black, watching the game.

EXT. SIDELINE

Coach catches the glance.

COACH

Don't pay attention to her.

(taps Sam's cheek)

Hey. Listen-- you go out there and just play the game. OK?

Sam looks to Coach.

SAM

(nodding)

Okay.

COACH

(slap her back)

Go get 'em girl.

EXT. SIDELINE - CONTINUOUS

Runs up to the scorekeeper's table. There sits JOEL, student announcer - 20, tan, athletic, attractive - and also the guy Sam is in love with...but she hasn't realized that yet.