

PAST DEFIANCE

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Period 6

Screenplay Workshop

2009

Fairfax Senior High School

EXT. ROOF - SUNSET

Anna, 17 years old, sits back on the grimy tiles of her roof and gazes at the sky. A golden sun sinking into a dark pink horizon sprayed with hints of orange and purple paint the gorgeous scenery. A slight breeze blows and Anna breathes in the fresh air. Her thick, black hair overlaps high cheekbones and large brown eyes. She swirls tendrils of hair around long thin fingers and gazes longingly at the sky. She seems to be in a reverie as her eyes go blank and she hums an unfamiliar melody.

Brrringg! Brrringg! Anna's phone rings.

ANNA

Hey Pearl! What's up?

PEARL (unusually jittery)

Anna? Um...I just heard about something.
I'm not sure if it's true, okay? Just
hear me out. I heard that...Elaine is
going to transfer to our school tomorrow.
Of all the schools...why...

ANNA

Hahaha! No way. Just a rumor, you hear?
Just a rumor...there's no way...

PEARL

But Anna, she-

ANNA

Thanks for caring but it's nothing.
Don't worry about it.

She hangs up the phone without hesitation and her lips tighten. Her eyes look troubled. She shakes her head fiercely as if trying to remove a bad memory.

MOM (from inside the house)

Anna! Are you on the roof again? Come down
and have some filet mignon! Let's eat, hon!

Laughter and clinking glasses are heard in the distance.

Anna

Be there right now!

She gets up, glances at the sky for the briefest moment, and rolls down the sleeve of her shirt. Just before the fabric completely covers her skin, dark cuts scarred in jagged lines are shown. She skillfully hangs over the roof and jumps down before entering the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Anna walks in to see another family sitting on the dining table. A middle-aged woman and man along with a young son rise to greet her. Anna's mother enters the room.

ANNA'S MOM (gestures to woman)
This is my college friend. The man next to her is her husband and this handsome youngster is their son.

ANNA
Hi...it's nice to meet you...

LADY
Hello Anna! It's a pleasure. I'd like you to meet my son. He just started attending your school a few weeks ago.

She nudges forward a lean boy wearing basketball shorts and a white hoodie. His brown, wavy hair and dangling dog-tag necklaces give a "bad-boy" impression. Anna is not fooled.

ANNA (leans back slightly)
Hey, I didn't know you came to my school.

JONATHAN (sticks out hand)
Um, yeah me too. Name's Jonathan by the way. Pleased.

The adults have dinner at a grand table furnished heavily with delicious smelling mashed potatoes, filet mignon, etc. They talk enthusiastically and share laughter and cheer. Meanwhile, Jonathan and Anna sit at a nearby booth. They dine in heavy silence.

JONATHAN
You don't talk much, do you?

ANNA

Mmm... how's school?

JONATHAN

Great..great..where's your dad?
I don't see him.

ANNA

He died of cancer when I was two.
I don't remember him at all so please
don't give me the usual pity look.

JONATHAN (awkwardly)

Oh...I see... you know, you really
make it hard to have a decent
conversation.

ANNA (smiles sarcastically)

I don't like conversing with "bad-boys"
I got over them.

JONATHAN

"Bad-boys"? What the heck are
you talking about?

ANNA (laughs)

Look at your get up. Jeez, dog tag?
Hoodie? B-ball shorts? Who do you
think you are?

JONATHAN

Wow, you noticed? That interested in me
already, are you? And this is just what I wear
by the way. You don't exactly dress
like a model either, princess.

ANNA (irritated)

I'm going to be a model when I grow up.
Take that back.

JONATHAN

Make me.

ANNA (exasperated)

UGH, do you have a comeback for everything
I say?

JONATHAN

Yes, I do. Got a problem, princess?

They argue until Anna gives up and goes to clear her dishes. After excusing herself, she goes upstairs to her room and closes the door.

INT. ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Anna is lying on her bed, reading a book. CAMERA ZOOMS in on the rest of her room. Trophies line the shelves next to her bed and a poster project done for her school is tacked neatly on an adjacent wall. Large words "BECOME A WILDLIFE RANGER. LIVE IN AFRICA & TRAVEL THE WORLD. ALSO, BECOME A MODEL??" are written under the category Ambitions. Next to each goal is a checkbox, meant to be marked when accomplished. It is obvious that Anna has high hopes for the future and is on the road to becoming a very successful person. The camera zooms back in on Anna.

ANNA (rolls up sleeves slowly)

.....

She gets up and approaches her mirror cautiously. Her reflection is startling: a horribly distorted image of Anna stares back. Scars are etched into bruised skin. Hair is wild and eyes look bloodshot. The hideous, dirty looking girl continues to watch herself. Clearly this is not how Anna actually looks but is what she sees herself as.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jonathan, who has just finished dinner, excuses himself to the restroom.

JONATHAN

Excuse me, where is the bathroom?

ANNA'S MOM

Oh, just go upstairs and take a right.

It should be next to Anna's room.

Jonathan skips upstairs, planning to surprise Anna. He stops in front of her door and peers inside. He sees a different side to the smart-mouthed beauty downstairs: a weary girl sits very still in front of the mirror. She views her reflection as if she's seen it everyday of her

life. She seems tired. Weary. Sighing, she turns away and avoids eye contact with her reflection.

EXT. ANNA'S ROOM - NIGHT

JONATHAN

What is she doing...?

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Anna meets up with Jonathan in the morning before school starts to see how he's doing.

JONATHAN (after separating with friends)

What's up?

ANNA

Mom just wanted me to check up on you to make sure you were okay. You seem great, so I'm going to class.

JONATHAN

WAIT! Walk me to my first period.

ANNA

Are you serious? You've been here 3 weeks and you have no idea where your classes are? You moron.

JONATHAN (grasps her jacket and drags her)

Oh, shut it.

So...I was going to talk to you about something last night. Um, I was passing by your room and-

ANNA (halts abruptly)

Oh...hey. Your classroom is right here. I gotta go...catch you later, I guess. Haha.

JONATHAN (views surroundings)

W-What? HEY, THIS ISN'T MY CLASS; YOU TOOK ME TO THE FREAKING BATHROOM.

Anna is already hurrying down the hall when she is stopped by her friends.

PEARL

Finally, we've been looking all over
for you. Listen, about the thing I
told you last night-

ANNA

I told you it's nothing. Don't worry
about it, okay? I love you guys for
caring but it really doesn't matter.

YUNA

No, but Anna-

ANNA (covers ears)

BLAH, BLAH, I CAN'T HEAR YOU!

YUNA

Why are you acting like such
a kid? We're trying to help!

ANNA

You guys said that was a good thing.
You said that meant I was lively. Hey,
class is going to start soon. Ahaha,
I don't want to get ol' Ms. Fritah
pissed again. See you at nutrition!

She turns and walks away, despite protests from her friends.

PEARL

...Yuna what are we going
to do...

YUNA

It's so obvious she's trying to
pretend nothing happened. That's not
good considering..

They catch each others eyes and bite their lips anxiously.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Anna walks in and slumps into her seat at the back of the
class. She sighs and looks around for someone to gossip
with before class began. Suddenly, she freezes. Her body

becomes rigid as she stares wide-eyed at a girl making her way into the classroom. Her long braids swing from side to side and a bright smile is plastered to her face. She stops at the front of the room and introduces herself.

ELAINE

Hi, my name is Elaine. I'm new here.
I'm only going to be here for a
year or so. I hope we become friends.
Please treat me well!

Panic seems to fill Anna's eyes. She begins choking on her breath as she discreetly tiptoes to her teacher. Elaine takes her seat at the front of the row and Anna goes unnoticed.

ANNA

Ms..Ms. Fritah? Can I go
to the nurse's office? I don't
feel well.

Ms. Fritah

Sure, Anna. Just take the pass.

Anna grips the pass and silently creeps out of the room. When the door closes behind her, her body becomes limp and her face goes blank. Anna seems to be in a daze as she stumbles down the hall. She passes by a row of mirrors and stops to gaze at one. The same disfigured girl seen in the room stares back coldly.

ANNA (whispers)

The past doesn't define the future. It
doesn't. It doesn't.

She wrenches her sleeve up to reveal the jagged cuts scarred on her arm. Anna's face turns hot as she glares at the marks in pure hatred. Her body sways a little and her pupils dilute. She pants hard for air but doesn't succeed. With a last breath, she collapses to the floor.

INT. NURSE'S OFFICE-MORNING

FADE IN to a peaceful scenery of Anna and Elaine laughing at school. Their eyes twinkle with merriment and all seems well. FADE OUT to Anna lying on a white-sheeted cot.

ANNA (eyes flutter)

A...a dream...

JONATHAN (appears suddenly beside her)

Huh?

ANNA

What are you doing here...

JONATHAN (grins sheepishly and shrugs)

I was playing hooky when I saw you at the hall. You looked like you were in a trance.

It was weird. You were just standing there shaking your head and muttering to yourself.

I was going to say "PRINCESS GONE MAD" when you suddenly fell to the floor. Man, you scared me.

ANNA

Ah...I was hoping I dreamt that all up too...

JONATHAN

What are you talking about?

ANNA

I was being ignorant...stupid... now it's all ruined. Everything I worked for...I should of...

JONATHAN

Want to tell me what's going on?
I'm lost...

Anna turns her head slowly to Jonathan until her eyes meet his. She still seems as if she's in a daze. Closing her eyes, she begins.

CAMERA FADE OUT to a middle school. Anna is with a group of girls discussing this and that. Elaine bounces in and pulls Anna out. They talk and giggle excitedly to each other before exchanging secret handshakes. As they do so, they sing a melody. It is the same melody Anna hummed on the roof.

ANNA (V.O)

Middle school. 8th grade year.
I had a best friend since 5th grade.
Her name was Elaine. She was like my
twin. We did everything for each other.
I believed she would always be there for me.

CAMERA ZOOM in to separate scenes of the two flirting with
a cute athletic boy (Kevin).

ANNA (V.O)

We both liked this boy. We didn't
know that the other liked him though.
He played us. He told lies to me saying
that I was his everything and he went to
Elaine and sweet talked her too. At
that time, I truly felt I was the
happiest girl on Earth. I had the best friend
a person could have and the most charming
boyfriend. My grades were exceptional. I loved
my life. In a way, it almost felt like a dream..

CAMERA ZOOM in to Anna and the boy holding hands walking
down a street.

ANNA (V.O)

She caught us one day. In her fury, she
didn't even stop to say anything. She ran home
screaming profanities and bawling her eyes out. I
didn't know why she was so angry. I had been
meaning to surprise her about my boyfriend later. When I
asked him if he knew anything, he shrugged and
said he didn't know. The next morning..

Camera shows Anna walking to school thinking about what to
say to Elaine. She is muttering to herself about how sorry
she feels for not telling her best friend about her
boyfriend.

ANNA

I wish I told her sooner..
she probably felt left out..
Man... I have to apologize..

Anna is stopped by a group of girls led by Elaine herself.
They surround Anna.

ANNA

ELAINE! I need to talk to you
about yesterday. I'm so sorry about not
telling you-

ELAINE

You traitor. You backstabbing,
liar. You think you're so
hot seducing MY boyfriend?

ANNA (utterly confused)

H-huh??

ELAINE

Hah, acting like you don't
know anything. Don't think
you're so cute. I thought we
were best friends. I trusted you.
I was going to tell you later about my
new boyfriend. To think I was ecstatic
to tell you...

She shoves Anna roughly to the floor and the girls all
laugh scornfully. They whisper words like, " slut, ugly
loser, whore, fat disgusting freak ".

ANNA (tries to get up)

STOP! ELAINE, SOMETHING
ISN'T RIGHT-

ELAINE (aggressively)

You're correct...it's not right
for you to be stealing other
people's boyfriends. And I already asked Kevin.
He said you forced yourself on him...threatened him
to treat you well. Pitiful.
You're just a desperate whore
who pounces on anything that moves.

She spits on Anna and leaves promptly. CAMERA fade to a new
scene: Anna is sitting by herself in a lunch area. She
looks at the floor miserably, tears brimming in her eyes.
Clutched in her hands is picture of Elaine and her waving.
Students pass by and occasionally knock her food down or
kick her shoes intentionally.

ANNA (V.O)

I was alone...I was harassed
everyday. To make things worse...

CAMERA FADE to a new scene. Elaine saunters over to the table Anna is sitting at and raps promptly on the surface to get Anna's attention.

ELAINE

ANNA! I need to talk to you!
I just discovered something...

ANNA (tears forming)
You found out? Oh thank God,
I was starting to think...

ELAINE (yanks picture out of Anna's hand)
I just discovered what a loser
you are. I can't believe I ever
hung out with you.

She rips the picture in half, right in between the two smiling girls. She continues tearing the photo; there is a strange pleasure glistening in her eyes. Anna watches in horror as the shreds fall to the floor. Elaine walks away, hooting and guffawing bitterly to herself.

CAMERA zooms in on Anna attempting to pick up the scattered pieces of photo, which the wind blows away. Anna cries as she desperately searches for the last remains of her happy memories.

ANNA (V.O)

The words...they hurt
to the point where I'd sit
in a room by myself all night.
The cutting started then. Other
things began, too. I used to...see a bright and
happy girl in the mirror, but over time, my
reflection became horrible. Disgusting. I felt
like a monster. I wanted to kill myself. The
worst part was, no one was there to stop me.

A new scene is shown: Anna is sitting in her room staring at her reflection. Tears stain her beautiful face as she opens a drawer and pulls out a small blade. She closes her eyes and holds it up to her neck. She cries out as she whispers that it will all be better now.

ANNA (V.O)

I can't...I can't take this
anymore...I'm so sorry Mom..
I tried so hard...please forgive
me...please..

A sing-along tune is heard outside the window, and she glances towards the sounds. She sees her mother outside her window watering plants, tidying the backyard here and there. Remembering that no one is there to help her mother but her, Anna slowly opens the drawer and places the knife back in. She cuffs her face into her hands.

ANNA (V.O)

They say time heals all wounds..
...Unfortunately, that didn't apply
for me. So, instead of letting the
past completely take over my life, I
deleted it. In high school, I
started a clean slate.

CAMERA VIEW on a new scene. Anna is at her house laughing and cracking jokes with her new friends. As she leaves to bring some snacks, they flip through her yearbook and find a picture of Elaine, scratched out wildly with pen. They share worried glances and sit Anna down with them. Her voice cracks as she explains the picture briefly before being covered from view by her friends' hugs.

ANNA (V.O)

Well, a clean slate with
rubbed off chalk stains.

It's back to present day. Anna's face is covered by her hands, and tears roll silently down her cheeks. A sob escapes and Anna covers her mouth with a shaky palm. She tries to cry without making a commotion. Her efforts go to waste. Suddenly, like a breaking dam, tears flood out.

Jonathan sits on a stool next to the cotton mat and ponders deeply.

JONATHAN
You're stupider than I
thought, Princess.

ANNA
What...

JONATHAN
I'm just kidding.

JONATHAN (reaches out and pinches Anna's cheeks)
The past doesn't define the future. If it
did, think about where everyone would be.
We live and change throughout our lives. Although
the past affects the present, it doesn't necessarily
control it. Accept your past. Turn it into
memories and grow from it. Learn from it. I shouldn't
have to tell you that, gosh.

ANNA
What are...

JONATHAN (smiles a dimpled grin)
You'll make the right choice..

He lets go and leaves the room. CAMERA ZOOM in on Anna's face. She's blushing fiercely and rubbing her tear-stained cheeks.

The nutrition bell rings shortly after. Anna gets up and starts towards the cafeteria. Kids empty out quickly and soon she is alone again. As she walks down the hall, she hears a commotion. She turns the corner and sees Elaine surrounded by Anna's friends.

PEARL
What's your problem, biatch?
You got some balls coming here.

YUNA

Yeah, and if you
got a brain, you'd better
get the hell out as soon as
possible. Or we'll make you
leave. Your choice.

Elaine stands with her head bowed. She makes no move to
fight back or run.

YUNA (slams Elaine to a locker)
You deaf, too?! HEY!

Anna watches, unsure what to do.

Memories from the past flash through Anna's mind and she
angrily turns her back. She begins walking down the stairs
ignoring the fight when a cry of "STOP" is heard followed
by a sharp tear. Anna halts on her step and her eyes widen.
She sees herself crying out to Elaine to stop. She hears
the tear as Elaine rips the picture in half. Anna closes
her eyes. Taking a deep breath, her face furrows in
concentration.

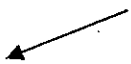
ELAINE (yanks picture out of Anna's hand)
...I just discovered what a loser
you are. I can't believe I ever
hung out with you...

ANNA (knife at throat)
I can't...I can't take this
anymore...I'm so sorry Mom...

YUNA & PEARL (hug Anna)
It's okay...it was the past...
We love you; we'll never
do that to you...

JONATHAN (pinches Anna's cheeks)
...Turn it into memories and grow
from it. Learn from it...

Reference to
page 13



She realizes how long it's been since the incident, how wrong Elaine's actions were, and how she was a changed person now. Jonathan's words echo in her head. She could learn from the experience. She was free. She would not run away from the past. Whirling around, Anna breaks into a sprint toward the crowd.

ANNA (places arm on friends' shoulders)
Guys...that's enough...

YUNA (voice is hard, but her grip loosens)
...We're doing it for you. I'm
pretty sure you know that.

ANNA
I know...

PEARL
Are you sure?

ANNA (turns to Pearl and Yuna)
Yeah...thank you... for...
you know... But now,
I'll take it from here...

She smiles at them and mouths 'sorry' before giving them a gentle nudge. For a brief, but somehow long moment, they look into each others' eyes. Her friends then trudge away; some turn back to make sure Anna is alright. Anna turns and looks Elaine in the eye. Fear turns into determination and she helps Elaine up stiffly. Elaine gawks wide-eyed at Anna.

ELAINE
Anna? Oh my God,
It's really you.

ANNA (takes a deep breath)
At one point in my life,
I tried to block you. Pretend you
weren't there. It was so hard;
painful memories wouldn't let me
forget. No more. I'm not afraid
of you. I helped you today
to prove to myself that I'm a
changed person. I'll never inflict
the same damage you gave to me.

Anna's eyes become blurry. She wipes her eyes and turns to walk away.

ELAINE
WAIT. ANNA, WAIT.

Anna looks back. She is shocked to see that Elaine is practically kneeling and crying. Elaine clutches a picture of herself and Kevin, now ripped in two.

ELAINE
The truth is, I'm so sorry.
I regret it so much. You've been hurt,
I know, but I've been in pain almost every
day since then. I regret what I did to you
so much. I didn't even know you attended this school.

ANNA
Why are you even here...?

ELAINE
...When I treated you that way...I really
thought Brad was telling the truth. I'm
so sorry Anna...a few months later, in high
school, I found out the truth. I was so
infuriated and disappointed with myself. I felt so
heartless. I really wanted to go back in the past and
change it all. If I could, I would. I'm here
because...Kevin and I...we did things together.
Terrible things. I'm here to finish my high school
education and get out of here as fast
as possible. No other school would accept me.
I have to get my diploma to get a good-supporting job
that could help the...the baby. Kevin regrets
everything too...

Anna's mouth drops open and she points incredulously at Elaine's stomach. Elaine lets out a loud sob and nods rapidly.

ANNA
YOU STUPID IDIOT!

Anna rushes to Elaine and flings her arms around her shoulders. They cried. For the past, for the present, for

all the pain they went through. The grief experienced, the difficult times in their lives, they sobbed for each other. After calming down a little, Elaine begins shakily humming their melody. Anna responds by finishing the little tune. Their embrace pulls apart and they look at each other. Suddenly they burst out laughing, tears still running down their cheeks. A janitor passes by and rolls his eyes.

JANITOR

God, the things parents let
their kids smoke nowadays...

Behind the two girls is a figure watching from the corner, but too distant to see clearly. CAMERA ZOOM on baggy shorts. CAMERA makes its way up to a hooded sweatshirt, dog tag, and stops just below the nose. A smile spreads across the face.

EXT. ROOF - SUNSET (3 weeks after incident)

Anna and Jonathan are on the roof lying on their backs. A similar setting takes place as the sun dips into the horizon. There is a new light in Anna's eyes. It's as if a huge burden has been lifted.

JONATHAN

Why do you like doing this? This
is so freaking boring.

ANNA

Shut up! I'm going to travel around
the world cuz` I love nature. I like
doing this kind of stuff.

JONATHAN (rolls eyes)

Model, travel the world, what's next?
QUEEN OF THE WORLD?

ANNA (sticks tongue out)

Mission Impossible: Jonathan shutting his mouth
for more than 10 seconds. Seriously
why's your name even Jonathan. You sound so
immature but the name makes you seem like
an adult.

Anna begins humming the tune and gazing off into the distance, the scene almost identical to the beginning.

ANNA

I don't know it's strange...whenever
I sit under the vast horizon, I feel...small.
Like all my problems are not as big as
they seem to be...

JONATHAN

So...it's all over, right?

ANNA

Yeah...I guess you're right, huh...

She looks down at a trashcan at the end of the curb. CAMERA ZOOMS in on a knife on top of dirty papers, bottles, etc. It gleams off the light of the setting sun.

ANNA (faintly)

The scars will heal...
I'm...free now, you know?

As she turns to him and laughs, embarrassed, final tears slowly slide down her cheeks.

ANNA

It feels as if...
as if it's...

JONATHAN

A dream?

ANNA

Too good to be a dream...
Because dreams have an
end...this is reality.

JONATHAN

Yeah, but you know-

Jonathan turns and sees her face.

JONATHAN

Oh my crap, not again.
I swear, people are going to
make rumors. You big baby.
You even cry like one.

ANNA

These are tears of happiness.

For once, Jonathan has nothing to say. Anna looks off into
the horizon. A new future. In a way, a fresh start.

JONATHAN'S MOM (exits house)

ANNA, JONATHAN. COME DOWN!
IT'S HAMBURGER NIGHT!

ANNA (wipes away tears; smirks)

Hey, let's make
a little bet.

JONATHAN

Huh?

ANNA

If I get down first, you're
asking me to prom next year.

JONATHAN

And if I win?

ANNA (in a coy manner)

I'll consider walking you to class
every morning.

JONATHAN (grins evilly)

You're on.

They scramble down and stampede into the house.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Anna and Jonathan, laughing, run into a brightly lit
kitchen. Just before they sit down at the booth table, Anna
passes a mirror. She glances and winks at her reflection:
it shows a beautiful, carefree girl.

Scene changes to upstairs in Anna's room. CAMERA zoom into large poster with Ambitions category. Under the section with "wildlife ranger, travel the world, model" etc., new words are scribbled in swift handwriting - "Large goals and new hopes for the future [x] A girl who matured from her experiences [x] A girl who won't let the past define the present! [x] Live and love every second of my life from now on; nothing will stop me now [x]" As the camera rolls down the poster, an uproar is heard from downstairs.

JONATHAN'S MOM (distant shrieking)
Oh honey, come and-
What the- JONATHAN DID YOU
GO CHRIS BROWN/RIHANNA ON ANNA?
YOU JUST WAIT TILL` I GET MY HANDS ON YOU.
GET OVER HERE!

JONATHAN (distant yelping)
UGHHH MOM!

ANNA (distant laughter)
Ahahahaha! What a loser!

Camera fade out.

-The end-