

EVERWOOD

“The Quality of Life”

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FADE UP ON: A MONTAGE OF EVERWOOD, COLORADO. EARLY EVENING.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM. MORNING.

Dr. BROWN, 40, is sitting at the dining room table with EPHRAM, 15, and DELIA, 8. No one is saying a word while picking through their food. Ephram drops his fork, gets up, grabs his plate with unfinished dinner, takes it to the sink and washes the food off the plate into the garbage disposal.

NERD (VO)

There's always a calm before the storm. Do we hear it or prefer to stay unaware, sleeping in what we think is our perfect existence. Yet, there are some who are stirring restless, they are no longer living the dream.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

NERD (VO)

The quality of life could be the lack of discipline in being responsible to our fellow man,

NERD, 15, dressed in black clothing and WENDELL, 15, are walking down the street. Truck passes with the TWO DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 and #2, both 16 who taunt them by calling them names and tossing raw eggs at them. The NERD steps in the line of fire and is hit by several eggs. The sound of a motorcycle is heard. A biker pulls up in front of the Nerd. The two DICKHEAD TEENAGERS take off as WENDELL is shouting at them. The NERD says nothing as he wipes egg off himself. The biker is CASSANDRA, 25, daughter of IRV HARPER.

CASSIE

You okay.

NERD

There goes my cholesterol count.

WENDELL

I never want eggs again.

CASSIE

I'm Cassie.

WENDELL

No one ever wants to know my name.

INT. NERD'S BEDROOM. EVENING

NERD walks out of the bathroom, towel wrapped around him, hair dripping wet, goes and sits at the computer table. He rummages through the desk drawer until he finds a bottle of pills that he sits next to his keyboard.

The Audience can read the title "QUALITY OF LIFE, THE LAST WORDS OF A NERD."

NERD (VO)

How does one measure the quality of life?
My quality of life was based on my parents
dream. All is not right in the life of a nerd
if you live someone else's dream.

He is opens the prescription bottle, shakes out two pills in his hand and swallows them.
He reads the writing on the computer screen.

NERD

This nerd lives on the dark side of life and
cannot enjoy the sunshine that exist for your
stereotype boy and girl next door. Some of us
are just moody and the quality of life seems to
best achieve when one is in a haze.

He leans back in his chair, puts the caps back on the pill bottle and holds it tightly.

CAMERA PANS to bed.

The NERD imagines he sees himself sitting on the bed.

IMAGINARY NERD

It is time to disconnect.

NERD

Have you ever wondered when you exit
is there a void left, a feeling that people
need to express, and maybe you carried
that unspoken feeling.

IMAGINARY NERD

You're not making a difference.

NERD

But what if I did and didn't know it.

IMAGINARY NERD

You can't push people past their limits
and not expect them to push back.

NERD

Wendell is my best friend.

IMAGINARY NERD

You blurred the lines.

FADE TO CREDITS

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. COLLIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM. EVENING.

COLLIN, 15, sits in a chair addressing an unseen person.

NERD (VO)

Is the quality of life measured by being a medical miracle validating human ingenuity,

COLLIN

I'll never be this person. I'll keep wearing this face like a mask. I'll learn my lines.

COLLIN looks at small piece of paper with facts about people he knows.

COLLIN (CONT'D)

Learn the lines Collin and everything will be just fine.

INT. DINING ROOM. EVENING.

EPHRAM is clearing dishes from the table. DELIA takes milk off the table and takes to refrigerator but accidentally drops the container. She looks at DR. BROWN and EPHRAM. DR. BROWN says nothing, just grabs a towel and goes to clean it up. DELIA continues cleaning off the table.

NERD (VO)

Is the quality of life living the expectations of others? Is there a comfort zone living in limitations and thinking this is all there is too life?

DR. BROWN

My culinary skills are still catching up to my enthusiasm.

EPHRAM

Your enthusiasm is stunting our growth.

DR. BROWN

Mama Joe's still has so much to offer.

EPHRAM

Why do we have to participate in your insanity?

DR. BROWN

Consider it a cultural investment in your future.

EPHRAM

You can't cook. We're exiled from civilization.

DELIA

We could have pizza every night.

DR. BROWN

It's important to have all the food groups.

EPHRAM

We'll starve to death before you figure out the right combination.

EPHRAM walks out the kitchen. DR. BROWN looks perplexed. DELIA continues to move about the kitchen as if invisible.

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING.

The NERD is asleep at his computer.

NERD (VO)

Maybe to grasps the quality of life, is experiencing the silent pause that causes reflection. Maybe it is honoring the passing of someone who has left an emptiness, a space, for something to fill it.

IMAGINARY NERD is standing at the door with suitcases.

IMAGINARY NERD

I'm ready to go. Bags are packed. Attitude has been adjustment. Wake up. It's bye bye time. I hate soap opera good-byes.

There is an envelope laying next to the computer addressed to the EVERWOOD CITY PAPER and to WENDELL.

EXT. KITCHEN. MORNING.

SAMUEL FEENEY, 4, is sitting at kitchen table playing soldiers at war in his food. NINA, 30ish, SAM'S MOTHER, is washing dishes at the sink.

NINA

Sam, stop it. If you're not going to eat, then go outside and play.

SAM continues to play.

SAM

When is dad coming home?

NINA

Enough.

NINA grabs SAM'S plate and throws it into the kitchen sink.

SAM runs out of the kitchen crying.

SAM

I want daddy.

FLASHBACK - KITCHEN. MORNING.

NINA is talking on the telephone.

NINA

He told me all about you. Carl doesn't love you. He wants me. We have our family. Do you hear me? We are his family. So stop calling here.

MALE'S VOICE is heard coming from the telephone.

MALE (VO)

I'm sorry. Tell Carl, I will not call again.

There's a shock look on NINA's face. She slams the receiver down.

BACK TO PRESENT MOMENT.

NINA

I wanted him to.

EXT. STREET. MORNING.

NERD walks up to a mailbox and mails two envelopes.

NERD (VO)

When you don't value the quality of life, what happens?

EXT. FEENEY FRONT YARD / SAM'S GARDEN. MORNING.

Sam is pulling plants out of the ground and throwing them around.

NINA walks to the window and sees SAM pulling plants out of the ground and throwing them in over his shoulder.

NINA

Sam, stop it. Stop it.

NINA runs outside and grabs SAM off the ground. He struggles. She holds him close as he starts to cry.

SAM

I want my daddy. I want my daddy.

EXT. MAIN STREET. MORNING.

NERD (VO)

In Everwood, the quality of life has been about community, how citizens treat each other. Sometimes, we forget how to treat ourselves.

PEOPLE take notice of CASSIE pulling up on a motorcycle in front of MAMA JOE'S DINER.

INT. MAMA JOE'S DINER. MORNING.

DR. BROWN is sitting at the counter watching NINA move about the diner nervously pouring coffee to CUSTOMERS. He stops her.

DR. BROWN

So I noticed when I mention Carl lately, there's this silence, then a pause, followed by a longer silence.

NINA

Didn't someone once say, silence is golden?

ANDY

Guess I'm doing that uninvited guest thing again?

NINA

Sorry Andy, is there something else you need?

CASSIE, walks in. All heads turn. COUNTER MAN, 20ish, greets her.

COUNTER MAN

May I help you?

CASSIE

Looking for a man.

COUNTER MAN

Haven't had many requests for that.

CASSIE gives him a blank look.

COUNTER MAN (CONT'D)

It's a joke.

CASSIE

So I guess, if this is your typical small town, everybody knows everybody, right?

DR. HAROLD ABBOTT, 40, walks in and over hears the COUNTER MAN speaking to CASSIE.

COUNTER MAN

You could say this place is the heart of town.

DR. ABBOTT

This place is consistent with heartburn but news spreads here faster than wildfire.

CASSIE

I'm looking for a man...Irv Harper.

DR. BROWN

I know Irv.

COUNTER MAN

We all know Irv.

CASSIE

Great we've solved a mystery. Can you tell me where I can find him?

DR. ABBOTT sits at the counter near Cassie.

DR. ABBOTT
So are you related to Irv?

CASSIE
About as much as I'm related to you.

Several people in the diner laugh. DR. ABBOTT is embarrassed.

DR. BROWN
This time of day, he's helping at the grade school. And you are?

CASSIE
A stranger looking for direction.

COUNTER MAN
He comes in here around 6:00 p.m.

CASSIE
Thanks, I'll be back.

DR. BROWN
Can I give him a message from a stranger?

CASSIE
(Exiting)
No, this is a personal delivery.

DR. ABBOTT
(To DR. BROWN)
Well, we don't have to worry about your approach with women.

EVERYONE watches her leave and get on her motorcycle and take off.

COUNTER MAN
Leather on a woman is so hot.

DR. ABBOTT
Motorcycles, women in leather, not a good Combination. She's trouble. What if she has a gang outside of town waiting to come in and stir up trouble?

DR. BROWN

Maybe it's not our concern. Irv doesn't need to tell us his business.

DR. ABBOTT

What's the fun of living in a small town if you can't know everyone's business?

EXT. SCHOOL YARD. MORNING.

IRV HARPER, mid 60s, is pushing a GIRL, 6, on a swing. He is in earshot of DELIA and ARNIE, 6, who are sitting off to them selves. DELIA takes a bite out of an apple and offers it to ARNIE.

DELIA

You can finish this for me.

ARNIE

Okay.

DELIA

An apple a day keeps the doctor away.

ARNIE

If you're my girlfriend, why do you boss me around?

DELIA

It's a woman thing, you wouldn't understand.

ARNIE

Okay.

SCHOOL BELL rings.

DELIA

I'll see you inside.

ARNIE

I'll wait.

DELIA

I have a headache. I need to be alone for a moment.

ARNIE starts to say something, DELIA ignores him and he walks away.

IRV stops pushing the little girl on the swing. She jumps off and runs into the school. IRV walks over to DELIA.

IRV

The nurse will have aspirins for your headache.

DELIA

Is a headache a sign of a distraught heart?

IRV

Could be your just frustrated with yourself for how you are treating Arnie? Sometimes we hurt people when we are hurting. Better get on to class for the teacher worries.

DELIA

It's not fun being a kid. You can't tell yourself what to do.

CASSIE has been watching IRV from across the street. She walks away before she is seen.

INT. COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY. MORNING.

NERD and WENDELL are walking down the hallway as DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 and DICKHEAD TEENAGER #2 are joking around at their lockers.

NERD

School is nothing but a factory to create worker drones.

WENDELL

How can you beat the system if you don't understand it? Me, I'm profiting off people's ignorance and greed.

NERD

Is there a way out of this computer program we are frying our minds in.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 takes notice of the NERD and pretends like he's a chimpanzee jumping around in front of them.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1

Ding, ding, ding. The village idiot approaches.

Nearby STUDENTS laugh as DICKHEAD TEENAGER #2 joins in monkeying around WENDELL and the NERD.

EPHRAM has been observing as he walking from the other direction. He interrupts DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 and #2 antics.

EPHRAM

You're determined to fill that dumb ass quota.

The laughter turns toward the two DICKHEAD TEENAGERS.

INT. CLASSROOM. MORNING.

TEACHER, 40ish, is walking through the class.

TEACHER

I'm not sure if I agree with that answer.
You can't rewrite what's in the textbook
to suit your views.

NERD

Textbooks are not accurate. It's history
from a white male perspective. We are
being spoon-fed lies by a secret
government that hides behind a propaganda
machine.

DICK HEAD TEENAGER #1

The boy watches too many X-File reruns.

CLASS laughs.

NERD

The average person is blinded to the fact
they are not in control of their lives and have
no real freedom. As long as they have a
semblance of freedom, they would rather be
asleep to the truth. The truth isn't out there

NERD (CONT'D)

it's inside of us.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #2

All that black makes you a gloomy boy.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1
Lighten up, you're scaring the children.

TEACHER
Enough.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1
No one wants to hear nerd propaganda.

TEACHER
I said enough.

NERD
We are being educated into ignorance.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1
Someone smells like rotten eggs.

CLASS MEMBERS laugh.

EPHRAM
Why don't you back off from him?

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1
Are you the white knight rescuing this damsel
in distress?

CLASS laughs out loud.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #2
(To NERD)
No one wants you here. You're too weird.

TEACHER
Pretend like I'm not standing here.

EPHRAM
You believe ignorance is bliss. That's why
you are locked into Neanderthal mentality.

TEACHER
Enough.

SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM. / COLLIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM. EVENING.

Amy is lying across the bed talking on a cell phone to Collin. The scene cuts back and forth. Collin is sitting in a chair.

AMY

How's it going?

COLLIN

I'm tired of these tests.

AMY

It'll be over soon. (Pause) I miss you. The kids at school say hello. This time, I promise no welcome home party. It'll just be us.

COLLIN

I'm getting sleepy now. I've got to get psyched For more early morning tests. (Pause) I miss you Amy.

AMY

I miss you too.

She hangs up cell phone. She stops the CD with a remote.

She picks up the cover laying on the night stand. It says MUSIC FOR AMY by EPHRAM.

She looks at COLLIN'S photo.

AMY (CONT'D)

I really do miss you.

INT. COLLIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM. EVENING.

COLLIN is addressing an unseen person.

COLLIN

She's not your girl in more. She's my girlfriend now.

INT. FEENEY' LIVING ROOM. NIGHT. EVENING.

NINA is picking up after SAM'S latest tirade that tore the living room apart. SAM is standing in the doorway watching.

NINA
We can't do this anymore!

INT. BROWN KITCHEN. EVENING.

Dinner is finished. DR. BROWN and EPHRAM are cleaning up the kitchen.

DR. BROWN
I think I'm getting a handle on this
cooking thing.

EPHRAM.
I prefer being on diner detail.

DR. BROWN
There was a time when men had to go
out and gather the food.

EPHRAM
At least they could recognize their
food.

DR. BROWN
So how was your day?

EPHRAM
The usual. I'm stuck in a town with the
culture IQ of a lab rat. I don't fit in and
it's not worth the effort. (Pause) So, have
you ever thought about giving up cooking
and hiring a real cook.

DR. BROWN
My omelets have passed the taste test.
Making a good omelet is an art form.
You should appreciate the subtlety of my
culinary talents.

EPHRAM
And who do I have to thank for that?

EPHRAM walks out the kitchen.

DR. BROWN says nothing as he goes back to cleaning the kitchen.

INT. COLLIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM. EVENING.

COLLIN wakes up from a bad dream. He gets up. He then addresses an unseen person.

COLLIN

There's this empty space that I have to fill
with people's expectations. (Pause) Let
go of me. I don't need you crippling me.
We're not friends!

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING.

NERD attempts to call WENDELL but gets his message machine and leaves the following message.

NERD

It's time to disconnect.

NERD hangs up and takes out a bottle of prescription pills.

INT. HARPER KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

EDNA, 60ish, is cooking. IRV walks in.

IRV

Good to see you're enjoying yourself.

EDNA

Watch it big guy.

IRV

You know the way to a man's heart.

EDNA

We did that this morning.

DOORBELL RINGS.

IRV answers the door.

IRV

Cassandra!

CASSIE

Cassie.

IRV

Come in. Come in.

CASSIE

I've played this moment over and over
in my head. It never came out right.

IRV

It's so good to see you Cassandra.

CASSIE

Cassie.

EDNA walks in.

EDNA

Who is it?

IRV

Cassandra, my daughter.

CASSIE

I prefer people call me Cassie.

IRV

This is Edna, my wife.

CASSIE

Great. Aren't we the happy one.

CASSIE walks out.

IRV

Cassie, wait!

INT. MAMA JOE'S DINER. MORNING.

DR. BROWN, DELIA, and EPHRAM are having breakfast.

EPHRAM

You are determined to ruin my morning.

ANDY

A family breakfast is just what we need to
start the day off right.

EPHRAM

We'll never have a Norman Rockwell moment.

DELIA

Whose is Norman Rockwell? Is he one of your patients?

ANDY

He's a painter.

EPHRAM

He lived in a world that didn't exist because he didn't want to see the real world. When people see the real world, they look for a ways to escape.

PHONE RINGS. COUNTER MAN picks it up.

DR. BROWN

Speaking of escaping this conversation, this omelet tastes like the streets of Denver.

COUNTER MAN

Dr. Brown, it's for you.

EPHRAM

Do you have offices all over town?

DR. BROWN

I'll just be a minute.

EPHRAM

If I had a dollar for every minute, I'd be rich.

DR. BROWN

Dr. Brown here. When? I'm on my way.

DR. BROWN returns to table.

EPHRAM

What's wrong? The end of the world is happening and your invitation is lost in the mail.

DR. BROWN

A patient of mine just committed suicide.

EXT. EVERWOOD. MORNING

Montage of people in Everwood going about their daily activities.

NERD (VO)

Should there be a moment of silence to appreciate the quality of life? Are we in a hurry to create distractions to avoid looking into the eyes of another person and knowing their soul. Are shallow conversations now that way of life? Can you hear me?

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY. MORNING.

WENDELL is sitting alone at a table listening to message on his cell phone.

NERD (VO)

It's time to disconnect.

EPHRAM walks into view and sits next to WENDELL.

EPHRAM

Sorry about your friend.

WENDELL

Need something?

EPHRAM

Thought you might want to talk.

WENDELL

No, I don't.

WENDELL leaves.

.EXT. SCHOOL YARD. MORNING

AMY and GIRL #1 and #2 are talking among themselves until they are interrupted by DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 and #2. WENDELL is sitting nearby.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1

Some people pollute the world instead of contributing to it.

WENDELL

At least he was conscious.

EPHRAM enters.

EPHRAM

It's a shame your brain is not connected to your mouth.

AMY

A student's death is nothing to joke about.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1

He was a waste of space.

WENDELL

I'm late for class.

AMY

Wendell I...

WENDELL

Don't.

WENDELL exits.

GIRL #1

Bet he's another time bomb.

GIRL #2

It's the one who thinks they're invisible,
you have to watch out for.

AMY

Do you ever hear how shallow you are?

AMY exits.

EPHRAM follows.

INT. EPHRAM'S ROOM. EVENING.

DR. BROWN is standing in the doorway watching EPHRAM who is lying in bed reading a comic book and listening to music with headphones. He notices his father.

EPHRAM

You're doing that thing again.

DR. BROWN waits until EPHRAM takes off his headset.

DR. BROWN

You're spending too much time alone in
your room. Living in a shoebox isn't good.

EPHRAM

Haven't we already had our father and son
chat for the week?

DR. BROWN

How are the kids at school dealing with this?

EPHRAM

I am not a barometer for student feelings.

DR. BROWN

It's important not to push this under the carpet like nothing has happened.

EPHRAM

Wouldn't want lumpy carpet, would we?

DR. BROWN

Do you want to talk?

EPHRAM

No.

EPHRAM puts back on his headset.

INT. MOTEL ROOM. EVENING.

CASSIE walks into the hotel room is carrying fast food. She turns on the TV. There is a knock at the door. She answers door. IRV is standing there.

CASSIE

You found me?

IRV

Everwood isn't a big city.

CASSIE

So?

IRV

Can I come in?

CASSIE

Can we do this later?

IRV

No. You left so fast.

CASSIE

We weren't having a Kodak moment.

IRV

Is this about Edna? Why are you here?

CASSIE

Once again, I've ruined a happy moment.

IRV

Don't.

CASSIE

I expected something different. You being miserable. Me content with you being miserable. But I didn't expect happy faces and laughter.

IRV

I have a new life.

CASSIE

Good for you, I know the old life was inconvenient.

IRV

Now, wait a minute. You came to my house. No matter what you may think, I will be respected.

CASSIE

Isn't that something to be earned or is it handed out to fathers who ruin their child's life.

IRV

I think we need to start over.

CASSIE

I'm not a little girl anymore who stares out a window wondering when is daddy coming home.

IRV

Cassandra.

CASSIE

It's Cassie. Cassie.

IRV

Sorry.

CASSIE

I didn't know you had re-married.

IRV

Edna is a good woman. She has rough edges
but a good heart.

CASSIE

Mom didn't have rough edges.

IRV notices her fast food on the table.

IRV

Why don't you let me buy you a real dinner?
We can talk.

CASSIE

I think this day has peaked for drama.

IRV

Tomorrow then?

CASSIE

Yeah. I'll stop by.

IRV leaves quietly. CASSIE closes the door, goes and sits on the bed. She turns up the volume on the TV with the remote and cries.

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR. EVENING.

WENDELL is having a large coke and pizza. He is sitting alone. EPHRAM walks in.

WENDELL

Thanks for coming to meet me.

EPHRAM

How many of these cokes have you had?

WENDELL

Three. I'm on a binge. Want to catch up.

EPHRAM

No, I'm a one-cup guy. So, how are you doing?

WENDELL

He liked being different, being the voice above
the crowd.

EPHRAM

Being in the popular crowd is such a downer.

WENDELL

I connect people to their dreams and wishes. That's
what I do.

EPHRAM

People fail themselves. It's their choice.

WENDELL

We're suppose to be there when a friend is
in trouble.

EPHRAM

Sometimes we don't know when we need to be
there or just get out of the way. People do have
issues with boundaries.

WENDELL

Crossing the line can push you over the edge sometime.

EPHRAM

I know you're upset.

WENDELL

He was my best friend. At least when I felt I
was less than zero, we were there together.

EPHRAM

I'm the kid that got thrown against lockers
so I don't think I'm part of anyone's team.

WENDELL

We became friends in the sixth grade. Some
kids were smacking him with wet towels
when he came out of the showers. Then a couple of
guys pissed on him. I grabbed a baseball bat
and threaten to swing at them if they didn't back off.
Since then, we've always looked after each other.

EPHRAM gets a dumbfounded look on his face.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

He wrote a suicide note. Well, more like an essay. He sent it to the paper. It's coming out in tomorrow's edition. He sent a copy to me. It's an essay he wrote called "The Quality of Life."

WENDELL pulls copy out of his pocket and hands it to him.

WENDELL (CONT'D)

Maybe I had boundaries with the wrong person.

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE. MORNING.

DR. BROWN and Dr. ABBOTT pull up at the same time in their cars. They both get out of the car at the same time.

DR. BROWN

I was thinking.

DR. ABBOTT gets office supplies out of the trunk of his car. A bag breaks and spills things and DR. BROWN grabs a bag out of the trunk of his car to help.

DR. ABBOTT

Does that come with a bag of chips, and another black eye?

DR. BROWN

Back to thinking. Maybe we should have some type of counseling service set up for students to talk about what happened.

DR. ABBOTT

We can't be everyone's parents.

DR. BROWN

Children don't always talk to their parents.

DR. ABBOTT

People in this town have normal children minus present company.

DR. BROWN

Do you know the signs of depression?

DR. ABBOTT

Let's start with you.

DR. BROWN

Most children don't talk to their parents.
Most parents don't have the time to listen.

DR. ABBOTT

I know my family. I'm not the one who has
put his family problems on public display.
Do you really know yours?

DR. BROWN

I'm just concerned that someone else is out
there who needs to be heard.

DR. ABBOTT

I see cracks in your glass house doctor.

DR. ABBOTT walks away.

DR. BROWN

I've never lived in a glass house. Can't
afford all those window washers.

INT. DR. BROWN'S OFFICE. MORNING.

DR. BROWN enters. EDNA is reading the essay in the town paper.

EDNA

Morning Doc.

EDNA hands him the morning paper.

EDNA (CONT'D)

Town has something else to talk about.

DR. BROWN looks at the article.

DR. BROWN

Guess, we're not so safe from the world.

EDNA

Every place has growing pains.

DR. BROWN

So young.

EDNA

Discipline. Kids have it too easy.
They have too many distractions. So
boredom sets it.

DR. BROWN

Sometimes being rigid makes things crack.

EDNA

You have a patient waiting.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE. MORNING.

ROSE, 40ish, is on the telephone, apparently annoyed with the caller.

ROSE

Yes, I understand the barking is keeping you up at night.

DR. ABBOTT walks in without knocking and is carrying the town paper.

DR. ABBOTT

Rose, we need to talk.

ROSE

(To caller) One moment.

She puts hand over receiver.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Harold, that door is there for a reason.

DR. ABBOTT

I can't be kept out today.

ROSE

I'll call you back.

ROSE hangs up telephone.

DR. ABBOTT

We have a situation.

ROSE

Yes, in this office, I'm not your wife. I'm the Mayor.

DR. ABBOTT

Then this is a professional visit.

ROSE

Harold, this is not a good time.

DR. ABBOTT

We need to talk about the incident.

ROSE

Incident?

He shows her the article in the paper. She is shocked.

DOCTOR

I'm concerned that parents may over react to this incident.

ROSE

You mean, the suicide.

DR. ABBOTT

This could have serious repercussions if we don't acknowledge it. You know sweeping things under the carpet doesn't resolve issues.

ROSE

Are you talking our marriage?

DR. ABBOTT

This is not the time.

ROSE

No, it isn't. I have a lot to do before tomorrow's town council meeting.

DR. ABBOTT

Why can't life be like the Music Man?

ROSE

Harold, you cannot live in an antiquated world.

DR. ABBOTT

Everwood may have a problem. Our kids
may have a problem.

ROSE

We're good parents. We have a good family.
This will just give people something to talk
about. It will pass.

DR. ABBOTT

We can't pretend this didn't happen.

ROSE

We can't change what happened.

DR. ABBOTT

Do you think we listen to our children?

ROSE

We listen to our children more than we have
heard each other. Now get out Harold,
I have work.

DR. ABBOTT leaves. ROSE picks up the paper to read.

TELEPHONE RINGS.

She ignores it as she reads the essay.

INT. SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM. MORNING.

Amy is standing in the doorway listening to EPHRAM playing the piano. He senses a
presence, looks up and stop playing.

AMY

Sorry didn't mean to interrupt.

EHPRAM

You okay?

AMY

Is this a new song?

EHPRAM

Still debating on that. Okay, you're making that face.

AMY

I'm not making a face.

EHPRAM

You want to say something, not sure how to say something; or you want to say something without being obvious you're saying something; or hope I can read between the lines. I'm still attempting to decode your secret language.

AMY

I need to do research at the library.

EHPRAM

This is a bit off the path for the library.

AMY

Did you know him well?

EHPRAM

No.

AMY

You think something like this will never happen in your own backyard.

EHPRAM

News flash, Everwood, though removed from the mainstream is still a part of the real world. Besides, not everyone can be popular in life.

AMY

So now the popular crowd is too blame for someone's low self-esteem.

EPHRAM

It would upset the balance of nature if we were all beautiful people.

AMY

Maybe people spend too much time trying to fit into one group instead of maybe creating their own group.

EHPHAM

Which is harder, people's expectations or yours?

AMY

You're right, this off the beaten path to the library.

AMY leaves.

EHPHAM goes back to playing piano at a greater intensity.

INT. DINER. MORNING.

CASSIE is sitting at the counter having breakfast. NINA is pouring her a fresh cup of coffee.

CASSIE

This town reminds me of a Rockwell painting.

NINA

We have our skeletons.

CASSIE

I was too poor to have skeletons in my closet.

They both laugh.

NINA

I couldn't think of living anywhere else.

CASSIE

I always wanted to be where I wasn't.

NINA

So what brings you here?

CASSIE

The past, the present, and a questionable future.

NINA

Lately, I've been wondering what happened to happily ever after.

CASSIE

Some man must be writing your life story.

WAITRESS

Would you care for anything else?

DR. BROWN enters.

CASSIE

A man will turn you upside down, inside out
and you will still love him.

NINA

We have good apple pie here at the dinner.

DR. BROWN

Is this a private conversation or may I listen in?

CASSIE

I have somewhere to be. Later.

CASSIE reaches in her jacket pocket, lays a few bills on the counter and leaves quickly.

DR. BROWN

I thought women found this beard attractive.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. MORNING.

EPHRAM and AMY are walking toward each other.

AMY

Hey.

EPHRAM

Hey.

AMY

I decided to take up a collection for flowers.

EPHRAM

Why? It's not like he was on anyone's radar.

AMY

What's with you?

EPHRAM

Why act like we care? Was he was making a
difference?

AMY

Okay, putting sarcasm aside for the moment,
have I done or said something I shouldn't have?
If I did, I'm sorry. So don't drop the world's
problems on my shoulder.

EPHRAM

Life sucks when you're world unravels.

EPHRAM walks away.

INT. KITCHEN. MORNING NEXT DAY.

EDNAR is cooking. IRV enters.

EDNA

Let's take the bike up to the mountain
this weekend.

IRV

Someone's feeling the call of the wild.

EDNA

More like retreat from KP detail.

IRV

You've been a good sport.

EDNA

You remember that when we bet again.

EDNA

If I'm going to leave you speechless,
maybe we shouldn't start our mornings so...

IRV

Cassandra's visit just has me out of sorts.

EDNA

Whatever she is feeling, she needs to be heard.

IRV

No one heard that boy. I remember that boy.
Always was being picked on by the other kids.
Never fitted in. I remember trying to measure
up to that badge of manhood. Dam! How can I
expect her to forgive me, if I can't forgive myself?

They hug.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DR. BROWN'S OFFICE WAITING AREA. AFTERNOON.

EDNA is sitting at the desk filling out a report when DELIA walks in.

DELIA

Hi Edna.

EDNA

Afternoon Private. That face is mighty long.
Have you been eating sour grapes?

DELIA

Thinking.

EDNA

Must be heavy thoughts.

DELIA

Will thinking hurt you?

EDNA

Not thinking hurts a lot of people.

DELIA

Does everyone give up because they don't
have quality of life?

EDNA

You have been thinking. Maybe your father
should answer this one.

DELIA

Do you have quality of life?

EDNA

You see this face, this is quality of life.

DELIA

Will he go to Heaven?

DR. BROWN enters.

DR. BROWN

Delia?

EDNA

A daughter needs a father at a time like this.

DR. BROWN

Something wrong?

DELIA

Do we have quality of life?

DR. BROWN walks up and puts his arm around his daughter and they hold each other tight as EDNA looks at a picture of IRV sitting on her desk.

INT. AMY'S BEDROOM. EVENING.

AMY is doing her homework. BRIGHT, 16, walks in and stands at the door.

AMY

I'm not doing your homework.

BRIGHT

Just seeing how you're doing? So how is Collin?

AMY

He's tired of taking tests.

BRIGHT

You didn't give up like I did.

AMY

You didn't give up. We all have had our moments of doubt.

BRIGHT

You didn't.

AMY

I love him. I know dad thinks I'm too young to know about love but I do.

BRIGHT

You're lucky you have someone.

AMY

You okay.

BRIGHT

This suicide thing, just got me thinking, maybe we don't treasure the time together. You know, take things for granted until it's too late.

AMY

Yeah.

BRIGHT

The way that weird kid dressed all in black, definitely had issues. (Pause) Collin will get through this. It'll be like it was before.

AMY

You're right. Just like before.

BRIGHT goes and hugs his sister and leaves quickly.

AMY stares at a picture on her desk of COLLIN.

EXT. PORCH. MORNING.

DOORBELL RINGS.

IRV answers.

CASSIE is standing there. She is carrying a knapsack.

IRV

Morning. Come in.

CASSIE

Let's talk out here.

IRV

You're always welcome here.

CASSIE goes and leans against the porch railing.

CASSIE

So this is your life?

IRV

I'm ready to hear what you have to say.

CASSIE

Momma said it was a bad ideal to do this.

IRV

I'm glad you did.

CASSIE

I didn't come here to argue. Yes, I'm angry. I am pissed! I need to understand why you abandoned us.

IRV

I didn't abandoned you, well, not the way you think. Too many people were being hurt. I kept hurting because I didn't know how to make the hurting stop.

CASSIE

Now I hurt and I can't make it stop. It needs to stop.

IRV

I'm glad you're here but you never responded to my letters.

CASSIE pulls a stack of bundled letters from her knapsack and hands them to IRV.

IRV

What's this?

CASSIE

These are the letters you wrote along with the letters I wrote. I never saw your letters. Mine were never sent. When I got older, I stopped because I believed I was just another statistic from a broken home. I don't want to be broken.

IRV

I'm so sorry.

CASSIE

Grandmother never mailed my letters. I never saw yours. Grandmother died a few weeks ago.

IRV

Can't say I'd miss her. Sorry.

CASSIE

As mom would say, she had too much grit in her craw. But I didn't doubt that she loved me.

IRV

You were lucky.

CASSIE

When I was going through some of her things, I found these letters..

She takes a bundle of letters out of her knapsack.

CASSIE

I hated you all these years because I thought you didn't want me.

IRV

Your mother and I loved you. We just didn't love each other enough.

CASSIE

I can't believe grandmother would do this.

IRV

Woman had a lot of vinegar in her.

CASSIE

You never tried to see me.

IRV

I'm ashamed of some things I've done. I don't know how I'll be able to make amends. With the constant fighting, it wouldn't of done neither of us any good. I thought maybe it was best I stayed away.

CASSIE

I kept making up imaginary fathers and eventually went looking for one through relationships.

IRV

Too many years of my life I stopped caring for myself, for everyone, then I met Edna and the bitterness, the anger started going away.

CASSIE

I wanted you to have the letters I wrote.
You shouldn't have stopped trying to reach me.

She walks away.

IRV clutches the letters tightly.

INT. MAIN STREET. AFTERNOON

Dr. ABBOTT is walking toward his office eating an ice cream cone. He is interrupted by DR. BROWN.

DR. BROWN

Dr. Abbott!

DR. ABBOTT

When I speak of your craziness in years to come, and I will, I have nothing nice to say.

DR. BROWN

So have you given any more thought to my suggestion?

DR. ABBOTT

There's no more cover story here.

DR. BROWN

Teen suicide is growing at an alarming rate in this country. We think it cannot happen to us. We are not immune from the ailments of the world.

HAROLD

You are proof of that. You've infect us all with your charming personality.

DR. BROWN

We should have an open forum with the students.
Discuss this. Depression takes on many forms.

HAROLD

I'm having a conversation with one. Now,
if you'll excuse me, saving the world today, I
cannot; but I can help my patients. Stop
turning over rocks looking for snakes. The
obvious problems keep us busy.

DR. BROWN

Aren't you concerned how this may affect everyone?

DR. ABBOTT

When someone wants to die, they'll find away?

DR. BROWN

Even you cannot be that detached from life.

DR. ABBOTT

Life is a privilege. People abuse it. Simple
facts are usually hard to see but I guess with
your celebrity status, this detour into the common
life is a bit of jog for your rich life perspective. You
can't make someone be practical, responsible.
If it's not in them, it's not in them. So don't
inflict yourself on the unwilling.

DR. BROWN

So this means, you agree to an open forum.

DR. ABBOTT

Is this going to be an ongoing thing with us, I
say yes, at some point, just to shut you up, and
give my ears a rest.

DR. BROWN

Glad we're on the same page.

DR. BROWN walks away.

DR. ABBOTT

We're not on the same page. You're a menace to
common sense.

INT. MAMA JOE'S DINER. AFTERNOON.

People are sitting around reading the essay.

TOWNS PERSON #1

I think it's in bad taste publishing that essay.

TOWNS PERSON #2

This is what happens when you dress in black all the time. It makes you depressing.

TOWNS PERSON #1

What does a kid know about the quality of life?

TOWNSPERSON #2

We're making a mountain out of a mole hill. He wasn't like the rest of the students. Look at the way he dressed. It wasn't normal.

DR. BROWN

(Entering)

What's the topic for today?

NINA

The quality of life.

DR. BROWN takes a seat at the counter.

TOWNS PERSON #2

Sensationalism that all it is. Boy was tragic, should let him rest. No sense in painting us all as being tragic.

TOWNS PERSON #1

So what do you think of that boy's essay Dr. Brown?

DR. BROWN

I think I want a Denver omelet with extra avocados.

INT. COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY. MORNING.

STUDENTS are standing around reading the paper. EPHRAM walks up and over hears DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 and #2.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1

What a nerd?

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #2

He acts like he is our judge and jury.

EPHRAM

Dumb nuts, did you know that suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15-to-24-year-olds? It's a serious problem. It's nothing to joke about.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1

Maybe we should watch out for you. Aren't you like one of those statistics, feeling stressed, confused, brooding, and having a bad haircut.

AMY walks up and hears DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1.

AMY

Being idiots is becoming a way of life for you two.

DICKHEAD TEENAGER #1 and #2 walk away.

EPHRAM

Amy?

AMY

What's the point in being superficial?

EPHRAM watches her walk away alone.

INT. ABBOTT DINING ROOM. EVENING.

The ABBOTT FAMILY is having dinner.

ROSE

Did you know him Amy? Bright?

BRIGHT

Are you serious? He's a nerd!

AMY

That's cruel.

BRIGHT

I didn't see you being his friend.

DR. ABBOTT

Enough. We're lucky our problems aren't as bad as others. Not everyone copes with life as well as they should.

ROSE

Harold, how could say such a thing?

AMY

His essay is disturbing.

BRIGHT

Ephram is our next prime candidate. He has the somber look of a lost puppy. Some girls dig the sensitive dudes.

AMY

Stop it.

BRIGHT

He's a nerd. Would you want that nerd for your son-in-law?

AMY gives a dirty look. DR. ABBOTT is horrified.

ROSE

Have either of you ever had thoughts like this boy?

DOCTOR

Rose?

ROSE

We need to know Harold. You know you can talk to us anytime about anything.

AMY

Mom!

BRIGHT

I don't need my head shrunk.

DOCTOR

We're a normal family. We don't have those kind of issues.

INT. BROWN KITCHEN. EVENING.

EPHRAM walks in with bags of diner food followed by DELIA.

DELIA

Why do people kill themselves?

EHPRAM

There are a lot of reasons.

DELIA

If you have a reason, does that mean you're going to kill yourself?

EHPRAM

No.

DELIA

What reasons kill you?

EHPRAM

You don't have to worry about that stuff.
Go wash your hands and help me set the table.

BAR. NIGHT. EVENING.

CASSIE is sitting at the bar having a drink. DR. BROWN walks in.

DR. BROWN

Never found my answer in the bottom of a glass.

CASSIE

It's fun to get there.

DR. BROWN

Dr. Brown.

CASSIE

Cassie.

DR. BROWN

You're lucky, I don't know me yet. I know your father, he's a good man.

CASSIE

Is this the part where a friend rides in for the rescue?

DR. BROWN

Never was good at the knight in the armor thing.

CASSIE

Is there a point to this conversation?

DR. BROWN

Look like you need someone to talk with.

CASSIE

The beard makes you distinguished, but dispensing wisdom, I'll leave it to my friend here. Besides, it's none of your business. Is that polite enough? Besides, I've met men like you before, first it's the shoulder, then it's other things and then they remind themselves later about the wife and kids at home. Or either they are your basic loser type.

DR. BROWN

I'm none of the above. Anyway, Irv is a good man.

CASSIE

Most men cause lot of pain before they want to be good.

DR. BROWN

There's never been a manual on being a man.

CASSIE

Are you always like this?

DR. BROWN

I don't like to see someone hurting and not helping.

CASSIE

I'd say you're about fifteen years too late. If you don't mind, my friend and I would like to be alone. It's a private membership thing, you know.

DR. BROWN
I'm around if you need to talk.

CASSIE
Don't you have children of your own to
worry about?

DR. BROWN walks away.

CASSIE continues drinking.

INT. MAMA JOE'S DINER. MORNING.

CASSIE and IRV are picking at their food.

IRV
You know I have enough guilt about what I've
done. So, I can't feel any worse. So, why are
you here?

CASSIE
Easy for men not to take responsibility for where
they leave their sperm.

IRV
Cassie!

CASSIE
I'm not feeling you.

IRV
What do you expect?

CASSIE
I wanted to look the man in the eyes who
deserted me and made my quality of life, a
big fat zero.

IRV
Cassie, you are always in my heart.

IRV pulls out a wallet and takes out a picture and shows her.

IRV (CONT'D)

When I was growing up, we have the wrong views of what being a man was. Guys were about 'scoring,' having a good time. I didn't handle my responsibility.

CASSIE

I'm tired of searching for a father in other men.

IRV puts his hand on top of CASSIE'S hand.

IRV

Cassie, I'm sorry. I hope someday you'll forgive me.

She pulls away and goes back to picking at her food.

EXT. PORCH. EVENING.

NINA is sitting on the porch. DR. BROWN shows up with carrying two cups of coffee.

NINA

The yard looks so sad without Sam's flowers.

DR. BROWN

He can start again.

NINA

Maybe we can't.

DR. BROWN

So, how do you like your criticism, on a scale of 1 to 10.

NINA

Don't Andy.

DR. BROWN

I'm here.

NINA

Sometimes telephones aren't the greatest invention.

DR. BROWN
Not knowing, is that any better?

She places her hand on his. They sit quietly.

FADE OUT.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. COLLIN'S HOSPITAL ROOM. EVENING.

COLLIN addresses an unseen person.

COLLIN

This life doesn't register on the radar.
You always measure up to everyone's
expectation. How can I compete with
someone like you?

INT. HARPER LIVING ROOM. MORNING.

IRV is sitting at a writing desk reading one of CASSIE'S letter. On the desk sits a photo of CASSIE as a little girl.

CASSIE (VO)

I hope you are doing okay Daddy. Momma
is not crying so much. Miss you. I hope you
will not stay mad at me. I drew a picture of a
house, with you, me and momma waving
in the front yard. Come home soon Daddy.
We miss you.

IRV wipes tears from his eyes as he reaches for the telephone.

INT. MAMA JOE'S DINER. MORNING.

IRV is sitting at a booth doing a crossword puzzle and drinking coffee when CASSIE walks in.

CASSIE

You know I've rehearsed this so often...

IRV

You're here, that's what's important.

She sits.

IRV

I know this hasn't been easy.

CASSIE

I know life is about the school of hard knocks.
Just didn't expect it from my father.

IRV

I read the letters.

CASSIE

I use to believe in Santa Claus, the tooth fairy
and that there was a boogie man under my bed.

IRV

What do you want me to say that will make things
right?

CASSIE

I wish you could make the hurt go away.

IRV

When I left, I was poisoned to everyone I touched.
Your mother had the sense to leave before I ruined
both of your lives.

CASSIE

You had a daughter.

IRV

I didn't want to face you as a failure.

CASSIE

Have you any idea happens to a daughter when
there is no father in her life?

CASSIE runs out.

EXT. FUNERAL HOME WAITING AREA. AFTERNOON.

EPHRAM is standing with Wendell. Several students walk by.

WENDELL

To be dead, to be noticed.

AMY walks up.

AMY

Hi Wendell. Ephram.

WENDELL

Hi Amy. I'll see you
inside.

WENDELL leaves.

EPHRAM

Surprised to see you here.

AMY

I know I didn't know him well but just
...well, you know. So, how's Wendell?

EPHRAM

There's a dark cloud around his head.
When I read his essay in the paper, didn't realize
how much he was hurting.

AMY

Guess people keep their dark moments to
themselves.

EPHRAM

Yeah.

They look at each. She gives EPHRAM a hug. He hugs her back.

INT. LIVING ROOM. AFTERNOON.

DR. BROWN and EPHRAM are walking in from the funeral services.

DR. BROWN

I didn't realize so many people knew him.

EPHRAM

People have a morbid curiosity for tragedy.

DR. BROWN

It's a shame they didn't get to know him.

EPHRAM

We only want to know the things that are
convenient. Be a tragedy if people started caring.

DR. BROWN

He took his life. He stopped caring. Sometimes people don't see the love that is in their life.

EPHRAM

Death brings out guilt feelings, doesn't it?

DR. BROWN

I can't change the past.

EPHRAM

Your promises for the future are bleak.

DR. BROWN

So is this the teen angst you're going through?

EPHRAM

I'm a teenager.

DR. BROWN

You can always talk with me.

EPHRAM

I don't need a doctor's prescription.

DR. BROWN

Is that what you think?

EPHRAM

When you have to deal with real issues concerning family, you put on that doctor mask.

DR. BROWN

Do you ever hear yourself, or does your anger at me make you deaf?

EPHRAM

What teenager relates to his parents?

DR. BROWN

I should have seen the signs.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

DR. BROWN is having a consultation with the NERD.

DR. BROWN

I see you have been on various medication for depression.

NERD

Guess I'm a test case for suppressing identity.

DR. BROWN

How are things now?

NERD

I'm not talking to myself and answering back.

DR. BROWN

That's good.

NERD

If this is what life is all about, what do we have to look forward to? I don't want to grow up and become a duplicate of my parents and spawn other duplicates.

DR. BROWN

I don't think you'll have a problem with your own identity.

NERD

I have to be mad to fit in.

DR. BROWN

I'd like to see you in a few weeks, let's see how this new medication is helping with your hallucinatory experiences.

DR. BROWN gets a concerned look on his face.

NERD

I don't want to be mad. But insanity is a prerequisite to make it nowadays.

BACK TO PRESENT TIME:

EPHRAM

Who really opens up to their parents when their parents seem confused about what their doing?

DR. BROWN

Life doesn't come with a manual. We do the best we can and hope it's the right thing and if not, then we attempt to fix it before it's totally messed up.

EPHRAM

What's messed up is you think a father and son moment makes everything right? That's messed up!

EPHRAM exits.

EXT. GRAVEYARD. EVENING.

WENDELL is sitting on top of the NERD'S tombstone. He is holding a bottle of beer that is wrapped in a brown bag. He takes a long sip. The NERD walks up and sits next to him.

WENDELL

This sucks you know. This like invalidates our friendship. We could have talked.

NERD

Sometimes we talk until we exhaust ourselves and start again, same drama, same issues.

WENDELL

You hurt me. Your life affected everyone.

NERD

Death brings out popularity.

WENDELL

We always said we'd be there for each other.

NERD

Expectations are hard to live up to especially when someone crosses a line that blurs friendship.

NERD reaches out to touch WENDELL's hand but pulls back.

WENDELL

I'm sorry. I responded without thinking. I said the wrong things to you. So what happens now.

NERD

You go on.

WENDELL

Us against the world. That's how it was suppose to be. Us against the world.

NERD

You are a connector. You connect things that look like they can't be connected.

WENDELL

I'm sorry for what happened between us.

NERD

We didn't connect.

WENDELL

You didn't have to leave.

EPHRAM walks up and sees WENDELL sitting on the NERD'S tombstone talking to himself.

EPHRAM

(Walks up.) You okay.

WENDELL regains composure.

WENDELL

I was...you know...so, what's going on?

EPHRAM

My father use to talk to my mother.

WENDELL

I really need to be alone now.

EPHRAM

Okay. If you want to talk or do something, just let me know.

WENDELL

Sure.

EPHRAM

Okay. Well, I'll see you around.

EPHRAM leaves.

WENDELL

What are friends for if you can't be a friend
when the lights are going out?

Wendell pours some of the liquor on the grave. He then takes a long sip.

WENDELL (CON'D)

Good bye James. Maybe it's time for me
To disconnect. That's what friends do,
Stick together. I miss you James.

He grabs the bottle and chugs the drink.

INT. PLAYGROUND. EVENING.

CASSIE is sitting in the swing. IRV is sitting in the next swing.

CASSIE

The Army has been good to me. It helped me
to find direction, discipline.

IRV

That's good.

CASSIE

I wasn't always good. I was too shamed to come
to see you after all I have done.

IRV

Don't ever feel that way. You'll always
be daddy's little girl.

CASSIE

I'm going overseas. It's an undisclosed location.
There are loose ends in my life that I need to tie
together. This war on terrorism will last for as
long as it take. Reality is I don't want to be a
casualty and have loose ends in my life.

IRV

You'll be fine. You have your mother's spirit.

CASSIE

Guess when I signed up I never thought I would
ever be in this situation.

IRV

People want safe places.

CASSIE

I was mad at the world. Now the world is going mad. I don't want to contribute to the madness so I want to make a difference.

IRV

Unfortunately, life isn't so clear cut.

CASSIE

I saw you the other days with the kids on the playground. You were laughing and talking with them. I don't remember you laughing. I don't remember you taking me to the playground. I remember doors slamming. You broke Mom's heart. I learned to live without one.

IRV

What do you want from me?

CASSIE fights back tears. IRV gets up, and goes to her and begin pushing her gently in the swing. He pushes her little harder and she goes higher into the air. They both start laughing.

EXT. DELIA'S SCHOOL YARD. MORNING.

NERD (VO)

Quality of life for many people is having integrity with one self, belief in one self even during adverse moments, living your truth even when you feel stones are being cast toward you.

DELIA is sitting at a table alone reading a book. ARNIE walks up to her.

DELIA

What do you want?

ARNIE

I want you to stop toying with me. So, I don't want to be your boyfriend anymore.

DELIA

I haven't made that decision.

ARNIE

I don't want to be your boy toy.

ARNIE walks away.

INT. BEDROOM. EVENING.

COLLIN is pacing back and forth.

COLLIN

Only one of us can be here. It can't be you. I
I'm going to be whom I decide to be. However,
long it takes for me to figure it out, it's okay.
I'm not all right with you trying to run my life.

He walks over and takes his photo off the dresser. He has been addressing the photo. He takes the photo out of the frame and rips it to pieces.

COLLIN (CONT'D)

It's my turn to have a life.

EXT. SAM'S GARDEN. AFTERNOON.

NINA, DR. BROWN, SAM, DELIA are in SAM'S garden replanting flowers.

NERD (VO)

The quality of life for a community begins
within the heart of its citizen. It can begin
with a simple gesture, or begins with reaching
out to someone who is hurting silently, offering
a helping hand. It's the trusted look offered
when you are at that place where you don't know
where to turn.

INT. LIVING ROOM. EVENING.

DR. BROWN is standing in the doorway of the dining room watch Ephram helping Delia with her homework. DELIA looks up and sees her father.

DELIA

Teacher wants us to write this essay for class
about the quality of life.

He quietly watches his family.

DR. BROWN (VO)

Quality of life is simple, it's life with it's
ups and downs, it's tears, it's laughter.

EPHRAM (VO)

The Quality of life is the days you feel as bright
as the sun, or feel like a storm that's coming. You
just take it moment to moment.

NERD (VO)

It's looking into the eyes of the one you love,
looking into the eyes of someone hurting, it's
feeling sometimes without completely understanding.

FADE OUT.

END ACT FOUR