

THE ONLY THING WORSE THAN BEING BLIND, IS HAVING SIGHT WITH NO VISION

THROUGH THE EYES OF LOVE

“INSPIRED BY A
TRUE STORY”

BY
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THROUGH THE EYES OF LOVE

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the most incredible young lady; Breeana Elaine Robinson.

Legally blind, yet still a brilliant dancer, professional cheerleader, but most importantly the most wonderful girlfriend, friend, sister, and daughter anyone could wish for.

Despite all your achievements while alive, your legacy has surpassed them all by changing so many lives, simply by the inspirational way you lived yours.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

While this book is a work of fiction, it is loosely based on true events. The events and beats in this book and the subsequent feature-length screenplay have been adapted and embellished to enhance the reader's experience.

Characters and names may seem familiar, however, any reference to personality traits are purely fictional and may not bear any resemblance to the people the characters are based on.

Please note that even though the author is Australian, due to the setting of the story being New York, the author has decided to use "U.S English" as the default spelling in this book. This may lead to some confusion for readers, depending on their own nationality.

CHAPTER ONE

“Sayonara Katie”

On a clear February morning in Manhattan, New Yorkers; all rugged up in winter clothes, briskly shuffled along the sidewalk during what appeared to be peak hour. Half-melted snow lined the Upper West Side walkways as the sound of snow slushed under car tires that slowly edged their way into the city.

Appearing from the surging crowd with a quick left turn into an open doorway of an unimpressive building, was Jamie Broadway, an exceptionally good-looking, sharply dressed man in his mid-thirties. As Jamie strode down the hallway of the dimly lit building, he glanced toward his jacket pocket. In a flowing motion, Jamie removed his phone from his pocket, stared at it, sighed, then returned the phone to where it came from.

Jamie swung open the fourth door on the lefthand side of the hallway and stepped inside. Seemingly out of nowhere appeared a state-of-the-art recording studio control room to rival the best in the world. Jamie scanned the room with delight. A large thirty-six-track mixing desk filled almost one entire wall, while a nearby six-foot rack containing impressive compressors and plug-in devices that would cost as much as a Manhattan apartment, towered over the computer sat on a small table next to the mixing desk.

What looked like a pre-recorded Pro-Tools music track of at least sixteen tracks filled the computer screen. Each track on the screen was labeled after a musical instrument, such as BASS, DRUMS and VIOLIN. To anyone who entered the room, it was clear that this was no ordinary recording studio. In fact, above the large plush leather couches along the back wall were several signed, framed posters of famous Grammy-Award-winning acts from the past four decades who had recorded there. In musical terms, this joint was the “ducks-nuts.”

Upon noticing Jamie, the studio engineer, Sean Campbell, a big burly guy dressed in ripped jeans and a slightly tattered Linkin Park T-shirt, smiled as Jamie scurried past him towards an open door on the other side of the room.

“Sorry, I’m late,” muttered Jamie, as he quickly shuffled across the room.

“It’s your money,” quipped Sean with a wry smile, as he swiveled in his plush chair. Sean watched Jamie disappear, then reappear on the other side of a large glass window in front of the mixing desk.

Beyond the glass window was the main recording room, with a baby grand piano, a drum kit, various guitars, and other recording equipment dotted around the impressive space.

Now inside a spacious glass vocal recording booth, Jamie removed a folded piece of paper from his coat pocket and flattened it out on a music stand that sat below a perfectly positioned Rode NT1 vocal microphone. Jamie reached for a pair of headphones hanging on the wall and carefully positioned the left side over his left ear, then adjusted the right side to sit behind his right ear. He nodded towards the control room, then took a deep breath as he stared at the piece of paper in front of him.

After a brief pause, four faint clicks from a click-track traveled into Jamie’s headphones, then simultaneously,

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beautiful orchestra strings along with Jamie's angelic voice filled the studio as Jamie sang, "A vision of beauty you are...."

Suddenly, Jamie's phone rang, interrupting the take, along with the mood of Jamie's romantic-sounding song.

"Fuck!" exclaimed Jamie, in a less than impressive tone, as he reached into his coat pocket to grab his phone.

Frowning at the phone, Jamie hit the decline button on the phone, then flicked it to silent, before placing it on the music stand in front of the piece of paper. Filling the page on the music stand were handwritten lyrics with the words "Sayonara Katie" across the top of the page, however, at some point, the word "Katie" had been crossed out.

Once Jamie had managed to compose himself, he took another deep breath and nodded at Sean. Once again, the same click track echoed down his headphones before Jamie sang in time with the orchestral strings as the song recommenced. Sounding like the sweetest of love songs, Jamie once again sang...

"A vision of beauty you are.... no more."

Sean's head jolted up from the desk to look at Jamie at the sudden change of tone, as Jamie continued singing...

*"So many faces that I never saw.
Don't turn around as you walk out the door.
'Coz I don't want to see you no more."*

Sean smirked as Jamie took a quick breath, right as the song exploded to life with driving guitars and an up-tempo kick-ass rhythm section pushing along the now edgy pop song. With a completely different persona from a moment ago, Jamie delivered the tongue-in-cheek lyrics with the

type of gusto that suggested the song's meaning stemmed from a long-simmering resentment that Jamie had held for a long while.

Jamie sang...

"I've wiped your voice off my answering machine."

Jamie's phone flashed with an incoming call. The name "Katie" filled the screen, but without missing a beat, Jamie brushed the phone off the stand and onto the floor, as he continued singing...

*"It's the last thing I want if you know what I mean.
I've woken up from a terrible dream,
And I don't want to see you no more."*

Later that afternoon, Jamie strode across a busy New York Street with the swagger of a man who had performing in his bloodline, as the punchy instrumental break from the same song blasted from his expensive noise-canceling headphones. Across the street, a large marquee atop the Gershwin Theatre flashed with the words "Piano Man – The Musical," featuring Jamie Broadway as Billy Joel.



As groups of people lined up at the box office out the front of the theatre, Jamie approached. One group of women;

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drooling over a poster of him, notice Jamie himself striding towards them. One by one the women smiled at Jamie, almost buckling at the knees as he flashed them the type of smile that indicated that they were in for a memorable night; one way or the other.

Jamie continued along the street towards a side street, where he came face to face with a charity collector who jumped out in front of Jamie, rattling a tin, and motioning for Jamie to donate money. With a look of displeasure, Jamie looked down his nose at the collector and snarled as he side-stepped him; like Jamie was above giving to charity.

A moment later, Jamie turned a nearby corner, arriving at the stage door of the theatre, and with a nudge, he pushed open the door. Upon stepping inside, Jamie caught a glimpse of Lyn; a hard-faced, slightly plumpy, middle-aged female security guard, sitting in a small security alcove, reading the newspaper.

Hearing the door open, Lyn lowered her newspaper and greeted Jamie with a maternal type of smile.

"Here he is," said Lyn. "I was just reading your latest glowing review in the local rag."

"I should hope so," replied Jamie with a cocky smile.

Lyn placed her newspaper on the bench in front of her, kicked out her chair, and stood to grab a large bouquet sitting on the bench behind her.

"These came for you," Lyn said, as she handed the flowers to Jamie. Holding the flowers in one hand, Jamie's eyes narrowed as he stared at the words on a small card inserted in the bouquet which read "Please forgive me. Katie." Lyn watched on with a sympathetic smile as Jamie jammed the card into his pocket, pivoted on his heels, and headed off down the corridor on his way backstage.

After making a right turn into another corridor on his way, Jamie smiled as he approached four attractive, slender

female dancers, sitting on the ground in various stretching positions. Jamie eyed each of the girls off as their toned bodies contorted into interesting positions in their tight-hugging athletic wear.

One by one the girls looked up at Jamie, smiling seductively as he carefully navigated their long legs that were stretched across the narrow hallway.

"Afternoon ladies," said Jamie, in a smooth deep voice, as the girls intently glowed; their gazes fixed on Jamie as he passed, then disappeared into a nearby dressing room.

Inside the dressing room sat Zoe, a petite, naive-looking dancer in front of the mirror, which was almost buried beneath dozens of cast and show photos, and endless makeup on the bench. Before Zoe had even noticed him enter, Jamie had placed the flowers on the bench and was on his way back to the dressing room door. As Zoe finally noticed, Jamie simply whispered, "From a not-so-secret admirer," before disappearing out of view, with not another word said.

Once back out in the corridor, Jamie made a beeline for a dressing room at the end of the hall. In full view on the door sat a large gold star, along with a gold plaque that read "Jamie Broadway." Jamie pushed open the door, allowing it to close behind him as he entered the spacious dressing room.

A large leather couch lined one wall, along with two framed show posters from years gone by. Costumes hung on racks nearby, and several bright globes shone brightly around a large mirror, spanning the entire wall. The size of the mirror was perhaps overkill, but this was Broadway, and after all; Jamie was the star.

After sliding his bag off his shoulder, Jamie stared at the photos on the mirror with a puzzled look on his face. Smack bang in the middle of the mirror he noticed the words "Can't wait for next time. Love Carly." Scribbled in bright

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red lipstick. With a look of displeasure, Jamie grabbed a baby wipe from a container on the bench, then wiped the lipstick off the mirror while muttering to himself, "You'll be waiting a while."

With a clean mirror, Jamie then walked over and slumped into the leather couch, as his usual swagger disappeared. Now that he was alone, he stared contemplatively at the photos on the mirror, all of which chronicled his long and illustrious career on stage. As he contemplated, he sat up, warmed up his vocal cords with a vocal siren, then belted out the lyrics...

"Say goodbye to Hollywood. Say goodbye my baby."

CHAPTER TWO

“Uptown girl”

Across town in an expansive dance studio, a large group of female dancers panted heavily as they went “all out” in a spectacular dance and cheer routine. Double pirouettes, flips, and highly complicated hip-hop choreography melded together in time to an upbeat pop song.

Standing in front of full-length mirrors, watching the girls dance, was Katie Mitchell. A fifty-three-year-old brunette with a certain class that suggested she was once a model or a performer herself. Katie was immaculately dressed, with impeccable hair; none of which looked like it was any effort at all.

Above the full-length mirror hung two banners. One was the official New York Knicks basketball team banner, and the other was that of the Knicks City Dancers. Dancing in the front row of the group was Virginia Rodwell. An attractive, yet somehow unremarkable blonde cheerleader of twenty years of age, dancing with technical perfection. Virginia’s blonde hair whipped around as she pirouetted effortlessly, giving us a glimpse of her fullish round bum and strong dancer’s legs.

As the song came to a spectacular climax, the girls all sucked in big breaths as they headed for their gym bags scattered around the perimeter of the studio. Unlike the other girls, Virginia seemed a little uneasy on her feet as

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she tentatively made her way over to her bag.

Despite Virginia's apparent issues, none of the other girls paid her any mind as they took large gulps of water, trying to return their breathing to a more normal level.

Eventually, Virginia arrived at her bag, tentatively knelt, and then clumsily felt around inside her bag. After a moment, Virginia drew in a sizable breath of annoyance, then sighed, with a look of frustration etched on across her flushed face.

She closed her eyes before quickly plunging her hand back into her bag, then swiftly and effortlessly pulled out a hand towel, which she briskly wiped her face with, then casually pulled out her cheerleading jacket and put it on as she stood, before opening her eyes.

From close by, a gentle feminine voice said, "Well done Vee," as Virginia looked around for the source of the voice. Noticing Virginia's attempt to see who it was, Katie stepped into Virginia's line of sight; only a foot or so in front of her.

"Is that better?" asked Katie.

"Yes. And thanks," replied Virginia.

While trying to focus on Katie, Virginia's cosmetically enhanced eyes flickered every so slightly from side to side. Was she nervous? Virginia's bright blue contact lenses brought her face to life, but given Katie's gentle approach towards her, there may be more to them than met the eye; pun intended.

Katie flashed a warm smile at Virginia, then glanced over Virginia's shoulder before exclaiming, "Your mother's here."

Virginia reached down and grabbed her bag, then, accompanied by Katie, made her way over to the exit, where a very large lady in her early fifties was leaning against the wall with a sour look on her face.

“Hello Elaine,” smiled Katie, in a less than convincing tone.

With a face like thunder, seemingly unable to speak, Elaine simply grunted, unwilling to hide her contempt for Katie. Not wanting to hang around Katie said to Virginia, “Good job tonight, Vee. See you next week.” before smiling at Elaine, then turning on her heels, and heading back to the front of the studio.

Back at the Gershwin Theatre, it was almost showtime. Jamie applied the final touches to his makeup. He was already in costume, dressed as a balding, older, Billy Joel. As he applied the final flick of mascara to his left eye, a photo on the mirror caught his attention. With the mascara brush still in his hand, he leaned back in his chair, reflecting as he scanned all the show photos on the mirror.

From nearby, a sweet female voice called out, “Hey handsome,” however Jamie was so lost in the photos that the voice didn’t even register to him.

“Jamie!” the same voice shouted, causing Jamie to fall out of his trance-like state.

Jamie turned to see Stella, a thirty-year-old dancer, wearing a shell-pink-colored dress with a white waistband, carrying a large textbook.

“You thinkin’ of giving it all up?” Stella enquired, as she meandered over to Jamie and placed the textbook on the bench in front of Jamie.

“What makes you say that?” Jamie inquisitively asked.

With a knowing smile, Stella shot back, “If only my schoolbooks were as easy to read as you are.” Jamie dropped Stella a smug look as he grabbed her book from the bench and turned it towards her.

“Well. I can’t be a Dance Captain when I’m fifty,” Stella quipped.

Jamie turned the book around to read the cover which had “Uncomplicated Psychology” written across the front of it.

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With a softer approach, Stella climbed onto Jamie's lap, placed her arm around his neck, and was about to speak when Jamie's phone began flashing silently on the bench in front of them. Expecting Jamie to answer it, Stella impatiently asked, "You gonna get that?"

Jamie remained unmoved, staring blankly at the flashing phone. Finally, Stella said, "You know you can't ignore her forever." Jamie slowly leaned forward, hit the decline button, and with a wry smile said, "Watch me."

Now with a disapproving look on her face, Stella added, "One day you're gonna have to let a woman into that heart of yours."

"I wouldn't hold your breath," snapped Jamie.

"Then perhaps you should replace your front door with a turnstile. That way the girls can come and go easier," Stella rebutted.

"Fuck you!" exclaimed Jamie.

"Been there. Got my heart broken," said Stella in a more reluctant tone.

Suddenly, Jamie began tickling Stella furiously as she tried to break free, eventually letting out a scream. A loud knock on the dressing room door abruptly interrupted Stella's screams.

Jamie and Stella stopped where they were and turned to see stage manager Mike Langdon standing in the doorway, wearing all black, holding a clipboard, with a backstage headset around his neck.

"Fifteen minutes," chirped Mike, before he disappeared.

Stella turned her attention back to Jamie and said with a smile, "You know. You're the type of guy who'd get married in Vegas."

"Hey! Don't knock Vegas," Jamie said with a smirk. "There are priests who will marry you and give you

matching tattoos at the same time. I hear it's real classy."

Shaking her head in disbelief, Stella decided to change tact. Now with a motherly look in her eyes, she said, "So, what are you going to do (looking around the dressing room) when all this is over?"

With a blank expression, Jamie replied, "no fucking idea."

"Why don't you write your own stuff?" Stella asked.

"You mean my own show?" Jamie clarified.

"Or a movie," Stella suggested in a supportive tone.

"Who'd want to see that? Jamie stated insecurely.

"Oh, I dunno. Maybe all the women you've pissed off," laughed Stella. "Just start with you know."

"So a porn film then?" remarked Jamie with a smile.

"You're such a wanker," snapped Stella, as Jamie began tickling her again.

Back at the dance studio, Elaine and Virginia exited the building and made their way across the crowded car park.

"Must you make things so awkward?" Virginia pleaded.

"You know I despise that woman," grunted Elaine.

"But why?" questioned Virginia.

Elaine's face crumpled, shooting Virginia a filthy look. Not wanting to poke the bear, Virginia attempted to move to a better subject by saying with a hopeful smile, "I got a text from Dad today."

Instantly, Virginia realized her error as Elaine, almost blowing a gasket, snarled as she opened the car door and climbed in.

With some trepidation, Virginia climbed into the passenger's side of the car, then attempted to place her drink into the cup holder, missing and causing the drink to spill everywhere.

"Virginia! Where are your glasses?" barked Elaine, as

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Virginia cowered while trying to mop up the mess with her gym towel.

"You know I hate them," pleaded Virginia.

Realising how harsh she had been, Elaine softened her tone, smiling ever so slightly as she proclaimed, "Well you had better get used to them because I picked up our tickets today."

Virginia's face lit up as the car's engine started and the stereo dash displayed the words, "Uptown Girl – Original Broadway cast recording." As the familiar intro to the 80's hit blasted out, Virginia and Elaine burst out in song, singing along with the Broadway cast.

Simultaneously across town at the Gershwin Theatre, Jamie (dressed as a young Billy Joel), along with his thirty-strong cast members performed the same song on stage...

"Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh. Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh-oh."

Jamie and the cast performed a spectacular re-enactment of Billy Joel's iconic film clip on stage, with all the color of a smash hit show. Male and female dancers dressed as mechanics in overalls performed choreography, while other cast members, dressed as a film crew, shot the footage that was beamed onto large screens live on either side of the stage, as Jamie sang...

"Uptown girl, she's been livin' in her uptown world.

I bet she never had a backstreet guy.

I bet her mumma never told her why, I'm gonna try for an,

Uptown girl. She's been livin' in her white-bred world.

As long as any guy with hot blood can.

And now she's lookin' for a downtown man - that's what I am."

Among the lights, cameras, and motorbikes on stage, a gleaming Rolls Royce appeared from the wings before the door opened, and the slender legs, then the body of Emily, a mid-twenties dancer, dressed as Christy Brinkley appeared. Jamie ogled Emily as she glided across the stage with Jamie and his male dancers in hot pursuit. In the wings, Stella stood smiling as her eyes followed Jamie around the stage, as the song continued.

Across the street from the theatre's stage door later that night, Stella, wearing jeans and a black "Piano Man" polo top with "Dance Captain" embroidered on the left pocket, was about to hop into a cab when she spotted Jamie, Emily and Chloe appear from the stage door, arm in arm, singing the chorus of Uptown Girl.

Stella's eyes became slightly glassy as she watched Jamie and the girls stroll down the dimly lit street, in the direction of what she knew to be Jamie's apartment. After a big sigh, Stella gently wiped a single tear from her eye, then got into the cab.

Like an earworm in our consciousness, Uptown Girl continued, as a delivery van swung by a newsstand located on a quiet New York Street in the early hours of the morning, dropping a bundle of newspapers on the sidewalk.

Sprawled across the front page of the top paper was the heading, "Say goodbye to Hollywood and hello to Broadway." On a nearby billboard in Times Square, a photo of Jamie in the show towered over the famous street, with the caption, "Another Tony award-winning performance – Time Out Magazine."

Meanwhile, in Jamie's luxurious bachelor pad, Jamie, Emily, and Chloe rolled around in Jamie's plush king-sized bed, in the throws of a hot and steamy threesome. With Emily riding Jamie like a stolen jet ski, she climaxed, moaning to the tune of Uptown Girl, "Whoa-oh-oh-oh-oh-

oh-oh,” causing Jamie and Chloe to burst out laughing.

CHAPTER THREE

“New York state of mind”

With the sun piercing a small crack in the curtains of a lavish Manhattan apartment lounge room, Jamie emerged from the bedroom wearing only a towel, sporting fresh fingernail scratch marks across his chest.

Looking bleary-eyed, yet smugly satisfied, Jamie walked over to the curtains and whipped them open to reveal large glass balcony doors, a breathtaking view of the New York Skyline, and the Hudson River in the background.

Taking pride of place in the lounge room was a gorgeous cream-colored baby grand piano, with a closed laptop sitting atop it. Nearby, a matching leather lounge suite sat below four large, framed posters of Jamie performing in the musicals *Grease*, *Jersey Boys*, *West Side Story*, and *The Boy from Oz*.

Under each frame sat a small shelf, each with a Tony Award sitting on it. Except for *Grease*. That shelf sat noticeably empty.

After taking in the view eleven floors up for a moment,

Jamie strolled over to the piano, sat, and began effortlessly playing the introduction for Billy Joel's "New York State of Mind", as he gazed rather blankly across the room; seemingly reminiscing about the previous night's debauchery.

A few bars into the song, Emily and Chloe appeared from the bedroom, wearing last night's clothes, and carrying their shoes.

While Chloe wandered over to inspect the framed posters on the wall, Emily sauntered over to Jamie with an unapologetic smile and whispered, "Well that escalated quickly," as she ran her fingers across Jamie's bare chest, causing him to flinch as she touched the scratch marks.

"Sorry, but I warned you not to wind me up too much," exclaimed Emily.

Despite Jamie's discomfort, he continued to play the familiar tune, without faltering.

From across the room, Chloe inquired, "Where's your Tony Award from Grease?"

"I donated it to a charity auction," Jamie said nonchalantly.

"Awe. How sweet. A philanthropic man whore," laughed Chloe.

Still playing the piano, Jamie turned back to Emily, casually inquiring, "Can I get you girls coffee?"

"Nah, we have to bounce," whispered Emily into Jamie's ear. "But thanks for last night," as she kissed his neck, making her way down to his lips, before engaging him in a passionate kiss.

Despite Emily's seductive actions, Jamie still did not miss a note, as they kissed. With Chloe now standing at the open front door of the apartment, Emily released herself from their lip lock and smiled seductively, casually making her way over to the door.

Jamie, still playing the song watched contently as the

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girls both blew him a kiss, then disappeared, letting the door shut behind them. With one hand, Jamie opened his laptop, while continuing to play piano with the other. He opened an Excel file located on the desktop and then scrolled down a list of girls' names on the file.

After what seemed to be a very long time spent scrolling down, Jamie reached the bottom of the list. Where the number 197 was on the left column of the document, Jamie moved the cursor to the box next to 197, then typed "Emily Ludwick", before hitting the tab key and typing "Chloe Perium" next to the number 198.

He stared at the last dozen or so names on the list, then his eyes glanced up to the title of the document which was "Jamie's Girls," before saving the document and closing the lid of the laptop.

Moments later, Jamie stood staring at his reflection in the bathroom mirror, with the shower water running in the background. A look of regret was etched across Jamie's face before the hint of a smirk escaped his lips, then the remorseful frown reappeared.

Jamie slapped his forehead with the palm of his hand before hopping in the shower and throwing his head back under the water, in an attempt to wash away the guilt.

As he wiped away the gushing water from his face, Jamie straightened up and sang...

"But I'm taking the Greyhound, on the Hudson River line."

He smirked to himself as the water cascaded over his back, as he continued to sing...

"I'm in a New York state of mind."

Despite his disheveled state, he still showed all of the natural showman qualities that we'd come to expect from Jamie Broadway himself.

Across town, in a cute boutique on Fifth Avenue, Elaine curiously watched on as Virginia inspected dresses on a rack. As Virginia grabbed each dress, she closed her eyes and ran the fabric through her fingers and against her face.

Eventually, she pulled a beautiful black flowing dress from the rack, and clumsily searched for the tag, looking for the right size. Once she located the tag, she held it so close to her face that it was almost shoved up her nose. Despite this, Virginia squinted, trying to read what was written on the tag.

Becoming slightly impatient, Elaine walked over and grabbed the dress from Virginia, saying, "Here. Let me do that," at which point Virginia snatched the dress back and forcefully said, "How am I ever going to become independent if you keep doing everything for me?"

Now clearly annoyed, Elaine snarled, "Why are you so desperate to be independent?"

"Oh. I dunno. Maybe 'coz I'm twenty and my mom stills does everything for me except wipe my butt," Virginia retorted.

Reluctantly, Elaine stepped back, crossed her arms, and watched with anticipation. Virginia removed her phone from her pocket, snapped a photo of the price tag, pinched the screen to zoom in on it, then realizing it was the wrong size, put it back.

Virginia repeated this process twice more before finding the right size. With a smug look on her face, Virginia smiled at her mother, before turning quickly towards the cashier, only to stumble into a clothes rack and topple over it in an awkward and embarrassing display in front of other shoppers.

At the Gershwin Theatre, Stella stood at the front of the stage, dressed in casual clothes, with her back to the empty

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theatre. In front of Stella were casually dressed male and female dancers standing in pairs in various positions around the stage. Looking out of place, two male dancers stood alone among the other couples, looking annoyed.

Speaking loudly to the dancers, Stella said, "One more time." She then looked at the phone in her hand. On the screen was the song and title "New York State of Mind – Original cast recording," in iTunes.

Stella pressed play and the dancers began dancing in intricate Pas de deux work, as the song echoed through the theater's sound system.

After only a few bars of the song, Emily and Chloe sheepishly slinked across the stage, still wearing the same clothes as last night. Stella eyeballed the girls with a none-too-pleased expression as she pressed stop on her phone, awaiting some sort of excuse from Emily and Chloe, but Emily simply said, "It won't happen again," before she and Chloe joined the two single male dancers on stage.

Stella rolled her eyes, before saying, "Let's try that again," then she pressed play to restart the song. As the music played and the couples danced, Stella turned to face the empty theatre and wiped her now teary eyes.

CHAPTER FOUR

“The Angry Young Man”

A few short weeks later, New York had transformed from a bitterly cold, snow-covered city, into a thawed-out, bustling metropolis with not a hint of snow or winter in sight. Beautiful clear skies encouraged New Yorkers to bask in the sunlight with half the layers of clothing from only a few weeks ago.

Outside the Gershwin Theatre, the box office was doing a roaring trade as Piano Man continued to sell out eight shows a week. Meanwhile, the media couldn't seem to get enough of the captivating smash hit musical story of Billy Joel's life, with most pundits struggling to understand why the show hadn't been created years earlier. Not since Jersey Boys took over Broadway had a show enjoyed such accolades and sell-out audiences over a prolonged season.

Inside the leading man's dressing room, Jamie kicked back reading Tony Robbins' book “Unleash the power

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within.” Even though he was engrossed in his book, he still managed to notice his very attractive cast member Zoe stroll into his dressing room, long before she had propped herself onto his lap and chirpily asked, “are we still on for Friday night?”

With a devilish smirk, Jamie quickly shot back an emphatic, “absolutely.”

Despite this, Jamie’s mood took a sudden detour into “grumpy land” when they both noticed his phone flashing on the bench with an incoming call from a “Katie Mitchell.”

“Is that the Katie Mitchell? Star of Chicago and Beauty and the Beast in the late nineties?” asked Zoe.

“One and the same,” replied Jamie, nonchalantly.

“She was my idol growing up,” announced Zoe.

“Mine too,” muttered Jamie with a groan, as he reached forward and aggressively declined the call.

“Got sick of being her toyboy hey?” quipped Zoe, with a sassy smile.

“Something like that,” grunted Jamie, losing interest in the conversation.

Sensing that Jamie wanted to be alone, Zoe smiled sweetly, kissed him on the lips, then hopped off his lap and headed for the door.

“Chookas for the show,” she said with a sincere smile, as she vanished from sight, leaving Jamie to ponder.

Before he could get too lost in his thoughts though, Stella strolled through the door carrying three DVDs and three separate piles of paperwork. Jamie watched on curiously as Stella placed the three piles of papers onto the bench in front of Jamie, placed a DVD on top of each pile, then smiled proudly at her handy work.

Looking down at the DVDs, Jamie noticed that the three movies were that of Forest Gump, Back to the Future, and

The Wizard of Oz. With a puzzled look on his face, Jamie began thumbing through the script for Forest Gump.

Noticing Jamie's slight confusion, Stella then rattled off in quick time, "Marty McFly must rewrite the past to fix the future. Dorothy never needed anything outside of herself, and Forest refused to be held back by his disability."

"So, what you're saying is I should let go of my past, believe in myself, and stop acting like a gumby with more baggage than an international flight?" Jamie rebutted, with a smirk.

"Oh good. I thought that may have been a little too subtle," laughed Stella.

Lacking a suitably witty comeback, Jamie simply screwed his face up at her, as he continued to flick through the scripts. As Stella watched on enthusiastically, she spotted Jamie's phone flashing on the bench.

Without even needing to see who was calling, Stella remarked, "she's not going to stop calling until you talk to her. Why don't you just hear what she has to say?"

Again, Jamie had no good response, so he simply stared at the phone, almost pleading with it to stop flashing.

Stella's gaze drifted from Jamie's phone to his upturned book on the bench and said "W.W.T.R.D?" before turning and heading towards the door, leaving Jamie with a clueless look on his face.

Before exiting the dressing room, Stella turned back to Jamie and with a smile simply said, "What Would Tony Robbins Do?" as she pointed at the book, then disappeared.

Out in the foyer of the theatre, crowds of people filed into the auditorium, while other patrons stocked up on drinks and show programs before heading in. Inside the main auditorium Elaine and Virginia, arm in arm, with Virginia carrying a show program, slowly made their way down the

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center aisle of the lower stalls, towards the stage.

When they arrived at the front row, they eased their way along the row until they found their seats right in the middle. Virginia struggled to contain her excitement as she looked around, taking in the atmosphere. She then opened her show program and held it very close to her face. Quick as you like, Elaine whipped out a small monocular and nudged Virginia with it.

“Do you get off on embarrassing me?” snapped Virginia, with a snarl.

“How else will you be able to see the show?” rebutted Elaine.

Conscious of anyone possibly looking at her, Virginia reluctantly took the monocular and placed it over her right eye as she continued to read the program. Appearing beside Virginia, Jim, the theatre’s usher, politely interrupted her reading by saying, “Good evening Miss Rodwell.”

Startled by the voice, Virginia looked up in Jim’s general direction, squinting to see him, as Jim continued, “you are our lucky V.I.P winner to meet Mister Broadway this evening.”

Virginia’s face lit up as Jim added, “Our stage Manager Mike will come and get you and take you backstage during intermission.” Jim smiled at Virginia and Elaine, then headed back up the aisle leaving Virginia glowing with anticipation, but before Virginia and Elaine could share their excitement, the front-of-house lights dimmed as large white screens began to lower along both sides walls of the theatre.

Directly in front of Virginia and Elaine, the lid of the orchestra pit slowly slid open, revealing a twenty-piece orchestra; poised to play. As the theatre fell into complete darkness, the sound of someone whaling on piano keys echoed throughout the auditorium. The audience spontaneously cheered as the excitement of what was about to unfold gripped them.

The screens on either side of the theatre came to life with

3-D footage of a packed Shea Stadium in New York, giving the audience the appearance that they had been dropped right into a packed stadium concert. Lights swirled, strobe lights flashed, and a wall of sound erupted from a live band that appeared on stage, accompanying the orchestra below in the pit.

Slowly, a grand piano on a platform, with Jamie standing behind the piano, descended from the fly tower towards the stage below as Jamie continued whaling on the keys. As Jamie came into full view, we could see he was dressed as a middle-aged Billy Joel. Virginia's face lit up as the introduction to "Angry young man" built and Jamie pounded away on the piano keys in spectacular fashion.

As the song reached fever pitch, Jamie flashed a smile at the audience, then sang...

*"There's a place in the world for the angry young man.
With his working-class ties and his radical plan.
He refuses to bend, he refused to crawl.
He's always at home with his back to the wall.
He's proud of his scars and the battles he's lost.
He struggles and bleeds as he hangs on the cross.
He likes to be known as the angry young man."*

The song continued with a stunning blend of color and sound with the audience bursting into spontaneous cheers as Jamie thrilled them, commanding the stage with his singing and his presence.

Later that evening, Jamie flopped on his dressing room couch, dripping with sweat. He took a huge gulp of water and then dried his face with a hand towel. As his breathing began to return to a more normal level, he heard a knock on the dressing room door. Jamie lifted his head from his

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towel to see Mike standing in the doorway with Virginia standing nervously just off Mike's right shoulder.

"Jamie. This is Virginia. She is tonight's V.I.P." announced Mike.

Dropping his towel onto the floor, Jamie stood, slowly walking over to Mike and Virginia, looking her up and down before saying, "Hi Virginia. Come on in," motioning for her to enter the dressing room.

"Can you excuse us for a minute please Virginia?" asked Jamie, before he turned to Mike and pointed to outside the dressing.

"Can we have a word?" Jamie asked Mike, in what was more of a command, than a question, as Jamie exited the dressing room, leaving Virginia alone inside.

"Won't be a minute, Virginia." Added Mike reassuringly, following Jamie out into the corridor.

Outside, Jamie's displeasure was evident as he whispered to Mike, "You were supposed to bring me a hot busty cougar."

"And you're supposed to do this as part of your contract, not treat it like the show farmer wants a fuck!" rebutted Mike.

Clearly caught off guard, Jamie took a moment, leaning in the doorway to watch Virginia, who was standing alarmingly close to the mirror, trying to decipher the photos stuck to it.

"She's a dancer, but there's something different about her," Mike whispered. "Be nice. You might be surprised."

Jamie turned back to Mike, still not convinced before he walked back into the dressing room and resumed his usual charm.

"Take a seat," Jamie said with a smile to Virginia, as he sat on an adjacent couch. Virginia cautiously made her way to the couch and tentatively sat, her eyes darting from side to side.

“So, Mike tells me you’re a dancer.” Jamie began, trying to engage Virginia.

“I’m a cheerleader for the Knicks,” Virginia replied, her face now lit up with excitement.

“That’s awesome!” said Jamie encouragingly.

“My dream is to get on Broadway,” Virginia stated. Suddenly, her face dropped, along with her head, as she realized her possible gaff.

“The stage, I mean. Not you,” Virginia added, trying to clarify and dig herself out of an embarrassing hole.

Laughing out loud, Jamie said, “nice one,” getting Virginia’s accidental joke.

“Broadway’s just a stage name,” Jamie added.

They both smiled as Virginia conceded, “I don’t think I’ll make it though.”

“Why not?” asked Jamie.

Virginia’s head once again dropped, as she became shyer. After a short pause, she looked up and said in a shy voice, “I’m legally blind.”

Not expecting that answer, Jamie paused, unsure how to react, as his usually confident façade melted away, replaced by a softer tone we hadn’t seen from him.

“You’re not completely blind are you?” Jamie asked.

“No. Just legally blind,” Virginia clarified. “I can see things up close, but anything more than a few feet away is pretty much just a blur.”

Without realizing it, the first genuine smile to escape Jamie’s face in a while beamed towards Virginia. Just then, Jamie jumped up and sat right next to Virginia, their faces only a foot apart.

“Am I clearer now?” Jamie asked in a cheeky tone.

Virginia blushed like a giddy schoolgirl as she looked

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into Jamie's eyes for the first time. From up close, Jamie studied Virginia's flickering eyes as his bravado continued to dissolve with every second.

Breaking their moment, Jamie asked, "So how old are you anyway?"

Hesitating slightly, Virginia glanced away, before lying, "I'm twenty-four. You?"

Also pausing, Jamie stuttered, "Um. I'm thirty."

Virginia once again smiled, clearly thinking that he wasn't too old for her.

Just as Jamie was about to speak, Mike's voice cut in, announcing, "five minutes." Virginia's face dropped upon hearing this. Her disappointment was evident.

"Are you okay?" asked Jamie sincerely.

"I was just hoping to ask you some questions about how you got into showbiz etc," she said, clearly disappointed that their time had come to an end already.

"Tell you what," said Jamie. "Why don't you give me your number, and I'll pick you up from training one day so we can hang out. That way you can ask me all the questions you like."

"You'd do that for me?" Virginia asked in an excited tone.

"Of course. It'd be my pleasure," replied Jamie, as he grabbed a pen and a piece of paper from the bench and handed it to Virginia.

As Virginia wrote down her number, her face glowed as she concentrated ever so hard with her face extremely close to the piece of paper, writing her number down, then handing the piece of paper and pen back to Jamie.

With a glance towards Mike, who was now standing just outside the door, Jamie leaned in and gave Virginia a peck on the cheek.

"Talk to you soon hey?" Jamie said as Virginia made her

way to the dressing room door, blushing wildly.

At the doorway, Virginia turned back towards Jamie and asked, “do you know which studio it is?”

Pausing for a moment, Jamie forced a smile and said, “Yes. I used to know the owner.”

With that, Virginia turned and left the room, as Jamie watched on with a broad smile. As he looked down at the messy phone number on the piece of paper, Jamie smiled even more broadly, before Mike poked his head back inside the door and said, “Told ya,” before disappearing once again.

Jamie thoughtfully made his way over to the mirror, clearly thinking to himself that there really was something special about Virginia.

Back in the auditorium, Virginia resumed her seat next to her mother with the biggest grin Elaine had ever seen.

“So? What did you talk about?” asked Elaine, excitedly.

Still glowing and talking at lightening speed, Virginia said, “Cheerleading. My eyesight. Broadway. Oh my God, he is so good looking up close.”

“How close did you two get?” asked Elaine in a surprised tone.

“Very,” replied Virginia. “Oh, by the way. If he asks, I’m twenty-four.

“Virginia!” fumed Elaine in an exacerbated tone, but her displeasure at her daughter’s brashness was interrupted by the front-of-house lights dimming to mark the start of the second act of the show.

CHAPTER FIVE

“Big Shot”

Early afternoon, the following day, Jamie and his best friend Darren McDonald were sat in a booth at their favorite bar on the corner of 52nd street and Broadway, enjoying beers and talking shit; as mates do. Sitting beside Darren on the seat was a briefcase. On Darren’s business shirt, above the left pocket is his company logo, “Hardwood Pharmaceuticals.”

After simultaneously taking the last swig of their beers, Darren reached over grabbed his briefcase, and swung it up onto the table.

“I can’t believe you asked me for this stuff. I mean, you. At your age,” said Darren.

“It’s alright for you married guys. You only have to satisfy one woman, and let’s be honest. She’s already married you, so you don’t have to impress her in bed anymore. It’s much harder having a different audience every night,” remarked Jamie.

Paying little attention to Jamie’s sob-story about having to satisfy all the women who desired him, Darren opened the briefcase and spun it around to face Jamie. The look on Jamie’s face as the briefcase opened, was priceless. His jaw dropped and his eyes widened as he surveyed the briefcase packed to the brim with boxes of Viagra.

Breaking Jamie out of his comatose state, Darren slammed the briefcase shut as a waitress approached.

“Two more beers please,” Darren requested.

Once the waitress was out of sight, Darren re-opened the briefcase, pulled out a box of Viagra, and tossed it at Jamie, as he said, “take one of these and harden the fuck up princess.”

Jamie caught the box of Viagra as it bounced off his chest.

“I do have a favor to ask though,” Darren continued, grabbing a slightly different-looking box, and placing it on the table in front of Jamie. “This one is a slow-release. You take one a day, but it only kicks in when you’re aroused.”

“Are you fucking kidding dude? Have you seen the hot dancers I work with? I’d be a walking towel rack,” Jamie replied. “But it would be handy if I worked on a cruise ship though.”

“How so?” asked Darren, with a confused look on his face.

“It would stop me from rolling out of bed in rough weather,” Jamie smirked, then continued, “Why don’t you just try it out on your wife?”

“We can’t all live your lifestyle,” Darren sneered.

“Speaking of which,” said Jamie, as he reached into his pocket and pulled out two show tickets. He placed them on the table, then placed a box of Viagra on top and with a smirk said, “These might help you get a bit.”

Without warning, a nearby jukebox fired up, blasting out Billy Joel’s hit “Big Shot”.

In a packed nightclub later that night, with the song Big Shot once again playing, Jamie and Zoe threw down Tequila shots at the bar, in time with the accentuations in the opening of the song. On her second shot, Zoe spilled some of the Tequila down her cleavage. Quick as you like, Jamie licked the Tequila off her partially exposed chest, as Zoe giggled excitedly.

A little later, a luxurious stretch limousine cruised down a dark New York Street, with the continuation of the song

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playing through the limousine's stereo. Lazing on the far back seat, Jamie and Zoe made out, as Jamie's voice sang, as part of the original cast recording of Piano Man...

*"You went uptown riding in your limousine,
With your fine Park Avenue clothes."*

Jamie reached around Becky's back, swiftly unhooking her bra strap, with a click of his fingers. Zoe smiled – impressed, while Jamie winked with a cocky smile as the lyrics continued...

*"You had the Dom Perignon in your hand,
And the spoon up your nose."*

In bed the following morning, with his head pounding, Jamie looked across at Zoe, fast asleep. Jamie rolled back over with a look of regret on his face, as the lyrics continued, this time in Jamie's head...

*"When you wake up in the morning,
With your head on fire,
And your eyes to bloody to see.
Go on cry in your coffee,"
But don't come bitchin' to me."*

On stage later that afternoon, a very disheveled Jamie, was sat at the piano, on top of a rotating platform on stage, as he and the band went through their regular afternoon soundcheck, which that day just happened to be the song Big Shot.

At the rear of the stage, the stage curtains were wide open, exposing large mirrors that spanned the entire width and height of the back wall of the stage. As the song continued, the rotating piano with Jamie on it then faced the mirrors.

Looking up from the piano, Jamie noticed his awful-looking state in the reflection. He quickly slammed a button on top of the piano, which halted the platform's rotation, then with an animated expression, Jamie sang to his reflection in the mirrors...

*"Because you had to be a big shot didn't ya.
You had to open up your mouth.
You had to be a big shot, didn't ya.
All your friends were so knocked out."*

Jamie then stood, his microphone pack dangling behind him as he walked over to the mirrors, pointing aggressively at his reflection as he continued singing...

*"You had to have the last word, last night.
You know what everything's about.
You had to have a white-hot spotlight.
You had to be a big shot last night."*

The band continued playing the instrumental break. Meanwhile, instead of returning to the piano, Jamie turned and disappeared into the wings, with his voice eventually ringing through the theatre's sound system saying, "Sounds great guys."

The band members all looked around at each other, gobsmacked.

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At home, Elaine walked purposely down the hallway of her apartment, carrying a cheerleading costume and Virginia's black Holston dress that she had just bought. As she approached Virginia's bedroom, Elaine's pace slowed as she heard Big Shot coming from Virginia's room, where the door was slightly ajar. Elaine quietly peered through the gap and saw Virginia holding her iPad very close to her face, as Jamie's voice rang out from the iPad...

*"They were all impressed with your Holston dress,
And the people that you knew at Elaine's.
And the story of your latest success,
Kept them so entertained."*

Elaine continued to watch as Virginia smiled broadly, almost melting as she watched Jamie performing the song in a YouTube video. Elaine nudged the door open slightly, announcing, "Here's your dress and your costume for game day."

Quickly throwing the iPad upside down on the bed, Virginia sat up, looking very embarrassed as she exclaimed, "Don't you ever knock?"

"How 'bout, thanks for mending my costume mom," rebutted Elaine, in a sarcastic tone. "So, when are you seeing him again?"

"Tomorrow night, after rehearsals," replied Virginia, with a huge smile on her face.

"Well, you'd better make sure that woman doesn't keep you too late at rehearsals, 'coz I don't want you home too late," Elaine said with a frown, as she left the room.

CHAPTER SIX

“Feelin’ Alright”

In a dimly lit corner of a downtown Police Station, Detective Marco Daley, a hard-faced, mid-sixties detective stared intently at a computer screen in his office, late at night. From his leaning back position, Marco leaned forward in his chair as an Instagram page opened on the screen.

The page was that of Virginia Rodwell’s. One by one, Marco clicked on each of Virginia’s posts, staring at each one, before moving onto the next.

Later that day Virginia and her fellow cheerleaders were finishing up the last few bars of an elaborate routine to an upbeat song in the dance studio. Undetected, a casually dressed Jamie slipped inside the studio, leaned against the wall just inside the door, and watched on with interest. Even though the studio was filled with stunning female dancers, Jamie’s focus was firmly locked in on Virginia.

At the end of the routine, the girls all made their way to their gym bags, then one by one each of them noticed Jamie leaning against the wall like a Calvin Klein model during a photo shoot.

Giggling like schoolgirls, the cheerleaders all smiled and whispered among themselves as they admired Jamie. Trying not to show that he noticed the girl’s adoration,

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Jamie's gaze drifted around the room. This plan came undone when his eyes met with Katie's, who was standing at the front of the studio.

Upon seeing Jamie, Katie flashed him an apologetic smile and looked as though she was about to walk over to greet him when she stopped abruptly. Catching Jamie off guard was the cute, familiar voice of Virginia saying "Hi," with a smile. With a surprised look on his face, Jamie turned to see Virginia suddenly standing right beside him.

"How did you know I was here?" asked Jamie, in a confused tone.

"They may be broken, but they're not painted on," Virginia said cutely while pointing at her eyes.

"I'm sorry," said Jamie, embarrassed. "I didn't mean to be disrespectful."

Virginia laughed. "I'm just messin' with you. It was your cologne. You could smell it from Staten Island." Virginia quipped, batting her eyelids at Jamie.

"Full of one-liners, aren't you?" Jamie said, returning the smile.

"It's my way of compensating," Virginia added.

With all the girls now watching Jamie and Virginia's interaction curiously, Jamie grabbed Virginia's arm interlinked it with his, and said, "Shall we head off?" Virginia glowed, smiling at him as he led her out of the studio.

From an unmarked police car parked across the street from the studio, Marco looked up from his newspaper, noticing Virginia and Jamie leaving. Marco's eyes narrowed as he watched them walk off into the distance.

In a busy sports bar near Times Square just a short while later, Jamie and Virginia sat sipping drinks across from each other in a private booth. Several televisions around the bar displayed various sports as spontaneous cheers broke out

from patrons watching live games at the bar.

Not wanting to sit in silence, Jamie leaned across toward Virginia and asked, "So, who's your favorite basketball player?"

Pausing thoughtfully, Virginia replied, "Tom Brady."

Jamie let out an involuntary laugh as Virginia stared at his straight faced.

"Oh. You're serious," remarked Jamie.

"He's good, isn't he?" asked Virginia, a little confused.

"Um, yeah. He's the best. But he plays football, not basketball." Jamie explained.

Blushing from embarrassment, Virginia elaborated, "Well. I just love to dance, and it happens to be at a basketball game."

"I get it," Jamie said with a smirk. "I love to perform, and it happens to be on stage eight times a week."

Grabbing her phone from her bag beside her on the seat, Virginia nervously asked, "Do you mind if I add you on Insta?"

"Do you have many cute friends?" Jamie asked sarcastically.

Virginia opened her Instagram account, held her phone super close to her face, then found Jamie's page, before exclaiming, "Holly shit! You've got like half-a-million followers. You don't need my friends."

Jamie smirked as Virginia clicked on the request button on Jamie's page. "You must get so many girls," Virginia added.

Jamie's smirk suddenly evaporated, replaced by an embarrassed look, as he tried to divert the topic by saying, "How 'bout them Knicks hey?"

The following afternoon Jamie and his fellow cast members were rehearsing on stage in casual clothes, going through a dance routine. A large black steel cage sat in the middle of the stage, with male and female dancers climbing all over it in precision choreography. Meanwhile, other male/female couples, located at various spots on the stage, ground provocatively on each other.

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Stood front and center of the group, Jamie sang to a dance/RnB hybrid track...

"A foxy lady walked in the room."

Emily strode across the stage towards Jamie, grabbed him, and started grinding against him, as Jamie continued singing...

"My heart starts pounding like a boom, boom, boom!"

From the back of the dark auditorium, Stella slowly walked down the center aisle towards the stage with a look of shock on her face. Still in darkness, Stella's jaw dropped, as she stopped eight rows from the stage.

Back on stage, the routine looked sleazy and very distasteful. Jamie slapped Emily on the ass as he sang...

"I spanked her booty. Damn, it felt firm."

At this point, Stella, who had seen enough, turned to the sound booth at the back of the room and signaled for the sound technician to stop the music.

To the shock of Jamie and the cast, the room fell silent, as they all looked toward the sound booth, trying to see why the music stopped.

Shielding his eyes from the bright stage lights, Jamie yelled, "Why did you stop the music?"

"I told him to," came Stella's voice from the darkness, as the front of house lights brightened, revealing Stella now standing with her arms crossed, staring directly at Jamie with a look of disdain on her face.

"Take five guys," Stella said to the dancers, as she motioned for Jamie to join her in the auditorium.

Looking like a naughty schoolboy who had just been busted stealing milk from the cafeteria, Jamie reluctantly trudged down the side-stage steps and made his way to where Stella was now sitting.

As Jamie slowly sat, bracing himself for what was about to come, Stella predictably fumed, “What on Mother Teresa’s name was that?”

Jamie sat silently as Stella continued. “You’ve worked with Sondheim, Gaudio, Allen, and now Billy Joel and that’s the best you can come up with?”

“You know I suck at vulnerability,” Jamie pleaded defensively.

“Then collaborate,” Stella demanded.

“If you say the name Katie Mitchell, you lose a friend,” said Jamie defiantly.

“You know it’s the right thing to do,” added Stella, in a lecturing tone.

Jamie opened his mouth to speak but thought it best to remain silent.

Across town, in a typical young woman’s bedroom, Virginia sat on a stool wearing the little black dress that she picked out as Elaine applied makeup to Virginia’s face. Strewn all over the bed and floor were clothes and several pairs of shoes.

Elaine stepped back from Virginia, looking at her handy work, and stated, “You are so beautiful.”

“You have to say that,” Virginia rebutted, as she hopped up and thrust her face very close to the full-length wall mirror, trying to inspect her makeup.

“So, is this a real date?” inquired Elaine in a concerned tone.

“Either way, don’t wait up,” Virginia said with a cheeky grin, as she hiked her dress up slightly.

“Virginia Robinson!” gasped Elaine.

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Ignoring her mother's displeasure, Virginia sat on the end of her double bed and put on her 3-inch-high heels.

"Careful in those," stated Elaine. "Remember what happened last time?"

"I was drunk mom. It wasn't 'coz of my eyes or my shoes," Virginia snapped.

"That's right," said Elaine. "You make horrible decisions when you're drunk."

"Well, I am my mother's daughter," Virginia shot back with a smile.

Later that same evening, Jamie and Virginia slowly strolled along a city street. Hesitantly, Virginia reached out to hold Jamie's hand, as she said, "Thank you for tonight. I wasn't sure what to expect. I've never been on a real date, or even had a boyfriend."

Virginia turned to catch Jamie's shock expression.

"Don't worry," she said. "I'm not a virgin."

"Rats," said Jamie with a smirk, "you look absolutely gorgeous by the way."

"I wasn't sure this red dress would look any good," Virginia said, blushing through her deadpan expression.

Jamie looked her up and down, with an unusual uncomfortableness.

"I'm just fuckin' with you," laughed Virginia, to Jamie's relief.

Just then, they arrived outside Jamie's apartment building. Still holding hands, Jamie turned to Virginia and asked hopefully, "Would you like to come up and check out the view?"

With a straight face, Virginia shot back, "Are you making fun of me?"

"Oh my God no!" quivered Jamie, mortified that he had offended her.

Virginia burst out laughing. “You are so easy to fuck with,” she said.

Trying to compose himself, Jamie decided to take another swing at the question.

“Would you like to come up and check out the ... atmosphere?” Jamie asked.

The smile on Virginia’s face said it all, so with that, Jamie swiped his security fob on the outside panel of the building and then led Virginia inside.

Back at Virginia’s home, Elaine was on the couch, talking on the phone, with her laptop propped on her lap.

“She’s on a date with Jamie Broadway. I always thought he was older than thirty, but Virginia says he’s not,” Elaine said into the phone.

After a brief pause, Elaine said, “Are you sure?”

Pausing briefly again, Elaine said, “I knew it.”

Elaine then typed Jamie’s name into Google on her laptop, then scrolled through a page of search results until she clicked on one in particular. Her jaw dropped as she saw several photos of Jamie with what the article called his “high-profile-love-interests.” As Elaine scrolled further down the story, she saw that Jamie’s age was mentioned as thirty-five; not thirty.

With a look of terror on her face, Elaine spoke into the phone, “Oh no. She’s going to make the same mistake I did. I’ll have to call you back.” Elaine then ended the call and hurriedly started typing a text message on her phone, before slumping back into her chair, with a worried look on her face.

Meanwhile, at Jamie’s apartment, Jamie stepped out onto the balcony to join Virginia. Jamie handed Virginia one of the two glasses of wine he was carrying.

“It’s so pretty up here,” Virginia said.

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“You can see all the lights?” Jamie inquired in a surprised tone.

“It’s mostly just shapes and colors,” Virginia replied.

Jamie placed his glass of wine down on the table grabbed Virginia’s glass from her hand and put it down, before turning her to face him and asking with a sincere smile, “Speaking of colors. Tell me about your eyes.”

Pausing thoughtfully, with an obvious shyness, Virginia asked, “Have you heard of Madeleine McCain?”

Jamie nodded, replying with, “That little girl who disappeared in Portugal in 2007?”

“Well, her pupils were more like a vertical line (as Virginia drew a vertical line in front of her eye with her finger) than perfect circles. Mine are the same,” Virginia explained.

“Is that what caused your blindness?” Jamie hesitantly asked.

“No. That’s just coloboma. That’s different from my blindness,” Virginia remarked.

“So why the contacts?” Jamie asked, looking at her with sincere reassurance that she was not being judged.

Virginia’s head dropped, as she went on saying, “I hate my real eyes. Mom is the only person who has seen them in years.”

Just then, Virginia’s phone beeped with an incoming message. She removed her phone from her purse, opened the message, and then held the phone close to her face to read it, as Jamie watched on with admiration.

“Just mom being overprotective,” Virginia said dismissively, looking a little downtrodden, as she placed her phone upside down on the table.

Wanting to lift Virginia’s mood, Jamie grabbed both her hands out in front of him and stared into her eyes. Without warning, Virginia shut her eyes, catching Jamie off guard.

“Are you okay?” Jamie asked.

With her eyes still closed, Virginia smiled and said, "Of course. Sometimes when I close my eyes, I actually see more clearly than when they're open."

"How is that possible?" Jamie asked.

"Well, with my bad eyesight, all the blurry images and shapes can be quite distracting, but when I close my eyes, everything becomes crystal clear," she said with a smile.

"It's like I see through my inner eye."

Smiling broadly at her, Jamie inquired in a hopeful tone, "So what are you seeing now?"

Without hesitating, Virginia whispered back, "A gorgeous man taking my breath away."

In a swift motion, Jamie pulled Virginia close to him, causing her to open her eyes. She looked up into his eyes, and around at his facial features and said, "You know. The closer you get, the better looking you are."

"Daniel Radcliffe good looking?" Jamie inquired nervously.

"More like George Clooney," Virginia laughed.

Despite his slightly bruised ego, Jamie pulled Virginia even closer. Now, with their lips only an inch apart, Jamie slowly brought their lips together, leading to a beautiful kiss, causing Virginia to inhale suddenly, as her breath was in fact taken away.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“Destiny”

The following morning, Jamie rolled over in bed to the sight of Virginia sleeping peacefully beside him. He gazed affectionately at her for a moment with a smile on his face and no sign of regret this time. He looked up from Virginia and noticed sitting alone on the bedside table on her side of the bed was a contact lens case.

Jamie turned his attention back to Virginia, smiling with anticipation. Slowly Virginia opened her eyes, smiling at Jamie, as he looked into her eyes, realizing that he was seeing her real eyes for the first time. Also realizing this, Virginia quickly covered her eyes with her hands.

Smiling broadly at her, Jamie gently peeled her hands away from her face saying, “Oh my God. Your eyes are so beautiful.”

Still holding Virginia’s hands away from her face, Jamie stared at her stunning bright blue eyes with her distinct pupils. Unable to cover her eyes with her hands, Virginia turned her head away, trying to avoid eye contact with Jamie, as she became incredibly self-conscious.

Unwilling to accept Virginia’s reluctance, Jamie used a single finger to gently turn her head back to face his, until their eyes once again met.

“You know. Sometimes the thing we think is our biggest flaw, is actually our greatest asset,” Jamie said sincerely.

Relatively surprised at his sudden empathy towards someone, Jamie smirked at his comment.

Wriggling free of Jamie’s grasp, Virginia rolled over to the outside of the bed and reached down into her bag on the floor.

“Speaking of floor,” Virginia said, as she turned back towards Jamie and handed him a ticket.

Jamie stared at the ticket, finally exclaiming excitedly, “Floor seats at the Knicks?” Virginia glowed, sharing Jamie’s excitement, before he climbed on top of her, kissing her passionately on the lips.

On the couch at home, Elaine trolled Virginia’s Instagram account with a disapproving look. As she scrolled down the page, a notification popped up, alerting her that Virginia had just added a new post to the account.

Elaine clicked on the post which revealed a selfie of Virginia and Jamie kissing on the top of the quaint little Gapstow bridge in Central Park. The post’s caption read, “The perfect first date continues.”

With a face like thunder, Elaine winced as she grabbed her right wrist and began flexing it, like it was some sort of old injury, as she continued staring at Virginia’s post.

On a sunny Spring morning in Central Park, squirrels emerged after a cold winter, while leaves began to sprout from every tree throughout the sprawling park. A horse and carriage were being prepared to take its first passengers for the season, while couples and families set up picnics, or strolled through the vast grounds sipping coffee.

Standing face to face, atop the Gapstow bridge, Jamie and Virginia gazed into each other’s eyes as a string quartet began setting up to rehearse on a lush patch of grass, off to one side of the bridge.

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Jamie gently leaned Virginia against the railing of the bridge as he stared into her eyes, seemingly wanting to say something.

“Is something wrong?” Virginia nervously asked.

“No. No. I just have so many questions,” replied Jamie with a sincere smile.

“About my eyes, you mean?” Virginia asked.

Jamie nodded, more shy than usual.

“It’s ok,” Virginia said. “If more people asked questions, people with disabilities wouldn’t feel so alone or misunderstood.”

Still hesitant, Jamie paused thoughtfully before asking, “Okay. So - how do you pirouette without being able to spot?”

Virginia burst out laughing, before exclaiming, “Of all the burning questions you could have asked, that was what you really wanted to know?”

Feeling stupid and embarrassed, Jamie also laughed.

Virginia eventually composed herself, then answered, “You know how dancers spot a specific object or place when the pirouette? Well, I can’t see far enough to focus on a specific spot, so I pick a general area instead and apply the same principle.”

Taken aback, Jamie paused, admiring Virginia, before moving closer to her and saying, “I have never met anyone as inspirational as you.”

Blushing, Virginia placed her head on Jamie’s shoulder. As if being cued to do so, the string quartet began playing a beautiful arrangement. Seizing the opportunity, Jamie pulled Virginia in close and led her in a romantic slow dance in time with the music.

As they danced atop the small bridge, with Virginia’s head resting on Jamie’s shoulder, Jamie felt his eyes welling up as an involuntary smile escaped his lips. Swept up in the moment, as the strong quartet continued and he and

Virginia danced, Jamie spontaneously sang...

*"Every glance, we share is like a brand-new start.
Every word, we speak is so much from the heart."*

With that, Virginia opened her eyes and looked up at Jamie, with such adoration in her eyes as he continued singing...

*"Though words cannot express things when they're real.
It's the look between two lovers, that show the way we feel."*

Virginia almost melted at this outpouring of spontaneous lyrics as Jamie continued...

*"And now, you're standing here in front of me.
Could this be destiny?"*

Now with tears of utter joy welling in her eyes, Virginia once again rested her head on Jamie's shoulder, as they continued to dance while Jamie sang...

*"I don't know how I ever made it through.
Through a minute of my life here without you.
And now that you're a dream that has come true.
Now that you are near. Our destiny is clear.
You and I have nothing left to fear."*

Lifting her head to look up at Jamie once more, Virginia stretched up to kiss him passionately as the music continued in the background.

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At the Gershwin Theatre later that night, Jamie stood in the wings in costume, waiting to go on stage when Stella approached him from behind saying, "How was your day off?"

Unable to hide his smile, but not wanting to upset her by saying something inappropriate, Jamie merely nodded with that smile of his.

Taking this as some sort of guilty admission on Jamie's part, Stella quipped, "So who's the poor girl this time?"

"It was last week's V.I.P. if you must know. A young cheerleader for the Knicks," said Jamie defiantly.

"Oh, Jamie! You didn't," snarled Stella.

"You told me to collaborate," laughed Jamie.

"Musically, you idiot," barked Stella

"Oh we were makin' sweet music," Jamie laughed.

With a look of fury on her face, Stella shot back, "Well, I'm glad you didn't say you were makin' love. 'Coz we all know Jamie Broadway doesn't know what love is."

Now deflated, but still defiant, Jamie stated, "How could I possibly love any woman, when the one woman who should have loved me, couldn't?"

"So that's your excuse for your endless parade of sexual conquests, is it?" Stella retorted.

"Girls have daddy issues, so why can't I have mommy issues?" Jamie shot back, as he reached behind his back, flicked the switch on his microphone pack, then smirked at Stella as he jogged onto the stage, leaving Stella shaking her head.

CHAPTER EIGHT

“Win or Lose”

Sitting on a stool at the kitchen bench at home, wearing her cheerleading outfit, with her hair and makeup done, Virginia unconsciously placed carrot sticks into her mouth as she leered at her phone. Of particular interest to Virginia were Jamie’s Instagram posts.

Interrupting Virginia’s gaze, Elaine’s voice cut in from the nearby lounge room, saying,

“You never replied to my text the other night.”

Choosing to ignore her mother’s comment, Virginia clicked on a photo of Jamie, but her smile and gaze were once again interrupted as Elaine prodded some more by saying,

“Aren’t you curious why he lied about his age?”

“I lied about mine too,” Virginia quickly snapped back, without looking up from her phone.

“Don’t you think he’s too old for you?” asked Elaine.

“It’s the same age difference as you and Dad,” replied Virginia.

“And look how that ended,” snapped Elaine.

“Jamie’s different,” Virginia fired back.

“You don’t know him,” Elaine retorted.

“I know I want to be with him,” said Virginia, finally looking up from her phone to glare at her mother.

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“Well, I don’t think it’s a good idea,” said Elaine sternly.

“It doesn’t matter what you think,” argued Virginia, getting even more annoyed.

“It does while you’re living under my roof,” proclaimed Elaine in an assertive tone.

With that, Virginia stood up, grabbed her gym bag, and then stormed over to the doorway, where she stood, tapping her foot impatiently, indicating that she was ready to leave.

At a bustling Maddison Square Garden a few hours later, Jamie tried to navigate hundreds of people in the corridors beneath the stadium arena, constantly checking his ticket for the right gate. As he looked up, he saw world-famous life coach Tony Robbins towering over the crowd, headed in his direction.

As Tony approached, Jamie noticed internet marketing guru, Gary Vaynerchuk walking alongside Tony. Coming face to face with Gary, but only face to ‘chest’ with Tony, Jamie smiled broadly, declaring, “Mister Robbins. Gary Vee. I’m a huge fan of you both.”

Smiling down at Jamie, Tony extended his massive hand to shake Jamie’s as Gary remarked, “You’re that Billy Joel musical guy.” Gary quickly turned to Tony and said, “This guy is fucking awesome. You have to see the show. It’s epic.”

“I’d be happy to hook you up with some tickets if you like,” Jamie said nervously. “I’m Jamie Broadway.”

“That’s your real name?” inquired Tony with a smirk.

“I changed it when I got my first professional gig,” Jamie said dismissively. “I didn’t want to use my family name. Long story.”

“Are you here alone?” asked Tony.

“Yeah. My, um, sort of girlfriend is one of the cheerleaders,” remarked Jamie. “What brings you two here?”

“He wants to buy a professional sporting team, and I’m here to talk him out of it,” Tony said.

“My preference was to buy the Jets, but they’re not for sale, so the Knicks are the next best thing,” added Gary.

“Hey. Why don’t you come join us?” asked Tony. “They’ve given us a private suite.”

“You serious?” exclaimed Jamie excitedly, before Tony and Gary ushered Jamie towards a doorway, in the direction of the private suites.

Down on center court, Virginia and her fellow cheerleaders walked and danced the perimeter of the court, greeting the crowd as fans made their way to their seats. Judging by the expression on Virginia’s face, this was her happy place.

Somehow, despite her disability, Virginia confidently strode around the court with the other girls, with the other girls forming a ring around Virginia, discreetly guiding her around so that fans had no clue of her lack of sight.

As the door of a private suite swung open and Tony, Gary, and Jamie entered, Jamie’s jaw dropped as he took in the view, along with the lavish seafood buffet lining one wall of the spacious suite.

An attractive waitress handed them all drinks, as Jamie stared down at the court, looking for Virginia. Just as he spotted her, his phone rang in his pocket.

Jamie removed his phone and angrily declined the call to Gary’s amusement.

“Ex-girlfriend?” Gary asked.

“Ex-biological mother,” Jamie said annoyingly, as he put his phone on silent and shoved it back in his pocket.

“I get it,” said Tony, empathetically. “I had a difficult relationship with my mother too.”

“Mind abandoned me as a baby,” said Jamie.

“And you think she is to blame for everything, right?” inquired Tony in what was more of a statement, than a question.

Letting out a chuckle, Gary chimed in, directing his comment at Tony, “Unleash the fucking guru.”

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“I’m not your guru,” retorted Tony, in a sarcastic reference to his 2016 documentary of the same name. With that, Gary smirked and headed over to the front of the suite to watch the players warm up on the court below.

Jamie meanwhile, looking a little disheartened, walked over to a stool and sat, as Tony followed, sitting backward on another stool facing Jamie.

“If you don’t mind me saying,” began Tony. “It seems to me that you’re blaming all wrong.” Allowing Jamie’s puzzled look to percolate for a moment, Tony paused, before adding, “If you’re going to blame her for all the bad stuff, then you also need to blame her for the good stuff too.”

Knowing that he was in the presence of the world’s foremost human behavior specialist and that there were no doubt some more awesome nuggets of information to follow, Jamie sat silently, almost pleading with his eyes for Tony to enlighten him.

Tony then said, “I take it you were adopted and didn’t grow up in an orphanage, or foster homes, right?”

Jamie nodded in agreement.

“Then it’s my hallucination that you had a pretty good life with your adopted parents. Correct?” inquired Tony.

“Of course,” muttered Jamie.

“Then you need to understand this,” Tony began. “A biological mother has to love her child, even if it looks like Gary.”

“Fuck you!” yelled Gary, raising his middle finger in the air, while smiling.

“But a woman who adopts a child chooses to love them,” Tony added.

Looking a tad confused, Jamie asked, “But how does this apply to me?”

Smiling as he leaned forward, Tony said, “It all comes down to how you frame it.” Jamie remained silent, as Tony

paused for effect, ready to load up and drop a truth bomb like one Jamie had never experienced before.

Tony then placed his hand on Jamie's shoulder stared sincerely into his eyes, and articulated very clearly, "You weren't abandoned. You were chosen."

A sudden wave of realization swept over Jamie. His eyes became glassy as he took in this mind-altering epiphany, but before it could seep into his subconscious too deeply, Gary's booming voice broke the silence, as he yelled, "Which one's your kinda girlfriend?"

Shaking off his previous thought, Jamie walked over to the front of the suite. Tony followed close behind as Jamie scanned the group of cheerleaders on the court, before proudly pointing and saying, "Cute blonde. Front row. Second form the left."

"Wow! exclaimed Gary. "She's the best one out there by far."

"Wanna know the most incredible part?" Jamie asked with a proud smile. "She's legally blind."

Tony once again clapped a hand on Jamie's shoulder and said, "Sounds to me like she's worked out how to reframe her challenges in life. Perhaps you met her for a reason."

Jamie, Tony, and Gary all admired Virginia's talent, as the stadium lights began to dim, and an announcer's voice said, "Ladies and Gentlemen. Please welcome on stage, performing her smash hit Win or Lose, as she performs with our very own Knicks City Dancers. Nineties Broadway star, Katie Mitchell!"

Blasting from the stadium's P.A system, a catchy rock/pop anthem erupted. Appearing under a spotlight, in the center of all the cheerleaders, Katie stood confidently, as she sang...

*"Through your life. You know things will surely get rough.
To succeed you must push, that's a must.*

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*If you do your dreams will come true.
What you wish for will surely shine through."*

Up in the suite, Gary and Tony bopped along. Meanwhile, Jamie tried desperately to focus on Virginia, but despite his best efforts, his attention was continually drawn back to Katie, who was commanding the stage as she sang...

*"You must never lose sight of your goals.
See the big picture as a whole.
There's just one secret to success.
And that is always give it your best."*

Jamie finally managed to keep his attention on Virginia as she danced full out, however as the anthem-like song hit the catchy chorus, Jamie once again found himself watching Katie as she prompted the crowd to join in singing...

*"C'mon and rock with me.
We'll recreate reality.
You know that you can choose.
Whe-ther-you-win-or-you-love!"*

Later that night, after the game had finished, Jamie found himself navigating the stalls below the stadium looking for an exit when out of nowhere, Virginia leaped onto him, wrapping her legs around his waist and her arms around his neck.

"You were so incredible!" Jamie gushed, but unexpectedly Virginia burst into tears.

"Hey, hey," said Jamie sincerely, as he slowly lowered Virginia back onto the ground and looked into her now tear-filled eyes.

"What's wrong? Jamie inquired, as he wiped away her tears.

"Mom forbade me from seeing you," Virginia muttered through her sobs.

"Why?" Jamie asked, stunned.

"She found out your real age," said Virginia.

"Ah," said Jamie, with an embarrassed look. "Sorry about that. I just didn't want you to think I was some sleazy old guy trying to pick you up."

"You're my sleazy old guy," said Virginia reassuringly. "And it worked, didn't it?"

"I'm only eleven years older, so what is the problem?" asked Jamie, before noticing Virginia's guilty expression.

"Not exactly," muttered Virginia.

"Please tell me you're of legal age," pleaded Jamie, as the color drained from his face.

"To drink? Not quite," said Virginia with a smirk. "Have sex? Well, it's a bit late to worry about that now, isn't it?"

Seeing Jamie's panicked expression, Virginia said, "Relax. I'm twenty-one in three weeks."

Jamie let out a huge sigh, as his breathing returned to normal.

"So, she doesn't want you dating an older guy?"

"Dad was fifteen years older than her and it all turned to custard, so mom is very overprotective," Virginia stated.

Jamie stared lovingly down at Virginia, with concern etched across his face.

"I don't want to come between you and your mom," said Jamie as he pulled her closer.

"And I don't want to lose you," Virginia quickly fired back.

"Then we're going to have to prove her wrong then, aren't we?" proclaimed Jamie, before kissing her passionately, as people passed by, paying them very little attention.

CHAPTER NINE

“Tell her about it”

Backstage at the Gershwin Theatre, Jamie was sat in front of his dressing room mirror in full costume, fixing his hair as Stella, also in costume, was sat on the floor stretching.

Stella looked up at Jamie’s reflection in the mirror and said, “I can’t believe the change in you since meeting that girl, but don’t you think she’s a little young? I mean, what do you have to talk about that’s deep and meaningful with a twenty-year-old?”

“Who said it has to be deep and meaningful?” replied Jamie, pivoting in his chair to face Stella. “Why can’t it just be fun?”

“Because when it comes to you, someone always gets hurt,” said Stella

“It’s not like that,” Jamie protested.

“So, what is it like then?” Stella asked, knowing full well what the answer would be.

Jamie shrugged, then said, “I guess I just love her energy and how she looks to me for advice.”

“How ‘bout you keep the advice above the waist with this one,” Stella said.

“Her waist or mine?” Jamie said with a smirk.

But before Stella could continue the lecture, Jamie’s phone beeped with a message. The message which was from Virginia read: “Mom won’t back down. Can I stay with you for now?” Stella watched on as Jamie stared worryingly at his phone.

“Everything ok?” enquired Stella.

“Vee’s mom kicked her out of home because she doesn’t want us dating,” Jamie began in a somber tone. “She wants to stay with me.”

“You’re going to say yes, right?” Stella quickly chimed in.

“I thought you said she was too young,” Jamie said.

“That doesn’t mean you let her walk the streets,” snapped Stella. “She’s barely an adult and she’s legally blind.”

Almost by divine intervention, as Jamie scrambled for a justifiable reply, Stage Manager Mike’s voice rang out through the tannoy system backstage, “Soundcheck.”

Jamie stood, jammed his phone in his pocket, and briskly headed for the door.

Outside in the corridor, five brass-section members of the orchestra played the introduction of the Billy Joel song Tell Her About It as they walked along. Four male cast members exited their dressing room and joined the musicians walking down the hall as they warmed up their vocal cords, singing...

“Dooby-dooby-do. Do-do. Do-do-do.”

“Dooby-dooby-do. Do-do. Do-do-do.”

Jamie quickly scurried out of his dressing room, in front of the moving pack, putting the cast members and musicians

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between him and Stella, as the groups surged through the backstage area.

Not giving up that easily, Stella dashed out of Jamie's dressing room and gave chase, as she sang...

"Listen boy I don't wanna see you let a good thing slip away."

The cast members chimed in vocally, singing...

"Slip away-ay-ay."

Stella began forcing her way through the ever-growing wave of performers, as she tried to catch up to Jamie. While they all continued towards the stage area, winding through a rabbit warren of dark corridors. Stella sang...

*"You know I don't like watching anybody make,
The same mistakes I made."*

A guitarist and bass player exited their dressing room, carrying their instruments. Upon seeing the commotion, they both joined in, playing along with the tune.

Meanwhile, Stella had finally caught up to Jamie, as she sang...

*"She's a real nice girl, and she's always there for you.
But a nice girl wouldn't tell you what you should do."*

Appearing from a dressing room, several females, all spiffed up in their costumes and makeup, clapped along in time with the musicians, as Stella continued her lecture to Jamie, right up in his grill, as she sang, with the male quartet as her back up...

STELLA

*"Listen boy I'm sure that you think,
You've got it all under control.
You don't want somebody telling you,
The way to stay in someone's soul.
You're a big boy now and you'll never,
Let her go."*

MALE QUARTET

*"Dooby-dooby-do.
Do-do. Do-do-do
Dooby-dooby-do.
Do-do. Do-do-do
You wouldn't ever let
her go."*

As the group arrived in the wings of the theatre, Stella grabbed Jamie by the shoulders and pushed him into a chair on wheels. She looked him straight in the eyes and sang...

"But that's just the kind of thing she ought to know."

With one almighty thrust, Stella pushed Jamie and the chair out onto the stage. Awaiting Jamie on stage, the rest of the orchestra was in position, playing in time, as more cast members in costume, filed onto the stage from the wings.

Jamie's chair stopped rolling center stage, as he looked around at the spectacle that was unfolding, in what had inadvertently morphed into their sound check. Male and female dancers performed choreography around the stage, as lights flashed and swirled.

The song took flight into the chorus, with the full orchestra, while Stella continued her lecture, singing...

*"Tell her about it.
Tell her everything you feel.
Give her every reason,
To accept that you're for real.
Tell her about it,*

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*Tell her all your crazy dreams.
Let her know you need her,
Let her know how much she means."*

At the end of the chorus, Stella grabbed Jamie and his chair and briskly rolled him off stage, and into the wings.

A moment later, Stella, Jamie, and the chair all rolled into a makeup room backstage. Standing with makeup brushes poised, several makeup artists crowded around Jamie, applying makeup to his face, and a bald cap to his head, as Stella stood watching on, singing...

*"Listen boy it's good information,
From a girl who's made mistakes.
Just a word or two, that she gets from you,
Could be the difference that it makes.
She's a trusting soul,
She put her trust in you.
But a girl like that,
Won't tell you what you should do."*

Suddenly, Jamie waved his arms around, signaling them all to step back. With a frustrated look on his face, he looked up at Stella and said, "Alright. Enough already."

Jamie reached into his pocket, pulled out his phone, and began typing, "Of course, you can stay" into his phone and sent the message to Virginia. Stella smirked at him proudly, as the makeup artists recommenced work on his makeup and wig. Jamie slumped back in his chair, looking burdened.

CHAPTER TEN

“Movin’ Out”

In her bedroom, Virginia stood at the end of her bed, with her noise-canceling headphones around her neck, hurriedly throwing clothes into a bag as Elaine stormed into the room yelling, “Where do you think you are going!”

“The place you forbade me from going!” Virginia yelled back, without looking up, as she threw makeup and shoes into the bag.

Now even more furious, Elaine grabbed the handle of Virginia’s bag and tried to yank it away from Virginia.

“If you leave, you leave with nothing,” screamed Elaine.

“What kind of a mother are you?” snapped Virginia, as she used all her strength to snatch the bag from her mother’s grasp. With a defiant look, Virginia adjusted her headphones to cover her ears, before grabbing her iPhone from her pocket.

On the phone screen the album “Piano Man – Original cast recording” was displayed. Virginia scrolled down to track six – “Movin’ Out” and pressed play, as she forcefully barged past her much larger mother, who was standing in the doorway, blocking Virginia’s exit.

With the music now playing, Virginia made her way to the front door of the apartment. Opening the front door,

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Virginia pivoted slightly and saw her mother's mouth moving wildly, but due to the loud music, Virginia couldn't hear her mother at all. Virginia pointed at her headphones, mocking her mother, as she exited the room and slammed the door behind her, leaving Elaine in tears.

Back at the theatre, on stage, dancers dressed as a blue-collar family sat at a dining table in the 1970s silently acting out a scene, dealing with the pressures of getting ahead in life; stage left.

Stage right, Jamie played piano under a bright spotlight, as he sang...

"Anthony works in the grocery store.

Saving his pennies for someday.

Mama Leonie left a note on the door.

She said, 'sonny move out to the country'."

Out the front of her building, Virginia looked both ways as she stood on the dimly lit sidewalk, alone and scared. She took a deep breath and then tentatively walked towards a nearby bus stop.

Meanwhile, Jamie continued to play piano on stage, as the simultaneous scene on the other side of the stage played out. Despite his impeccable performance, there was something clearly on Jamie's mind as he sang...

"And it seems such a waste of time.

But that's what it's all about.

Mama if that's movin' up, then I'm movin' out."

As the song continued to play in Virginia's headphones, she now stood on the sidewalk facing the bustling 5th

Avenue. She looked straight ahead as cars whizzed past in both directions. With tears welling in her eyes, Virginia closed her eyes and started walking out onto the road.

Suddenly the sound of screeching tires grew louder and louder, as Virginia closed her eyes even tighter, bracing for impact. As the screeching stopped, a loud prolonged car horn rang out. Virginia slowly opened her eyes and glanced down to her left, where she saw the bumper of a yellow cab, only an inch from her left leg.

"Hey lady!" a male voice yelled, in a thick New York accent. "You on a death wish or sumpt'n?"

Virginia looked up to see a male cab driver hanging out his taxi window, glaring at her. Tears streamed down Virginia's face, as she stepped back to the safety of the curb, shaking uncontrollably.

Sitting outside the stage door of the Gershwin Theatre later that night, Virginia got to her feet as she saw Jamie exit the building. Jamie instinctively wrapped his arms around her as she burst into tears.

"It's going to be okay," Jamie said, in an encouraging tone, trying to convince both himself and Virginia.

Sat on Jamie's balcony late one night, Virginia mindlessly fiddled with the discolored leaves of a potted plant, staring out over the railing, as the song *Movin' Out* played on her iPhone, sitting on a small table beside her.

Interrupting the song, her phone beeped with a message. She opened the message and put it close to her face, where she saw that it was from her mother. The message simply read "You broke my heart." After reading the message, Virginia deleted it and put her phone back down on the table as she returned her gaze to the New York skyline.

Sitting at an outdoor table at a quaint downtown café one day, Stella and Jamie sat sipping coffee, as they observed tourists wandering by.

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"I can't believe you've gone from being a commitment phobe to having a live-in girlfriend," Stella remarked.

"Are you proud of me?" asked Jamie sarcastically.

"That depends. Does she know about Katie yet?" inquired Stella, knowing the answer.

Jamie began nervously fiddling with the sugar container on the table, trying to avoid eye contact with Stella.

"She's going to find out sooner or later," continued Stella.

"By later, you mean never," mumbled Jamie.

"She's a part of your life. Whether you like it or not!" Stella said forcefully.

"How 'bout not!" said Jamie in a definite tone. "She is a part of my past that I wish to forget."

Stella simply shook her head at Jamie.

A short time later, Jamie opened the front door of his apartment and looked around for any sign of Virginia. Almost instantly, he heard faint sobs coming from the bathroom. As he entered the bathroom, he saw Virginia hunched over the basin with her head in her hands, sobbing.

Walking over to Virginia, Jamie rubbed her back and asked, "What's wrong sweetie?"

Speaking through constant sobs, Virginia muttered, "I tried doing my makeup."

"You've never done it before?" inquired Jamie in a surprised tone.

"Mom always did it for me 'coz I couldn't see properly in the mirror," Virginia said.

"Let's have a look," said Jamie encouragingly, as he slowly stood Virginia upright and peeled her hands away from her face.

Having to hold back a smirk, upon seeing Virginia's face, Jamie said even more encouragingly, "It's not too bad."

Virginia then turned towards the mirror to look for herself. Unable to hold it in any longer, Jamie burst out laughing, just as Virginia too began laughing hysterically at her face.

If a clown or something from a Halloween costume party was the look Virginia was going for, then she nailed the brief. Patchy foundation, smeared eye-liner, blotchy mascara, and crooked lipstick, all contributed to the makeup disaster.

Once they had both regained their composure, which incidentally was after quite a few minutes of laughter, Jamie pulled out his phone from his pocket and dialed a number. After a brief pause, Jamie then said, "Hey. Can you come over and bring your makeup kit with you? Thanks."

A short time later, Stella watched on as Virginia stood close to a "10 x magnification mirror" sitting on the bathroom counter, as Virginia applied the final stroke of eyeliner to her eye with a stumpy eyeliner pencil.

Looking up smiling proudly, Virginia turned to Stella and said, "Thank you so much."

Just then, Jamie appeared in the doorway, ogling the mirror Stella brought with her.

"Man, that thing is awesome," exclaimed Jamie. "Imagine how big my dick would look in that."

Unimpressed, Stella grabbed a can of hairspray and pegged it at Jamie's head, only giving him a second to successfully duck out of the way, before he disappeared.

Once Jamie was gone, Virginia turned to Stella, and with a nervous look, asked, "Did you and Jamie ever..."

"...Date?" Stella cut in.

Looking somewhat conflicted, Stella added, "He's a great guy, but I wanted more than he was willing to give."

Over the following weeks, Virginia's independence, and her learning curve, now that she was out in the world on

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her own, shot up exponentially. Slowly but surely, she began to deal with having to do everything for herself, now that she was outside of the controlling presence of her mother.

At first, simple tasks such as cooking and cleaning were frustrating as she realized just how sheltered her life had been under her mother's control. The constant challenges Virginia had encountered led to many teary outbursts and moments of feeling helpless, and more worryingly; a burden on Jamie.

Surprisingly though, to both Jamie and Stella, Jamie's patience and support for Virginia was remarkable, as this once unlikely couple grew closer than anyone had expected, despite how upended their lives had become.

As time went on, Virginia missed their bus stop less often as she learned that most bus drivers would happily alert her to her stop if she prewarned them that she was legally blind.

She also learned that despite her disability, with the right encouragement from Jamie and with a little inventiveness, she was quite capable of doing most things visually abled people could do.

Even though it had been a while since Virginia had discovered that she could live a semi-normal life, that realization hit Jamie seemingly out of nowhere one summer's night.

As Jamie opened the front door of his apartment after an afternoon rehearsal on his usual Monday night off, he paused just inside the door as he surveyed the scene before him.

The first thing Jamie noticed was the incredible aroma of a cooked roast meal wafting from close proximity. With his tastebuds salivating in anticipation, Jamie scanned the room, finding surprises everywhere he looked.

Coming from the loungeroom soft music set a romantic mood in accompaniment with dimmed lights and candles

burning from carefully chosen vantage points around the room. As he moved towards the dining table he saw a perfectly set table with the most delectable-looking roast beef meal sat plated and strategically placed on opposite sides of the table.

As Jamie took it all in, the only piece missing from this perfect setting; Virginia, strolled into the room, immaculately dressed in a flowing dress, with her hair and makeup as gorgeous as ever. Smiling proudly, Virginia handed Jamie one of the glasses of wine that she was carrying as she welcomed him with a kiss.

Still speechless, Jamie simply stared at the beautiful young woman standing before him.

“Welcome home honey,” Virginia said with an adorable smile, as she took a moment to enjoy the shocked look on Jamie’s face.

Finally, after a sip of wine, Jamie asked apologetically, “Did you Grub hub all this?”

Glowing proudly, and not even slightly offended by Jamie’s question, Virginia simply said, “Nope. Did it all myself.”

Looking her up and down with a smile, Jamie then asked, referring to her hair, makeup, and outfit, “What about all this?”

“All me,” Virginia said with a smile. “I caught the bus to Fifth Avenue for the dress, did the shopping, came back, cooked dinner, did my hair and makeup, and,” then, presenting herself like a gameshow hostess said, “Voila!”

Completely gobsmacked, Jamie sat at the table and said, “All that, being legally blind?”

“You do realize there’s a difference between being blind and having sight with no vision, right?” Virginia said with a smile, as she sat opposite him.

Noticing Jamie’s stunned expression, Virginia explained, “It’s an old quote by Helen Keller.”

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Jamie smiled, staring at her, before exclaiming, “My God, you are inspiring,” with a look of wonderment in his eyes. “Sometimes I don’t feel worthy of you,” he continued with an unexpectedly insecure tone.

“A big Broadway star unworthy of little ole me? How is that possible?” Virginia asked.

“The result of one particular woman not wanting to love me,” said Jamie, as they stared into each other’s eyes.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

‘Light of Day’

Lunchtime on any given weekday at the Gershwin Theatre was usually when the production crew performed maintenance on the theatre or worked through any technical issues that may have arisen the night before. On this day, however, Jamie and some of the show’s musicians were on stage working on a new song that Jamie had written.

Jamie turned to the seven-piece-band, consisting of bass, drums, guitar, piano, and a three-horn section positioned behind him, as he held his guitar ready and counted them in, “one, two, three, four.”

Exploding to life, an up-tempo pop/rock number bellowed from on stage, as well as through the sound system, before Jamie began singing...

“I could climb the highest mountain.”

I could swim the widest seas.”

I could tame the wildest creature,”

But I can’t forgive what you did to me.”

The band rocked out and it was clear that the lyrics had real meaning to Jamie as he continued singing...

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*"I'm like a dog chasing its own tail.
Wonderin' what there is to gain.
It's like I'm walkin' 'round in circles.
I know I can't win this way."*

From the back of the theatre, under the cover of darkness, Stella quietly entered, accompanied by Katie Mitchell, slowly making their way down the aisle toward the stage.

About halfway down, Stella and Katie found a seat and quietly sat as the song hit the chorus. Just as Jamie was about to sing again, a loud sneeze echoed throughout the auditorium.

Hearing the sneeze, Jamie stopped playing immediately, as did the band; following Jamie's lead. Jamie shielded his eyes from the bright stage lights as he looked out into the auditorium to see who was there. Just then, Katie stepped forward into the aisle, just a few rows back from the stage, so that Jamie could see her.

With a snarl on his face, Jamie glared at Katie, then across at Stella, before tapping his foot to count in the band, "one, two, three, four," he said. Jamie then sang...

*"Seems like a million years since,
We went our separate ways."*

Jamie stormed off stage, still playing guitar, disappearing into the wings as he sang...

*"You said you can't return my love.
Said you didn't feel that way."*

Like a bull bursting from a rodeo gate, Jamie appeared

storming through the exit door at the side of the stage. He strode purposefully up the side aisle as he sang...

"I gave you all a boy could give."

Gave my heart and soul with it."

As Jamie approached Katie with his eyes firmly locked on her, he began circling her, with years of resentment in his eyes, as he played and sang...

"You said your love would last forever.

Promised me you'd leave me never."

The chorus once again kicked up a gear, but this time with Jamie staring at Katie, still circling like a lion about to unleash on its prey, singing...

"Oh, why can't I break free.

Give me all the strength I need.

Give me everything to face tomorrow.

Wash away my hurt and sorrow."

Finally breaking eye contact, Jamie stopped circling Katie and began striding up the aisle, towards the back of the theatre as he sang...

"Oh, won't you set me free?

The time has come; I've seen the light of day."

With one hand, Jamie pushed the door leading out into the foyer open and disappeared as his voice sang...

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"Its time to walk away."

Leaving Stella and Katie standing in the theatre, completely speechless.

Arriving home a short time later, still carrying his guitar in a way that suggested that he had been playing it all the way home, Jamie opened his front door in a much better mood than when he left the theatre.

As he walked in, he saw Virginia sitting on the balcony, talking on her phone, visibly upset. Jamie leaned his guitar against the couch and stepped out onto the balcony to hear Elaine's voice on loudspeaker say, "You broke my heart."

"You kicked me out!" yelled Virginia, into her phone.

Jamie stood silently as Elaine yelled, "I didn't want you seeing that guy."

"His name is Jamie and I love him, so it doesn't matter what you want," Virginia said passionately.

This information caught Jamie off guard, but none the less, it made him smile. Virginia aggressively ended the call and looked up at Jamie.

"Well, that was an interesting conversation to walk in on," said Jamie with a smirk.

"Which bit?" inquired Virginia, still showing the annoyance from her phone conversation.

"Well, the bit about you loving me was of particular interest," Jamie quipped.

"Surprise!" exclaimed Virginia, suddenly more light-hearted. "Not the way I had rehearsed that moment, but at least you know now."

Jamie led Virginia into the lounge room, where they sat on one of the couches.

"I know she has a problem with me being older, but she seems to be overreacting," Jamie said, as Virginia nodded in agreement.

"I think she just sees how glamorous your life is and thinks you'll eventually cast me aside," Virginia said.

"Glamorous?" Jamie asked. "Clearly she hasn't seen the years of training, audition after audition, weeks of rehearsals, and all the sacrifices."

Jamie leaned over and grabbed his acoustic guitar, placing it on his lap as Virginia said with a knowing smile, "This isn't one of your musicals where people burst into random song."

"That's how we roll baby!" proclaimed Jamie, as he began strumming the same four chords over and over on his guitar.

"It can be glamorous," Jamie said, "but it's mostly..." He broke off and began singing...

"One-star motels. Greasy food and hotels.

Gettin' around in a burnt-out van.

Back on the road, makin' money for the man."

Virginia smiled at Jamie and said, "You're such a show-pony." Jamie just smiled and continued to sing....

"Breakfast radio.

Hours on a bus, then another show.

Two hours sleep in a lumpy bed,

But everybody get up,

Coz here we go again."

Virginia rested her head on Jamie's shoulder as he continued singing...

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"That's just rock n roll.

Sometimes we felt like we'd sold our soul.

Albuquerque nightmare all over again.

Wondrin' if it would ever, ever end."

Jamie stopped singing and playing, at which point Virginia looked up at him and said with a smile, "Sounds pretty glamorous to me."

The following morning Virginia woke to the sound of running water coming from the shower in their bathroom. She rolled over in bed and noticed Jamie's phone silently flashing with an incoming call on the bedside table.

As she sat up in bed to look at the phone, her face dropped when she saw the name on the screen was Katie Mitchell. Presuming that Jamie knew Katie professionally, Virginia thought nothing of it, until a text message saying "It was so nice seeing you yesterday. I love you. Please forgive me" popped up on the phone screen a few seconds later.

Despite Virginia's trusting nature and naivety, curiosity got the better of her. She looked towards the bathroom and noticed the shower still running, then grabbed Jamie's phone and opened the message from Katie.

To her shock, this was not the only recent message from Katie. There were dozens of messages in the thread from Katie, all of which said things such as she loved him, she was sorry, and that she wanted Jamie in her life.

What was Katie sorry for? Did she cheat on Jamie? Leave him for another guy? Virginia didn't know, but either way, she became worried at this discovery.

Now quite visibly upset, Virginia opened the call log on Jamie's phone and to her shock, there were several missed calls from Katie over the recent weeks, all while Virginia and Jamie were not only dating but living together.

As tears welled in Virginia's eyes, she put the phone

down and opened the drawer of the bedside table on Jamie's side of the bed. Again, her face dropped at what she discovered in there. Full to the brim, were more little boxes than Virginia could count. She grabbed one of the boxes and held it very close to her face.

Virginia's heart sank as she realized that all the little boxes were Viagra. What was Jamie doing with all that Viagra, she thought? Did he need it? Did he use it with her? Or worse, did he use it with Katie or some other girl behind Virginia's back?

All of these thoughts visibly shook Virginia, but before she could think too much about it, the shower stopped running. She quickly put the box of Viagra back and closed the draw, before rolling back over and pretending to be asleep.

That evening, Virginia, and her fellow cheerleader Bianca, both dressed in their training gear, rode along on the subway train. Virginia stared out the train window, looking downtrodden.

"Are you still bummed about your mom?" asked Bianca.

"That. Plus, I found a stack of Viagra in Jamie's drawer, and he's been getting heaps of calls and messages from Katie Mitchell for some reason," Virginia said.

"You think he's cheating?" inquired Bianca.

Virginia simply shrugged.

"Katie's way too old for him," Bianca added, trying to reassure Virginia. "Why don't you just ask him?"

"And say what?" Virginia blurted out. "Am I that ugly that you need Viagra and some old cougar to satisfy you?"

Bianca chuckled at Virginia's reaction, asking, "Is the sex good?"

Virginia shot Bianca a stunned look, before replying, "Yeah. It's amazing."

"Then why does it matter if he uses Viagra? As long as he still rings your bell," said Bianca bluntly.

"But what about Katie?" asked Virginia, to which Bianca

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had no good answer, so she just shrugged.

Late that night, Virginia stood on the balcony of Jamie's apartment, looking straight ahead. She reached down and grabbed hold of the balcony railing with both hands, then leaned over and looked down at the street eleven floors below.

Slightly losing her breath, she gripped the railing tighter, before releasing her grip and slowly taking a step backward away from the railing.

In bed, Jamie rolled over, feeling around for Virginia, but her side of the bed was empty. He sat up and looked around, but couldn't see Virginia anywhere. He hopped out of bed and made his way out into the lounge room. Upon entering the lounge area, he spotted Virginia standing out on the balcony.

Jamie slowly walked towards her, not wanting to startle her. He whispered, "Vee," but she didn't respond. Finally, when he was right behind her, he placed a hand on her shoulder, causing her to jump a little.

"Vee. Are you okay?" Jamie asked.

Virginia turned to face Jamie, as tears began running down her cheeks. Jamie put his arm around her and slowly led her into the lounge room. He sat her down on the couch and sat beside her, before gently asking, "What's wrong sweetie?"

With tears still running down her cheeks, Virginia stared at Jamie, before finally answering, "I'm disappointing you, and I'm disappointing mom. I may as well just throw myself off the balcony."

If Jamie wasn't already seated, Virginia's comment would have floored him. He leaned in towards her, trying to remain calm for her.

"How are you disappointing me? Jamie asked.

"I saw your stash of Viagra," Virginia said matter-of-factly.

"I also saw all the missed calls and texts from Katie.

Unsure what to say, Jamie remained silent, but that only made Virginia feel worse, as she began crying even more.

"Is that what you want? Virginia asked, sobbing uncontrollably.

"An older woman?"

Still coming to terms with the situation, Jamie sat quietly, unable to articulate what he needed to say. Meanwhile, Virginia grew more hysterical as she asked, "Am I that ugly that you need Viagra to fuck me?"

Although not the ideal reaction, Jamie smirked at Virginia's comment, before he explained, "My mate is a pharmaceutical rep. He gave me the Viagra to test it out."

"How many times have you used it with me? snapped Virginia.

"None. I promise," said Jamie.

"Well, what about Katie? asked Virginia. "She must be at least twenty-five years older than you. Is that what you prefer?"

Jamie took a deep breath, realizing that he had to come clean. He grabbed Virginia's hands out in front of her and looked her in the eyes.

"You really want to know?" Jamie asked.

Virginia nodded.

Jamie wiped away her tears and began, "For starters, she's only eighteen years older than me. But that's not the point."

Jamie paused once again and took another deep breath, as the color began to drain from Virginia's face, as she feared the worst.

"Katie," Jamie said, pausing again, "Is my biological mother."

Virginia's sobs stopped instantly as she stared at Jamie in complete shock.

"She was eighteen when she had me, but she wanted so desperately to be on Broadway... the stage," Jamie said with a smirk, but Virginia didn't even smile at their "in" joke this time.

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“She gave me up for adoption as a baby,” Jamie continued. “I was born James Mitchell. Ever since my adopted parents both died, Katie has been trying to reconnect with me. That’s why she keeps calling and texting.”

“So, why didn’t you?” asked Virginia, now much calmer.

“I was way too angry,” Jamie conceded.

“I get it,” replied Virginia. “I’m angry at my mom too, but I’d give anything to have her in my life.”

Smiling broadly at Virginia, Jamie said, “There really is something special about you, isn’t there?”

This remark caused Virginia to smile for the first time that night.

CHAPTER TWELVE

“The Fall”

Sitting alone at the piano on stage, under a single light late at night, Jamie played a beautifully flowing melody as cleaners collected rubbish throughout the auditorium.

After a few bars, he stopped, grabbed a pencil from on top of the piano, then wrote a few musical notes on a blank piece of sheet music on the piano’s music stand, before commencing playing once again.

The piece Jamie played was light and romantic, which seemed to contradict the melancholy mood he appeared to be in. Appearing from the wings, Stella, still with her show makeup and eyelashes on, stopped just behind Jamie, smiling with adoration, before saying, “That is so beautiful.”

Jamie looked up at Stella as he continued playing, before proclaiming, “all done.”

Stella sat next to Jamie on the stool, as he grabbed the pencil and held it poised just above the piece of paper.

“Did you have a title?” Jamie asked.

“How ‘bout, The One,” Stella said, after a brief pause.

Jamie wrote “The One” at the top of the page, then handed the page to Stella. Sensing something was up with Jamie, Stella asked, “Is everything okay?”

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Jamie paused, reluctant to say too much, given his and Stella's past, before Stella prodded a little more by asking, "Is it, Virginia?"

"Not really," replied Jamie, although his tone wasn't too convincing. "Well. She did go through my phone and saw all the calls and texts from Katie. But that's not really the issue."

"She doesn't seem like the jealous type," remarked Stella in a surprised tone.

"She's not," said Jamie. "That's what worries me. I think she sensed me struggling emotionally with the whole situation."

Stella sat quietly, allowing Jamie to verbalize his thoughts.

"I'm all she's got now," Jamie added. "It's a lot of pressure."

Stella gently placed a hand on his shoulder and said, "Give it time. You're both adapting to a whole new set of circumstances. Just be patient. With her; and yourself."

Stella wrapped her arms around Jamie in a loving embrace, as he slowly let his head drop onto the top of the piano.

Arriving home at his apartment building a short time later, Jamie pulled his warm coat up to his neck as he entered the building. Standing at the security desk in the foyer, a young security guard named Gordon greeted Jamie with a smile.

"Good show tonight mister Broadway?" asked Gordon.

"No one booed, so that's a bonus," said Jamie with a grin, as he rushed towards the open door of a waiting elevator, before ducking inside.

Outside the front door of his apartment a moment later, Jamie swiped his security fob and opened the front door. As the door swung open, Jamie spotted Virginia standing behind the piano with his laptop open and a flash drive in her hand.

Virginia's face dropped when she saw Jamie. She quickly slammed the laptop shut and dropped the flash drive,

with a petrified look on her face. Jamie slowly walked over to the piano, not losing eye contact with Virginia. Jamie leaned over to open the laptop as Virginia squeaked, “I’m sorry baby.”

Jamie opened his laptop, and his face dropped, as he saw the file with his list of girls’ names on the screen.

“Baby, please. I’m sorry,” said Virginia once more, as she reached out to grab Jamie’s hand.

“I don’t want to hear it,” snapped Jamie, as he pushed her hand away.

“Pack your shit,” he said furiously, before storming into the bedroom, and slamming the door shut, as Virginia burst into tears.

Inside the bedroom, Jamie threw himself backward onto the bed. As he lay there trying to slow his now heavy breathing, he muttered to himself, “What is wrong with me?” before Stella’s voice came to him saying, “Just be patient. With her and yourself.”

Out of the silence, a blood-curdling scream that was clearly Virginia’s rang out. Jamie sat bolt upright at the sound of her scream. Instantly he got to his feet and raced to the bedroom door, flinging it open.

Four floors down in the same building, a middle-aged woman was sitting on her balcony smoking a cigarette when Virginia’s body flew past her in a vertical position. The woman sat up in her chair as if she had imagined what she had just seen when a loud bang echoed from below. The woman ran over to the balcony railing and peered over it to see Virginia’s body lying on the glass awning, one floor above street level.

From the twentieth floor, a couple leaned over their balcony, only to see several people also leaning over their balconies between them and the glass awning below, trying to see what had caused the loud bang.

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Moments later, down at street level, Jamie burst through a fire escape, incoherently babbling into his phone.

“Girlfriend. Fell. Send an ambulance,” Jamie stuttered in a panicked voice.

He ran over to below the glass awning. He looked up and saw Virginia lying on the other side of the now badly shattered glass. What looked like blood was smeared between the shattered glass and Virginia’s body.

Jamie began frantically looking around for a way up onto the awning, when out of the same fire escape came Gordon the security guard.

“Is that Virginia?” asked Gordon.

Noticing Jamie’s attempts to climb up a lattice wall attached to the building to get to Virginia, Gordon grabbed Jamie’s arm and dragged him back into the fire escape.

Shortly afterward, Gordon and Jamie; with his phone still pressed to his ear, appeared from the fire escape on the first-floor landing. Gordon ran over to a nearby apartment door and banged hard on it. After a moment, he grabbed his master fob, swiped it, and swung the apartment door open.

As the door opened into the apartment, an elderly Asian woman recoiled as Gordon flashed his security badge, then ran towards the balcony doors, closely followed by Jamie.

Out on the balcony, Jamie and Gordon climbed over the balcony rail and down onto the glass awning, a few feet below.

Gordon carefully crawled across the awning towards Virginia as he said to Jamie, “You relay info to the emergency services.” Jamie stood shaking, surveying the scene, as Gordon checked Virginia for vital signs.

Virginia’s body was laying perpendicular to the building, with her feet closest to the building and her head furthest away. The blood was now pooling around her head and backside, both of which had left deep indentations in the glass.

Listening to his phone, Jamie then said to Gordon, "Check for breathing."

Gordon lowered his right ear down to Virginia's nose and mouth until it was almost touching her.

"There seems to be breath," said Gordon.

Jamie relayed that information to the operator on the phone, then knelt next to Virginia and placed a hand on her leg.

"It's gonna be okay baby," Jamie said to Virginia, unconvincingly.

As Gordon checked Virginia for a pulse, Mark, the building manager, and two paramedics arrived on the first-floor apartment balcony. The paramedics climbed down onto the glass awning, as Mark said to Jamie and Gordon, "Come back up here where it's safer guys."

Hesitantly, Jamie and Gordon climbed back up onto the first-floor balcony, as the paramedics slowly moved Virginia away from the edge of the awning and into a more parallel position, so they could work on her more safely.

Back in the Asian lady's apartment on the first floor, Gordon led Jamie back out into the foyer area, then into an elevator, as the gravity of the situation began sinking in for Jamie.

Only a couple of minutes after that, Jamie emerged from the building looking very somber, as he walked around to the awning to see how the paramedics were going treating Virginia.

To Jamie's shock, when he looked up, he did not see the paramedics working on Virginia at all. Instead, he saw her body covered with a white sheet and the paramedics now standing on the Asian lady's balcony talking to Mark the building manager.

Even though he hadn't fully comprehended what he was looking at, Jamie let out a huge wail, as he collapsed onto

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his knees on the pavement. He collapsed further onto his hands screaming uncontrollably, as a Police Officer knelt beside Jamie to console him.

Over the ensuing hours, Jamie attended the nearby Police station where he was subjected to a DNA test, including full-body analysis, and fingerprinting, before he sat down with Detective Diane Harrison and gave her a formal statement.

While all of that was going on, back at Jamie's apartment, Detective Marco Daley grabbed the flash drive from Jamie's piano, as a forensic photographer took photos of Jamie's apartment, and the balcony, while other forensic officers dusted all the surfaces for prints.

Down on the glass awning, another forensic photographer took photos of Virginia's body, as well as the damaged glass awning.

Just after midnight, Police Officers knocked on Elaine's apartment door. After a moment, a disorientated Elaine answered the door, wearing a long dressing gown.

"Missus Rodwell?" asked a male police officer.

"Yes," replied Elaine, in a confused tone.

"May we come in and have a word?" continued the officer.

Elaine led the officers inside, at which point they explained the events of the evening. Elaine collapsed onto the floor, as the police officers tendered to her in an inconsolable state.

After hours of interrogation and no sleep, a bleary-eyed Jamie made his way along a corridor of the police station. Passing Jamie, headed in the opposite direction was Marco.

After Jamie had passed, Marco turned and stared menacingly at Jamie, before slipping into the commander's office.

Inside the office, Commander Jackson sifted through paperwork, before hearing a knock at the door. Commander Jackson looked up to see Marco standing in the doorway.

"What can I do for you Detective?" asked the commander.

"I'd like to be assigned to the Rodwell case sir," replied Marco.

"I don't think you can be impartial enough," said Commander Jackson bluntly.

"But sir," Marco pleaded. "I know a bio-mechanics expert who could determine if she jumped or was thrown."

The commander looked curiously over the top of his glasses at Marco.

"You think it was foul play?" Commander Jackson cautiously enquired. "Detective Harrison seems to think it was suicide."

"There's only one way to find out sir," said Marco.

After careful consideration, the commander leaned back in his chair and said, "I will allow you to assist Detective Harrison. But everything must go through her. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes sir," said Marco, as he turned and left the commander's office.

In the very early hours of the morning, Jamie slowly made his way along the street as the first signs of daylight appeared over the horizon. Nearing his apartment building, Jamie's breathing began to quicken in anticipation of what might lay ahead.

At the front of his building, Jamie curiously looked up at the awning. Breathing heavily, he looked along the awning, spotting the two shattered glass panels, but saw no sign of Virginia.

He stared up at the awning for a moment, focusing mostly on the blood-stains that were still prominent, before trudging inside the building.

As he slowly opened the front door of his apartment a few moments later, Jamie's eyes scanned the room for any sign of Virginia. He stepped inside the door. Like a building collapsing on top of him, the magnitude of the events of the previous night hit him as he collapsed onto the floor crying.

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Several hours later, Jamie lay in his darkened bedroom, where only a slither of light pierced a small gap in the closed curtains. Jamie's face was red, and his eyes were swollen. As he lay staring at the wall, his phone which was sitting on his bedside table, flashed silently with an incoming call.

Jamie's head moved ever-so-slightly so he could see that it was Stella calling. He reached over to decline the call before his eyes slowly closed.

At some stage thereafter, possibly a couple of days, or maybe even a week later, judging by the number of empty pizza boxes on the bedside table, and Jamie's much longer facial hair, Jamie lay asleep in bed.

A loud knock from the distant front door broke the silence. Jamie slowly opened his eyes, raised his head slightly, then went back to sleep.

Outside Jamie's apartment, Stella stood with a frustrated look on her face. She banged forcefully on Jamie's front door. After a moment, she looked down at her handbag, plunged her hand inside, and pulled out a security fob, attached to a key tag labeled, "fuck-face's front door."

Looking slightly guilty, Stella swiped the fob on the panel beside the door, exclaiming to herself, "I bet the prick forgot he gave me this," as she swung the door open and entered the apartment.

Stella surveyed the mess of epic proportions in front of her, which was once Jamie's lounge room. Empty alcohol bottles, pizza containers, and fast-food wrappers were strewn all over the place, giving the appearance that either Jamie had lost the will to live, or a pack of zoo monkeys had ransacked the place.

Stella made her way across the room and into Jamie's bedroom where she was met with a similar mess. She stood staring at Jamie sleeping for a moment, then walked over to the closed curtains and flung them open, letting in a burst of bright sunlight.

“What are you doing?” wailed Jamie from under the covers.

“Being a good friend,” Stella retorted. “Now get up.”

Stella yanked the covers right off the bed, then stood glaring at Jamie as he squinted up at her.

“A good friend would let me suffer in peace,” muttered Jamie.

“You think that’s what Vee would want?” snapped Stella, staring incredulously at him.

“That’s a low blow,” exclaimed Jamie, but Stella just stared at him.

Later that same day, Jamie wandered down a busy city street carrying a coffee and a small plastic shopping bag. As he walked along, his attention was frequently drawn to couples walking in the opposite direction. Jamie intently watched each couple as they passed. Of particular attention to Jamie was the couple’s hand-holding, kissing, and other public displays of love.

Jamie’s eyes welled up as his recent loss flooded back to him. Just then his phone rang. He looked at the screen, wiped his eyes, and answered the call.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

“For Eternity”

Jamie seemed agitated as he spoke aggressively into his phone, saying, “That’s fine if you don’t want me there Elaine, but you kicked her out with nothing, so what gives you the right to demand her stuff back?”

He shook his head as he listened while walking, before adding, “Well I donated it all to charity.” He paused, before saying, “Yes Elaine. Even her cheerleading jacket,” as he glanced down at the plastic bag he was carrying.

Jamie stopped outside a picture and framing shop and tapped his foot impatiently, while once again listening on the phone, before finally saying, “Goodbye Elaine,” before abruptly ending the call.

He placed his phone back in his pocket and then walked inside the framing shop. Once inside the shop, Jamie walked over to the counter pulled Virginia’s cheerleading jacket from the plastic bag, and spread it out on the counter.

He stared emotionally down at the jacket as a soft female voice asked, “How can I help?”

Jamie looked up from the jacket to see a female shop assistant standing in front of him. With glassy eyes, Jamie said, “I’d like to frame this please.”

“How would you like it framed?” asked the shop assistant.

“It doesn’t matter,” said Jamie in an uncaring tone.

The assistant, noticing Jamie’s emotional state then asked, “Are you sure? Because the way you frame something can make a huge difference to how it looks.”

With a hint of a smirk, Jamie glanced towards the roof of the shop momentarily, as the gravity of her comment sunk in.

“What would you suggest?” asked Jamie, returning his focus to the shop assistant.

The next day Jamie and Stella sat on his balcony quietly admiring the view. Jamie glanced across at his potted plant. His face contorted as he noticed that it was now pretty much just a bunch of sticks due to fall setting in. He thought that he could easily empathize with the plant at that stage of his life.

“When is the funeral?” Stella asked, breaking the silence.

“Two P.M. tomorrow,” replied Jamie in a somber tone.

“I’ll go with you,” Stella added supportively.

“Her mom doesn’t want me there,” Jamie remarked regretfully.

“She can’t stop you!” snapped Stella.

“No, but do I really want to turn her funeral into a circus?” Jamie calmly said.

Softening her facial expression, Stella saw the logic in Jamie’s argument.

“I think there’s a better way to honor her,” Jamie said.

With his head lowered Jamie spotted the word “LOVE” tattooed in red on the inside of Stella’s left wrist.

“Since when did you have a tattoo?” he asked.

Stella licked her right index finger, then gently rubbed the red ink on her wrist, removing a small part of the word.

“It’s just pen,” she said. “Writing the word love on

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your inside wrist, or wearing yellow, signifies that you or someone you know has either committed suicide or has had suicidal thoughts.”

Jamie looked Stella up and down, noticing for the first time that she was wearing a yellow top. His head snapped up to Stella’s face. “Wait a minute! Have you tried to commit suicide?” he asked in a concerned tone.

“No. No!” Stella quickly remarked. “Just doing my bit to raise awareness for...” Stella broke off.

Jamie looked back at the tattoo on Stella’s wrist, pondering.

The following day, Jamie stood in front of his bathroom mirror, deep in thought. He looked down at his left wrist, then lifted his right hand which was holding a red marker.

Pausing, he stared at his left wrist, before writing the word “LOVE” on the inside of his wrist. He held his wrist up to the mirror, looking curiously at the writing in the reflection.

He lowered his wrist, then wrote “VEE” in front of the word love. His eyes narrowed as he once again looked at his wrist, then he licked his finger and rubbed off the “VEE”, leaving only the word LOVE.

He then wrote “EV” in front of LOVE. Once again, he held his wrist up to the mirror, with a knowing smile on his face. He tilted his head slightly, then smiled broadly, recognizing that the letters “EVLOVE” backward spelled “EVOLVE”.

At precisely 2 pm that afternoon Jamie was sat at his piano, with the balcony curtains behind him wide open, as he stared blankly at the piano keys. With his hands hovering over the keys, seemingly frozen, he remembered Virginia’s words, “When I close my eyes, I somehow see more clearly.”

A single tear formed in Jamie’s eye, before he let out a sigh, then closed his eyes. Pausing, his head perfectly still, Jamie’s fingers gently fell onto the piano keys, playing a beautiful, sustained chord, as he sang...

"A tear in my eye."

He paused. With his eyes still closed, he played another sustained chord and sang...

"I'm lost for words to say."

Once again, he paused, before playing a third chord and singing...

"You whisper you love me."

This time, pausing for much longer, Jamie played one last chord and sang...

"But you have to go away."

Jamie then opened his tear-filled eyes as he began playing fluently while singing...

"I fall to my knees and beg.

Lady please don't leave.

I never knew a love like this before.

Look me in the eye, it's plain to see."

As he closed his eyes once again and played the chorus of the song, Jamie was transported through his mind to a quaint little church on the Upper West Side. In his mind, Jamie was slowly walking down the church nave towards an open coffin, as his voice sang...

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*"Don't go away.
I need you here with me.
With my hand on my heart I promise,
I will love you for eternity.
You know how hard I've tried.
I still can't say goodbye.
It's written in the stars I love you,
For eternity."*

From Jamie's point of view, he reached the end of the nave, looked down at the open coffin, and saw Virginia lying inside it. He slowly reached down and gently held her hand, as his voice sang...

*"I miss you already.
Still feel your hand in mine."*

Jamie's mind then drifted off to their kiss on the Gapstow bridge, as his voice sang...

*"My mind is slippin' away,
To another place and time.
You smiled at me, and you said your love will always linger."*

As Jamie's dream returned to the church, his gaze was firmly on Virginia's face as he sang...

*"You're still smilin' today,
But the light in your eye is a little bit dimmer."*

Back in his lounge room, Jamie opened his eyes as he sang the chorus. He stared straight ahead as he sang with such emotion...

*"Don't go away.
I need you here with me.
With my hand on my heart I promise,
I will love you for eternity.
You know how hard I've tried.
I still can't say goodbye.
It's written in the stars I love you,
For eternity."*

With tears now streaming down Jamie's face, the song came even more to life, as it hit the middle-eight, with Jamie singing with all his heart...

*"Please don't go.
Don't leave me alone.
With so many questions left unknown."*

The emotion of it all became too much for Jamie, as he collapsed onto the piano keys howling.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

“Another Night”

Late one afternoon, Detective Marco Daley sat at his desk in a contemplative state. He grabbed a flash drive that was taken from Jamie’s apartment and inserted it into his computer. As the folder opened on his desktop, he clicked on a file titled “Jamie’s Girls.”

The Excel file opened and Marco’s eyes widened. Staring at the list of names, he moved his mouse, then scrolled... and scrolled....and scrolled until he eventually reached the bottom of the list. His head dropped as he read Virginia’s name at the very bottom of the list.

After a moment, he hit print on the file. Seconds later, page after page appeared on the printer tray. He briefly sifted through them, then folded them up and placed them in his jacket pocket, before standing and exiting the office.

Backstage at the theatre, Stella, in full costume, and holding a piece of sheet music, made her way into the orchestra pit below the stage. She navigated several members of the orchestra as she approached Malcolm, the conductor, standing at the front of the orchestra pit.

Malcolm smiled upon seeing Stella. She handed him the sheet music which we now recognize as “The One.”

“This is the song I was talking about,” Stella said.

“You want full orchestration?” inquired Malcolm, as he glanced down at the music.

“Cow horns, and barking dogs. The whole shebang,” said Stella with a smile. “Remember. Not a word to anyone.”

Malcolm winked and gave Stella a knowing smile, as she left the orchestra pit.

Sitting on Virginia’s bed, sorting through her daughter’s things, Elaine picked up a photo of Virginia cheerleading. She stared at the photo, and tears streamed down her face as she remembered how much Virginia loved to dance.

A knock at the front door of the apartment startled Elaine. She wiped away her tears, hopped up, and made her way to the door. As she opened the door, Elaine’s jaw dropped as she saw Marco standing in the doorway, forcing somewhat of a guilty smile.

Quick as she could, Elaine slammed the door shut, but Marco managed to wedge his foot in between the door and the door frame before Elaine could get it fully closed.

“Ouch,” exclaimed Marco. “That hurt.”

“Good,” snapped Elaine, partially satisfied.

“Elaine, please. Our daughter just died,” said Marco.

With few options, Elaine reluctantly let go of the door, allowing Marco to remove his squashed foot. Elaine trudged over to the couch and flopped onto it, as Marco followed her into the lounge and sat on an adjoining couch.

“I thought that useless woman was in charge of Virginia’s case,” Elaine muttered.

“She is,” Marco said, “but if I can prove Jamie has a history of treating women badly, then I can get him charged and take over the case.”

“Well treating women badly is your area of expertise,” snapped Elaine, as she grabbed her wrist, flexing it like it again, and wincing in pain.

“I’m surprised your loyalties don’t lie with his family, to be honest,” Elaine added.

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“That’s uncalled for Elaine,” said Marco, as he reached inside his jacket pocket and pulled out the printed pages. He unfolded the pages and handed them to Elaine.

“This is a list Jamie kept of all the women he slept with,” said Marco.

“So, he’s a slut. How does that help?” asked Elaine.

“If we show this to a female jury, he’ll be toast,” said Marco.

“Look. I want that family punished more than anyone, but that’s a long bow to draw, don’t you think?” stated Elaine.

“Why don’t you leak the list to TMZ and let them ruin his career?”

“Not good enough,” snapped Marco.

Elaine slumped back into the chair, staring incredulously at Marco.

“What?” inquired Marco.

“I want to know why it is that you suddenly have an interest in your daughter now she’s dead when you’ve wanted nothing to do with us for the last few years,” inquired Elaine.

Marco diverted his gaze away from Elaine as even he thought it a valid question.

The following morning, Jamie emerged from his kitchen, finished his coffee, then grabbed his guitar and flung the strap over his shoulder, before heading out the door. As he hopped in the elevator a moment later, he glanced at the elevator clock, which displayed the time as “0900”.

Looking up at a speaker on the roof of the elevator, Jamie listened intently to an instrumental version of the Doobie Brother’s song, “Listen to the Music.” With his interest piqued Jamie swung his guitar around the right way and began strumming the same famous riff.

As the elevator door swung open on the ground floor, Jamie stepped out, still paying the same riff as he strode

across the foyer, oblivious to those around him watching with dismay. Out on the street, Jamie hung a left around a corner and had a double-take, thinking that he saw Virginia.

Jamie stopped walking, but continued playing, then watched the woman disappear before he once again set off down the street singing...

*"It's nine a.m. I wander down my street.
Turned the corner, then you walk my way.
Seemed like so long since I've seen your face."*

Jamie continued walking. His mind drifted to Virginia's funeral, where he was looking at her face in the coffin. He sang...

*"You're not the same girl that I knew back then.
Some would say that I'm the one to blame.
Your once gorgeous face, it now shows the pain."*

Now, standing beside Stella in an expansive rehearsal room, Jamie leaned over a piano, as a pianist played the same tune, while dancers rehearsed in time, in front of large floor-to-ceiling mirrors.

In front of Jamie and Stella, a piece of sheet music with the title, "Virginia – The Musical" lay on the piano, as they both sang in harmony...

*"Another night. Another day.
Every time I turn around, I see your face.
Another time in another place.
The time's not right for us right now,
But maybe – someday."*

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After singing the last line, Stella discreetly glanced across at Jamie, with a sincere smile.

Back in the recording studio, a forty-piece orchestra played an incredible version of the song, as Jamie stood in the vocal booth singing...

*"I've tried to move on, but I still remember,
The way we used to love and used to laugh.
But it's over now, forever in the past."*

Jamie had a flashback of Virginia's makeup disaster and the two of them laughing hysterically at it, as he sang...

*"If I could have my time just once again.
There's probably not that much that I would change."*

Jamie had another flashback; this time of him swatting Virginia's hand away and him storming out of the room on the final night of her life. Back to reality, he sang...

"But those memories, just won't go away."

On stage at the Gershwin Theatre, Jamie, Stella, and their entire cast were now in the throws of a full-dress, and technical rehearsal, with lavish sets and costumes, as Jamie and Stella then sang...

*"Another night. Another day.
Every time I turn around, I see your face.
Another time in another place."
The time's not right for us right now,
But maybe – someday."*

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

“The Charge / Longest Time”

In the very early hours of the next morning, Jamie was awoken by a loud banging on his front door. He sat up, looking around in the darkness, unsure if he had dreamt the sound. As he was about to lie back down, another loud banging came from the direction of his front door. Jamie sleepily climbed out of bed and made his way to the front door.

As Jamie opened the front door, his eyes narrowed with confusion. Standing in front of him was Detective Marco Daley, along with two plain-clothed detectives.

“Mister Broadway,” Marco began. “You’re under arrest for the murder of Virginia Rodwell.”

“You’re fucking kidding me?” said Jamie, stunned and still half asleep.

Unfortunately for Jamie, they were not kidding, as no sooner had Marco told Jamie he was under arrest, the other two detectives were handcuffing Jamie. Marco began reading Jamie the Miranda Rights as the other two detectives led him toward the elevator.

Sitting cross-legged on her couch eating breakfast a few hours later, Stella received a text message on her phone. Her eyes widened and her jaw dropped as she read the message. No sooner had she read the message, another

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text came through, this time with a link to a news story.

Stella clicked on the link and as she saw what it was about, she began shaking. The news story was about Jamie being arrested for murder. Stella quickly dialed a number on her phone as she hopped up from the couch and grabbed her coat and handbag.

In a dreary, graffiti-stained cell, Jamie sat on the floor with his head in his hands in one corner, while three black prisoners, (Jacko, Robbo, and Coxy) sat glaring at Jamie, while Pauly, a white prisoner, lay staring at the ceiling, trying to read some of the graffiti scratched into the roof. Robbo's eyes narrowed, looking at Jamie.

"Dat's where I seen ya before," Robbo said. "You dat dude on the billboard in Times Square who does tha singin' 'n' dancin'."

Jamie nervously smirked.

"I wish I could sing," said Jacko.

Jamie perked up, smiling.

"I bet I could teach you," Jamie said, becoming more like his usual cocky self.

"You'd have more chance getting' ma dinner off me," said Jacko in a menacing tone.

"If you can walk; you can dance, and if you can talk; you can sing," Jamie said.

"If that was the case, I'd be Pavarotti," exclaimed Coxy.

"Almost all the greatest four-part harmony groups were black," Jamie said. "It's in your genes."

"Well," said Jacko, standing to stretch his legs. "We've got nothing else to do while we're stuck in this shithole. Let's see whatcha got, Broadway boy."

Jamie and the other three slowly got to their feet.

Meanwhile, Chris Hannon, a tall, charismatic middle-

aged man wearing an expensive suit, with a large bundle of paperwork under his left arm, confidently strode down the snow-sodden street, talking on his phone.

“Don’t worry,” Chris said. “I’ll make him see some sense.”

Chris arrived at the back entrance of the watchhouse, pressed a buzzer on the wall, and waited.

“I’ll text you when we’re on our way out, so you can meet us at my office,” said Chris, before hanging up the phone.

Back in the bulk holding cell, Jamie and the four other detainees were now enthusiastically huddled in the middle of the cell. Jamie glanced around the group.

“You ready?” Jamie asked.

The other men all nodded.

Jamie turned to Robbo and hummed an A-Sharp note. Robbo sang...

“Dm dm dm.”

Jamie and the others followed suit, clicking their fingers while singing in four-part harmony...

“Woah, oh, oh, oh. (For the longest) For the longest time.

Woah, oh, oh, oh. (For the longest) For the longest time.”

While the others continued with their harmonies, Jamie took the lead, singing...

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JAMIE

"If you said goodbye to me tonight.

"There would still be music left to write.

"What else could I do.

"I'm so inspired by you.

"That hasn't happened,"

DETAINEES

"Oo, oo, oo, oo, oo.

Oo, oo, oo, oo, oo.

Ah, ah, ah.

Ah, ah, ah.

Ah, ah, ah."

The group all looked at each other, smiling, then sang in harmony...

"For the longest time."

With a loud bang, the cell door flew open. Jamie and the other detainees all stopped singing and looked towards the door.

Standing in the doorway, a burly-looking prison guard, glared at Jamie.

"Broadway," the guard said. "You've got a visitor."

"Visitor?" inquired Jamie.

The guard simply nodded towards the corridor, indicating that he didn't have time to answer questions.

Looking annoyed that their vocal jam session was abruptly interrupted, the other inmates turned and sat on the steel bench seat fixed to the floor. With a shocked expression, Jamie made his way over to the cell door and exited.

A short time later, Jamie sat dejected in a bland-looking interview room at the watch house, trying to come to terms with the situation. Without warning, the door to the room flung open, and Chris Hannon stood in the doorway smiling.

"Chris Hollywood Hannon. Hannon lawyers," Chris said, extending his hand to shake Jamie's hand.

"Hollywood?" asked Jamie, in a confused tone.

"I like the sound of it, don't you? But I'm only playing," Chris said, as he sat at the table, opposite Jamie.

"Your mom asked me to come and see you."

"What the fuck does she want?" snapped Jamie.

"To see you released. That's it," Chris fired back.

"And how's she going to do that?" asked Jamie in a less than impressed voice.

"By putting up one million dollars for your bail," Chris calmly added, as he flicked through the paperwork, now spread out between him and Jamie.

"Look. I know your relationship with her is strained, but let's get you out of here, then worry about that."

Later that day, Jamie emerged from the watchhouse, escorted by Chris, as a pack of eager reporters rushed towards them with a barrage of indistinguishable questions. As Chris led Jamie down the steps to a waiting black SUV with dark-tinted windows, Chris said to the media scrum, "Mister Broadway won't be answering any questions at this stage."

Standing by the SUV, a burly-looking security guard opened the car door and ushered Jamie and Chris inside, before the car sped off, leaving the reporters on the sidewalk.

A short time later, Jamie and Chris made their way along a corridor of an immaculately decorated law office, before turning into a doorway. As Jamie stepped into a lavish boardroom with a large mahogany boardroom table, he froze at the sight of Stella and Katie sitting across the table.

With his stare locked in on Katie and years of resentment in his eyes, Jamie barked, "What the fuck is she doing here?"

"Jamie!" snapped Stella.

"It's okay Stella," interjected Katie in a calm voice. "He has every right to be angry."

Jamie's simmering anger didn't wane as he stared at her

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and sarcastically said, "So you think money can fix what you did?"

"No," said Katie, refusing to get upset. "But it's what was needed right now."

A little less angry, but not yet forgiving either, Jamie asked, "So, why now?"

Katie looked Jamie directly in the eyes and with her eyes becoming slightly glassy said, "Not a day has gone by that I haven't regretted that decision I made all those years ago."

Katie then reached across the table, grabbing Jamie's hands as she continued. "But more importantly, because I know you're innocent."

Surprising everyone in the room, Jamie didn't pull his hands away from Katie's grasp.

"I don't know what the future holds for us, but I will do whatever it takes, no matter what tomorrow brings," Katie said.

The next morning, Jamie stepped out of his apartment building wearing a cap, hoodie, and dark sunglasses. He briskly walked down the busy street, trying not to get noticed.

As he arrived at a newsstand his jaw dropped. Looking along all the newspapers on the stand, every single one had his face plastered across the front cover, each one with a headline referring to him being a murderer. Jamie quickly pulled his cap further down over his face and scurried off down the street.

A little further on, Jamie stopped across the street from the Gershwin Theatre. He watched as a workman replaced the poster of him next to the box office with a poster of his understudy, as other workers replaced his name on the marquee atop the building with the new male lead's name.

Jamie sighed, resigned to the fact that this was how things were going to be from now on. He, as an outcast, as the world celebrated his fall from grace.

In a quaint little café downtown, Stella and Katie sat

drinking coffee, when Stella piped up by saying, "I just wish he'd let go of this stupid resentment and let you in."

"He's not ready to stop blaming me yet," said Katie.

"Well, it's about time he blamed you for all the good things too," remarked Stella.

"What do you mean?" inquired Katie.

"If it wasn't for you and what you did, he wouldn't have become half the performer he is," Stella said. "Plus, he has this burning desire to be more famous than you. Just to prove a point."

"Oh honey," said Katie with a smile. "He achieved that long ago.

"Well, I'm going to talk some sense into him," affirmed Stella.

"You're a good friend, Stella," said Katie, noticing Stella's suddenly flushed cheeks. "You are just friends, right?"

Judging by the overwhelming glow now engulfing Stella's face, the answer was obvious.

Late at night, Marco sat at his desk, examining two large photographs. In his left hand, the photo showed two bowed and shattered panes of glass running in a perpendicular direction relative to the building.

In his right hand, the photo illustrated Virginia's body lying parallel to the building, covered with a white sheet. Marco placed the second photo down on the desk, picked up a recording device, and spoke into it.

"The photo on file for Doctor Clinger to base his bio-mechanical report on clearly shows the body lying in a parallel position relative to the building. Please base all analysis on this photo only."

Marco stopped recording and placed the recorder, along with the photo he was holding on the desk. He then picked up the photo of the two shattered panes of glass and tore it into several small pieces, before throwing them all in the bin under his desk.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

“Box of Chocolates”

Standing in the dining room of his apartment, and now sporting a full beard, Jamie sifted through a box of his belongings from the theatre. Sitting on the table was his name plaque from his dressing room door, along with some makeup.

Jamie pulled out a few photos from the box and stared at them thoughtfully. Interrupting his thoughts, the sound of letters being slid under the door caught his attention. Jamie put down the photos and walked over to the door, bending down and grabbing three envelopes, just inside the apartment.

As he walked back to the table, he opened one. Unfolding the paper inside, he discovered it was a phone bill for \$80.43. He opened the other two envelopes to find two more bills for \$120 & \$200. He sighed, looking at the bills, then exclaimed, “That’s almost four hundred bucks I’m not earning,” before pinning all three bills to the fridge using a magnet.

Determined to lift his mood, Jamie pulled on a jacket, put a beanie on his head, and grabbed his guitar, along with the scripts that Stella gave him, then headed out the door.

A short while later, Jamie crossed 57th Street towards the entrance to Central Park, carrying his guitar, scripts, and the

addition of a large takeaway coffee. As he stopped at the entrance gate, his shoulders dropped, and his body relaxed at the thought of his new environment.

After meandering through Central Park for a while, Jamie found an empty park bench and sat. He placed his coffee cup on the ground in front of him, and the scripts on the bench beside him. He looked around for a moment, then started strumming the same four chords over and over on his guitar.

As he tapped his foot in time, he accidentally kicked over his coffee cup. He looked down at the cup, not fussed, as it was almost empty anyway. Unsure of what he was going to sing about, he glanced down at the scripts sitting beside him for inspiration. On the top of the pile was the script for *Back to the Future*, so with a cheeky smile and the same four chords on repeat, he sang...

*"If I could travel back in time.
I'd be just like that Marty McFly.
Power my flux-capacitor 1.21 gigawatts.
November the 12th 1955."*

Just then, a mother and daughter strolling along, stopped and watched intently. A couple also curiously watched on, while another man walked over, stood Jamie's coffee cup up, and threw a handful of coins into it, thinking that Jamie was busking.

Jamie smirked realizing that no one recognized him, as he sang...

*"Life is like a box of chocolates.
You never know whatcha gonna get."*

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You could be a shrimp boat captain baby.

Or you could meet the president.

And don't you ever call me stupid."

Just then the wife of the couple said, "Stupid is as stupid does," to the amusement of Jamie and the growing crowd, as Jamie continued...

"And life is like a box of chocolates.

Where are you Jenny, my love."

As Jamie looked down, a small gust of wind blew the top script onto the ground, revealing the script for The Wizard of Oz. He paused thoughtfully, while still strumming his guitar, then sang...

"If I could follow the yellow-brick road.

Go up in a twister and come down,

Somewhere - over the rainbow.

I'd ask the wizard for a million bucks, and a brand-new car."

"Damn straight!" yelled one of the crowd members as Jamie sang...

"Me and my Porsche on the yellow brick road,

While Dorothy walks with her dog."

By the time Jamie reached the second chorus, the crowd had swelled to over one hundred people, almost all of whom had put money into Jamie's cup. Feeling like he was on a roll, Jamie continued with the chorus to see how catchy it was. He sang...

"Life is like a box of chocolates."

Jamie looked around at the audience, who all sang...

"You never know whatcha gonna get".

Jamie smiled and then sang...

"You could be a shrimp boat captain baby.

Or you could meet the president.

And don't you ever call me stupid."

Jamie once again turned to the crowd who sang...

"Stupid is as stupid does."

Before Jamie finished off the chorus by singing...

"And life is like a box of chocolates.

Where are you Jenny, my love."

The song ended and the crowd applauded. As they all dispersed, more people threw coins and notes into Jamie's cup, causing it to overflow.

On his way along a busy street later on, Jamie walked along with his head down counting money. Stopping in his tracks, he exclaimed to himself, "Holy shit! There's like four hundred bucks."

With his head still down, he set off again, only to walk right into someone. He stopped, looked up, and was

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mesmerized by what he saw. Standing in front of him was a beautifully dressed young lady, carrying a large rectangular tin with a photo of a young girl on the front.

Smiling at the lady, Jamie said, "I am so sorry."

"It's fine," replied the lady, flashing Jamie a genuine smile.

Still staring at the photo of the girl's face on the tin, Jamie asked, "Tell me about your charity."

"We build schools for visually impaired children in third-world countries," the young lady proudly said.

Jamie looked at his overflowing cup of money and without a second thought, tipped the entire contents of his cup into the tin.

"Here's four hundred for the cause," Jamie said.

"Oh my God! Thank you so much," she said.

"No. Thank you," Jamie insisted.

Just as Jamie was about to walk away, he stopped and asked, "Do you have a business card? I have an idea."

The young lady reached into her small purse, grabbed a business card, and handed it to Jamie.

"I'll be in touch," he said, before continuing on his way.

Further along, Jamie stopped outside the front of a café and looked up at the sign above the door which read, "Touch the Stars café". Written in small writing above the door, was "Licensee – Katie Mitchell." Jamie smiled as he opened the door and entered.

Inside, Jamie marveled at the incredible display of Broadway memorabilia dating back to the 1700s that lined the walls. Walking through the venue, he saw framed posters and pictures from every show to ever make it to Broadway. Funnily enough though, he didn't see any posters from the shows he had performed in.

Halfway down Jamie stopped, thoughtfully looking at a large framed poster from the hit musical "Chicago". As he admired

the poster, he felt like he knew the two young women in it. Both were glamorous and clearly stars of their day.

Then it dawned on him, that the woman playing Velma Kelly was Katie. He further studied the poster, trying to think who the lady was playing Roxy Hart. He had seen that smile before, but only recently, and had never seen this poster until now.

“No. It couldn’t be,” he thought to himself. “Or could it?”

He was certain that the other woman was Virginia’s mother. The smile was undeniably the same as Virginia’s so it must have been. But why didn’t Virginia ever say that her mom was a performer too?

Pulling himself away from the poster, Jamie continued towards the back of the café where Katie was seated at a table, surrounded by paperwork. Katie stood, smiling at him as he approached, and then embraced him as only a mother could.

As their embrace concluded, Katie motioned to a waitress to bring them coffee, as she and Jamie sat.

“They had the same smile, didn’t they?” Katie stated, glancing at the poster that Jamie was just looking at. Jamie remained silently stunned, as Katie continued, “She was a truly beautiful soul, your Vee.”

Wanting to move the conversation to a happier place, Katie said, “Stella tells me you’re writing a musical.”

“Well. I’ve got six songs and a premise,” Jamie said unconvincingly.

“That’s a great start,” Katie said encouragingly.

“Yeah, but I need a duet and a P.A.L.” Jamie added.

“P.A.L?” asked Katie.

“Public Admission of Love,” explained Jamie. “You know. That moment in every movie where the hero declares their undying love in front of everyone.”

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“Ah. Yes. The P.A.L,” Katie said, now comprehending. “Crocodile Dundee in the train station. Come What May at the end of Moulin Rouge. When Richard Gere gets out of the limo at the end of Pretty Woman. That’s a very important part”.

“Yepp. Now you can see my dilemma,” Jamie said.

Jamie pulled out a USB stick from his pocket and slid it across the table to Katie.

“I’ve written the music for the duet,” Jamie began. “But I’m struggling with the lyrics.”

Katie smiled and said, “Well seeing as I’m the one who caused your emotional blockage, why don’t I give it a go? I think I have an idea.”

Admiring Jamie’s facial hair, Katie, with a wry smile then asked, “So, what does Stella think about the beard?”

Perplexed by the question, Jamie remained silent, taking a sip of his coffee.

All of a sudden, Katie stood with a look of fury on her face and screamed, “Oh no you don’t!” as she strode purposefully towards the front of the café. Jamie turned and saw Marco standing just inside the front door.

“Stay away from my son, asshole!” Katie yelled, pointing at Marco. Jamie stood and was ready to jump into the possible mele, but Katie seemed to have things totally under control. In fact, Katie was so menacing that Marco began backtracking to keep his distance from her.

“How dare you use him as a way to get back at me for your infidelity,” Katie screamed as she shoved Marco out the front door and onto the sidewalk.

“I’m just glad Elaine eventually saw through your bullshit,” barked Katie before she closed the front door and made her way back to Jamie at the table. As Katie sat back down, there was a slightly awkward silence, although

Jamie was quite amused by seeing a side of Katie he had never imagined existed.

"I guess we should unpack that," said Katie, with a look of unease.

"As long as Virginia and I weren't related, then we're all good," Jamie said, with a wry smile. Even though Jamie had made light of the situation, Katie could tell that he had a few questions about what Katie had said in the heat of the moment, so she took a deep breath, had a sip of coffee, and began to explain.

"You deserve to know the truth, so here goes," Katie began. "Elaine and I met in our twenties doing Chicago. Elaine was dating Marco back then."

"Who?" interjected Jamie.

"Marco Daley," said Katie. "That's the asshole's first name." Jamie nodded, comprehending.

"When our season of Chicago was coming to an end," Katie continued. "Marco's dad was producing a new run of Beauty and the Beast and asked both Elaine and me to audition for the lead role.

A few weeks after my audition, Marco hit on me at a gala event, and told me that he and Elaine had broken up."

"Oh, mom. You didn't?" asked Jamie, with a look of shock etched across his face.

"Well," Katie said, embarrassed, "After a few drinks. You know."

"So, my behavioral traits are genetic then?" said Jamie with a smirk.

Katie rolled her eyes, then continued, "Anyway. Elaine thought she was a shoo-in for the lead role, but Marco wanted to leave her for me, so to impress me, he convinced his dad that I should play Belle. All of this was unbeknownst to me."

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Jamie sat quietly, riveted, impressed, and even mildly grossed out by the sauciness of his mother's past.

"Of course, Elaine took the news very badly," explained Katie. "The last few weeks of Chicago were hell. We didn't speak for years after, and Elaine swore that she would never let any child of hers become a performer. She didn't want them to experience the pain she went through."

"But that's part of the industry," Jamie said.

Katie nodded, taking a sip of her coffee.

"How come Virginia ended up being a dancer then?" Jamie asked.

"When Virginia was born partially blind, Elaine thought she didn't have to worry about that," Katie said. "But as you know, Vee is one remarkable young lady and it was only a matter of time before she would excel at dancing, given how determined and resourceful she was."

"So you think that's why Elaine was so controlling?" asked Jamie.

"Elaine and Marco divorced shortly after Virginia was born, so Virginia was all Elaine had. She thought she was doing the right thing," Katie said, expressing empathy for her former friend.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

“How Could You”

On a sunny winter's morning, Jamie and Stella strolled along in Central Park drinking coffee, as joggers passed and cleaners picked up trash.

“It's great you're collaborating,” Stella said with a smile.

“Yeah. But until it sells,” Jamie said. “If it sells. Until then, I'm virtually unemployable.”

“Dad is desperate for staff at the factory,” said Stella. “He'd love to have you.”

Unsure, Jamie paused before saying, “Well, it's either that or I pimp myself out to make ends meet.”

“That's a nice idea,” Stella said with a smile. “But who'd pay to have sex with you, when you've already humped half the upper west side for free?”

With that, Stella quickly skipped off down the path, as Jamie playfully lunged at her.

A few short days later, Jamie was in fact working for Stella's dad, pushing a large trolley loaded with boxes through an expansive warehouse. Not paying attention to where he was going, Jamie ran the trolley into a wall, causing the boxes on the trolley to topple onto the floor.

Jamie scrambled to clean up the mess, loading the

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boxes back onto the trolley before anyone noticed his incompetence.

Later that same day, Jamie stood at a conveyor belt packing items into boxes as they passed. The work was mind-numbingly boring, and this showed on Jamie's face.

At lunchtime, Jamie sat on his own at a table in the lunchroom, checking his phone. He opened his Instagram account, but when he looked at his page, his number of followers caught his attention.

He squinted to make sure he was seeing clearly, but there in front of him, the number of followers he had was only 246,481, instead of his usual 500,000+ followers.

As he stared at the number on the screen trying to work out what had happened, a notification flashed on the phone. He clicked on it and a short message that read, "Murderer" filled the screen. Stunned, Jamie closed the message but then saw several other message previews on the screen. As his eyes went down the page of message previews, he saw titles such as, "Pig", "Die Bitch", and "You're dead pretty boy".

Shocked, and with his heart now racing, Jamie quickly went into the app settings and deactivated his account before slumping in his chair; despondent.

Having finally finished his first full day of the only real job of his life, Jamie aimlessly wandered along the footpath of the Brooklyn Bridge during peak hour. As he slowly crossed the bridge, he heard a familiar tune edging closer. As the song grew louder, Jamie recognized the song as his original cast recording of "Only the Good Die Young".

Jamie turned to notice the music coming from the stereo of a car driving over the bridge toward him. As the car edged even closer to Jamie, he heard himself sing...

*"Well, your mother told you,
All that I could give you was a reputation."*

The car pulled alongside Jamie in heavy traffic. The driver didn't notice Jamie looking at him, but the poignant lyrics were not lost on Jamie, as his voice sang...

*"Ah, she never cared for me.
But did she ever say a prayer for me?
Woah, oh, oh."*

As the car faded into the distance, Jamie drifted off to another time and place, but just before the music completely disappeared, he did hear...

"You know that only the good die young."

The reality of the situation, and the divine timing of those lyrics coming to him, hit Jamie hard. His breathing quickened and his eyes welled up as he once again set off across the bridge with a very heavy heart.

Arriving at the middle point of the bridge, directly over the center of the Hudson River, Jamie stopped, turned towards the edge of the bridge, then looked down at the river, a long way below.

At that moment, a very sad piano piece came to him. Without realizing it, he softly hummed a melody, then took a deep breath, looked both ways, then closed his eyes.

Jamie arrived home, turned the TV on, and sat on the couch, as the piano and lyrics played...

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*“He comes home from work, at the factory.
Turns the TV on for some company.
The phone don’t ring, and there’s no one to call.
He stares up at a picture on the wall.”*

Jamie looked up at a framed photo of him and Virginia hanging on the wall. He became teary-eyed, as the song continued...

*“How could you leave me here he cries.
Then he reaches for some pain relief,
As the tears well in his eyes.
My heart is almost frozen.
All this pain. Will it ever go away?
How could you leave me here – alone.”*

Later on, it looked like Jamie had been on a bender, with a three-quarter-empty bottle of scotch sitting on a small table beside the couch, and a bottle of pain pills tipped over, with only a few pills left. The song continued...

*“He looks at the time on his old wristwatch.
Empty bottle of pills. Empty bottle of scotch.”*

Jamie swigged the remainder of the scotch, along with the last few pills, before he stumbled over to the photo of him and Virginia and removed it from the wall. He stared regretfully at the photo, before collapsing onto the floor, holding the picture, with the lyrics ringing in his ears...

*"He takes her picture off the wall,
And clutches it tight as he starts to fall."*

Now on his knees, with Jamie sobbing over the picture,
the song continued...

*"How could you leave me here he cries.
Now he's taken all that pain relief,
Thinking of their sad goodbyes.
My heart's forever broken,
Damn this pain. Now I'll make it go away.
But how could you leave me here – alone."*

Kicking open Jamie's front door two police officers and three paramedics rushed over to Jamie, who is now lying lifeless on the floor. The photo frame lay smashed beside him. One of the officers picked up a hand-written note beside Jamie, as the song continued...

*"Hold on. I'll be there soon,
Said the note by his side,
When they found him in his room."*

Paramedics began CPR on Jamie, as an officer inspected the empty scotch and pill bottles. Jamie was unresponsive, but the song continued...

*"How could you leave me here, he cries.
Then he thinks about his only love,
As the light fades from his eyes."*

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Paramedics stopped working on Jamie. They sat disheartened, as the song continued...

*"My heart's forever broken.
All this pain. I can feel it slip away."*

Jamie's eyes are lifeless. As we go in close. So close that we can almost see inside his damaged soul, his closed eyes let out the tiniest of flickers. The lyrics continued...

"How could you leave me here – alone."

Now that flicker turned into Jamie's eyes slowly opening. He's alive! As we pull back out, we see Jamie sitting at his piano, with tear-stained eyes. He sings...

"Alone."

Jamie continued to play the final few bars of the song. He sighed with a certain pride. Thank God it was all in his mind's eye.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

“What Tomorrow Brings”

A deep-blue Harley-Davidson motorcycle with white-wall tires cruised along an upmarket street in The Hamptons mid-morning. Stunning houses flew past as the Harley interrupted the usual tranquility of the area.

The bike turned into the driveway of a modest house by Hamptons standards, but nonetheless impressive. Slowly the bike rode up a long driveaway, with well-manicured gardens on either side.

Once at the front of a large double-story house, the rider dismounted and removed their helmet. Jamie appeared from under the helmet, still sporting a serious beard, which made him look more at home on the Harley than on stage.

As Jamie walked towards the house, the large double timber doors opened, and Katie stood grinning at him.

“What? No butler to answer the door?” Jamie said with a smile, as he hugged Katie.

“He’s making lunch,” replied Katie, as she led Jamie inside.

They walked along a high-ceiling hallway. Jamie slowed, staring at several framed posters of him hanging on the walls on either side.

“Were these not good enough to make it to the café walls?” Jamie asked, with a hint of sarcasm, referring to the posters.

Through The Eyes Of Love

“They are way too precious to go there,” Katie said proudly.

At the end of the hallway, Jamie caught a glimpse of a cream baby grand piano, identical to the one in his apartment, sitting in Katie’s living room. Jamie stared curiously at the piano for a moment.

Making their way out onto an expansive back patio, Jamie took in the lush gardens, as Katie said, “I don’t blame you for hating me.”

“I don’t hate you,” said Jamie, as they sat at the table which was filled with an assortment of delectable food and drink.

“Well, I did,” he continued. “But if it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t be the man I am today.”

“Pig-headed. Stubborn. Determined. All traits you inherited from me,” quipped Katie with a smile.

“I even got your chops,” added Jamie.

With a more serious look in his eyes, Jamie asked, “So, why have you never married?”

Katie paused thoughtfully. A single tear formed in her eye.

“How could I give my heart to any other man, when I turned my back on the only man I’ve ever loved?” Katie said.

Blushing like the little boy Katie was referring to, Jamie looked around, attempting to divert the topic.

“That’s a beautiful piano,” Jamie said.

“It’s never been played,” said Katie.

Jamie looked stunned at this piece of information.

“Just like me,” Katie began. “It’s been waiting all these years for you to bring it to life.”

Without hesitation, Jamie stood, grabbed Katie’s hand, and led her over to the piano.

“If that wasn’t so corny, it would make a brilliant lyric,” said Jamie with a smile, as he arrived at the piano.

Just as Jamie was about to sit on the piano stool, he noticed a Tony Award sitting on top of the piano.

"I never knew you won a Tony," Jamie said.

"I didn't," Katie replied. "It's the Tony you won for playing Danny Zuko. The one you donated to charity."

"That fetched like eighty grand at auction," exclaimed Jamie.

"You can't put a price on a mother's love," said Katie, with a loving smile.

Katie picked up the Tony Award from the piano and handed it to Jamie. As he held it in his hand, he raised it up, then looked across at Katie and said with a smile, "I'd like to thank my mom for this award." They both laughed.

Katie then leaned over, grabbed a piece of paper with handwritten lyrics on it, and handed it to Jamie. He put the award down and stared at the lyrics for a moment, noticing the title "What Tomorrow Brings" written at the top of the page.

"Shall we give it a crack?" asked Jamie, as he sat down on the piano stool and lifted the lid covering the piano keys.

"Katie Mitchell, featuring Jamie Broadway," exclaimed Jamie, in an announcer's voice.

"Uh, Ah," interrupted Katie. "Jamie Broadway, featuring Katie Mitchell."

They both laughed before Jamie began playing a beautiful "Disney-like" piece. Smiling proudly at Jamie's talent, Katie looked down at the lyrics and sang...

*"As the rain falls down outside our window,
I gently kiss your lips; it takes my breath.
There's something in the air that tells me,
That you and I are so unlike the rest."*

Jamie looked up at Katie, exclaiming, "She's still got it." He then looked back down at the lyrics and sang...

Through The Eyes Of Love

*"Coz when I have you near, I soon discover,
That what we have right here is like no other."*

Jamie glanced at Katie with a knowing smile, before singing...

*"I'd climb the highest mountain. Swim the widest sea.
Just because you're here right now with me."*

As Jamie transitioned into playing the chorus, Katie gazed lovingly at Jamie as she sang...

*"And now I'm standing here beside you,
I feel our every breath.
Now that you are in my life,
My mind can finally rest.
I will always stand beside you.
I'll give you everything.
No matter where our lives may lead.
Or what tomorrow brings."*

Fast forward to a few weeks later and Jamie was sitting at a grand piano in the foyer of the St. James theatre. Jamie was wearing a tuxedo, still sporting the beard, playing a continuation of the same song, accompanied by a small orchestra, in front of a packed audience of New York's elite.

Standing in front of the musicians, Katie, wearing a stunning ball gown, wowed the audience as she sang...

*"I want to spend each moment with you.
This love I feel for you just can't be beat."*

*Every moment you're away, I miss you.
When you're with me, I simply feel complete."*

Walking around the room, charity collectors took substantial donations by way of cash and cheques from the rich listers who were in attendance for this gala event.

On the wall behind Jamie, a large marquee read, "Child's Vision – Please give generously to help a child."

On a nearby wall, a large, framed poster of a much younger Katie, as Velma Kelly took pride of place in the foyer. Jamie looked up proudly at the poster as he sang...

*"Coz when I have you near, I soon discover,
That what we have right here is like no other.
I'd climb the highest mountain. Swim the widest sea.
Just because you're here right now with me."*

Later that night, with the song still on his mind, Jamie returned home, feeling proud. As he walked in his front door, he stopped and stared at a large frame with Virginia's cheerleading jacket inside.

Staring at the beautiful piece of memorabilia, he heard Katie's words, "You can't put a price on a mother's love" ringing in his ears. With a slight smile, Jamie slowly lifted the frame off its hooks and placed it on the ground, staring at it lovingly.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

“The One”

Sitting on his apartment couch, watching TV late one night, Jamie looked at his watch, then turned off the TV with the remote control. He walked over to the balcony and stared thoughtfully out over the city, as a light breeze blew across his face, from the open balcony doors.

He grabbed both door handles and slid the glass doors together. He considered closing the curtains as well but decided to leave them open. Feeling sleepy, he trudged off to bed.

Several hours later, Jamie stirred in bed. The room was dark and silent. He eventually got out of bed and sleepily walked out into the lounge room. When he got into the lounge room, he paused, then rubbed his eyes.

He stared out onto the balcony and noticed that the balcony doors were now open. Beyond the glass doors, he saw Virginia walk over to the railing and climb over. He knew this couldn't be possible, but she looked exactly as she did the last time he had seen her.

He couldn't be dreaming, because he was aware of everything going on around him, including his suddenly itchy nose, but when he tried to run to save her, he found that he couldn't move. He tried to yell, but no sound came out.

Frozen to the spot, Jamie watched Virginia, now facing him, with tears in her eyes, try to adjust her grip on the

railing, but as she tried to move, her feet slipped on the narrow ledge. Once again, Jamie tried to yell, but to no avail. Virginia let out a scream as she disappeared from sight.

With tears streaming down his face, Jamie remained frozen to the spot. Virginia's sweet voice pierced the silence, whispering, "I wanted you to see that it was an accident."

Virginia appeared beside Jamie, slowly moving around to be standing right in front of him. She smiled at him. Up close, she somehow looked different. She was the same beautiful Virginia; however, she had a soft glow about her.

Staring at Jamie with a regretful smile, Virginia said, "I was in so much pain. I just wanted it to go away, but I never meant to leave you."

She gently wiped the tears from Jamie's cheeks, then said, "There is so much love around you. It's time to let it in." Virginia then placed her hand over Jamie's heart.

The following morning, Jamie woke up and headed out into the lounge room. As he stepped towards the balcony, he once again froze. In front of him, the balcony doors were wide open. Staring at the open doors, he pondered for a moment, then remembered that he had shut them the night before.

Suddenly, he had a flashback of what happened. With glassy eyes and a regretful smile, Jamie tilted his head up towards the ceiling, before his right hand instinctively reached across to touch his heart.

Later that day, Jamie arrived at the front of his old theatre. Feeling a little apprehensive, he stepped through the front doors. He walked through the foyer, looking around. Nothing had changed, yet somehow, everything had changed.

He pulled open the heavy timber doors leading into the auditorium to see a relatively dark theatre. The only light he could see was a single overhead spotlight, illuminating the piano on stage, which Stella was sitting at.

Through The Eyes Of Love

As he walked down the center aisle towards the stage, Stella smiled at him.

“Feels kinda weird being back,” Jamie said.

Stella simply smiled as Jamie made his way up onto the stage and over to her. Stella stood and greeted Jamie with a huge hug, before handing him the piece of sheet music he had written many months ago. Jamie sat on the piano stool, looking at the sheet music.

“I almost forgot about this,” he said, as he scanned the notes on the page.

Stella stood to one side of the piano, nervously shuffling pieces of paper, glancing between the pages and Jamie.

“You ready?” asked Jamie.

Stella nodded, then took a deep breath.

Jamie began playing the beautifully flowing piano piece. Stella looked even more nervous now, as she took yet another deep breath, then sang...

*“I see your smiling face.”
But I can’t have your warm embrace.
I promise, I will always love you.
I’ll be anything that you need me to.”*

Jamie looked up from the piano, smiling encouragingly at Stella, as she sang...

*“I want you and nobody else.
Don’t want to be here, all by myself.
Give me a chance, and you will see.
Your magic love has put a spell on me.”*

Stella briefly looked up from her handwritten lyrics to see if Jamie was looking, but he was now focused on playing, as the song hit the chorus.

Staring straight at Jamie, Stella sang...

"Can I be the one?

To lift you up and make your troubles seem small.

Can I be the one?

To take you away from it all."

On that musical cue, the orchestra pit lid slowly began to slide open, as Jamie played a cute little musical interlude before the beginning of the second verse.

Seemingly out of nowhere, the full orchestral accompaniment joined Jamie's piano to bring the song to life, as Stella sang...

"You see me as a friend.

Well, that's alright for now, I'll have to pretend.

That when I'm with you, I don't feel this way."

Jamie looked around, dumbstruck by the sight of the orchestra, which had now raised up to stage level and were all smiling at him. It may not have been a flash mob, but to Jamie, it sure felt like one.

Stella smiled at Jamie's dismay, as she sang...

"While deep inside my love grows stronger each day."

One by one, Jamie's old cast members walked on stage from the wings and formed a semi-circle around him and Stella, as she sang...

Through The Eyes Of Love

*"I'll take a deep breath and I'll dry my eyes.
Could fill an ocean with the tears I've cried."*

Suddenly, the penny dropped for Jamie. The song was about him. He stared up at Stella as he played. She smiled lovingly back at him as she poured her heart out, singing...

*"It's time to speak my mind, can't wait anymore.
Your love's a treasure that is worth fighting for."*

Staring directly at Jamie, Stella sang...

"Can I be the one?"

The cast then joined her in singing...

"To lift you up and make your trouble seem small."

Once again, Stella sang...

"Can I be the one?"

Then all together, everyone sang...

"To take you away from it all."

With the orchestra now in full flight as the song hit the climactic middle-eight, Stella wiped away her happy tears as she passionately sang...

"Now is the time and here is the place, for us to be as one."

Stella sat down beside Jamie, gazing into his eyes singing...

"See it written all over my face."

There was so much passion and love in her voice, that it ever-so-slightly cracked as she sang...

"I'll never break your heart."

As the orchestra played a stunning instrumental, with the most gorgeous saxophone solo, Jamie stopped playing, as Stella grabbed him and kissed him passionately. With the music still playing and all the cast watching on, Jamie eventually pulled back from their prolonged kiss to stare at Stella.

She stared back at him, waiting for him to say something; anything! After what seemed like an eternity, Jamie, now with a look of regret on his face said, "I can't. Not right now."

And that's where we have to leave it – for now!

CHAPTER TWENTY

“The Case”

Standing in front of his bathroom mirror, a freshly shaven Jamie, wearing a sharp-looking suit, checked himself in the reflection, with determination in his eyes. He fixed his collar, puffed out his chest, smiled, then said, “tits and teeth.”

It’s show time!

On the steps of the New York County Courthouse, a throng of media gathered. A black SUV with dark windows pulled up and as if a starter’s pistol had gone off to signal the start of the men’s Olympic one-hundred-meter final, the media rushed the SUV as Jamie and Chris Hannon climbed out.

Court security, along with Police Officers escorted Jamie and Chris through the media scrum, up the stairs, and into the courthouse, as photographers scrambled for their “money shot.”

Inside the courtroom, Katie and Stella entered and made their way to the public gallery. As Detective Daley entered the courtroom, Katie locked eyes with him, glaring with absolute contempt. Katie and Elaine then exchanged a brief look, but neither look had the same venom that Katie held for Elaine’s ex-husband. The look between the two mothers and one-time friends was more like that of two

matriarchs, hoping for the best outcome for their families.

Not long after, Jamie nervously shuffled in the witness chair, as Crown Prosecutor Berrigan approached Jamie, carrying a pile of papers.

“Mister Broadway,” began C.P. Berrigan, as he handed Jamie the wad of paper. “Can you please tell the court what this is?”

Jamie looked down apprehensively at the pages, recognizing them as his list of intimate partners.

“It’s a list of all the women I’ve slept with,” Jamie said reluctantly.

“Would you like to tell us how many names are on that list, Mister Broadway?” asked C.P. Berrigan, now standing close to the witness box.

“No, I would not!” Jamie snapped back.

“Why is that?” enquired C.P. Berrigan.

“It’s not relevant,” said Jamie defiantly. “I’m on trial for murder. Not being a slut.”

The female judge looked over her glasses at Jamie and said, “Answer the question, Mister Broadway.”

Jamie took a deep breath and reluctantly said, “Two hundred.”

Several audible gasps and even a snigger or two filled the courtroom. In the gallery, Stella and Katie exchanged a curious look.

Later that same day, Chris Hannon paced in front of Paramedic, Wifred Niblett, wearing his uniform, sat in the witness box.

“Mister Niblett,” Chris began. “When you arrived at the scene, can you tell me what you saw?”

Wilfred sat more upright in his seat, and answered, “We saw a female body lying on the glass awning, and two men working on her.”

Through The Eyes Of Love

“Do you recall which way Miss Rodwell’s body was laying when you arrived?” Chris asked.

“Yes,” answered Wilfred. “She was lying perpendicular to the building, with her feet closest to the building, and her head furthest away from it.

Chris nodded, seemingly satisfied with the answer. He paused, then asked, “Did you or your partner move her body at all?”

“Yes,” said Wilfred. “We moved her into a more parallel position, relative to the building so that we could safely work on her because she was dangerously close to the edge.”

Chris smiled, turned to the judge, and said, “No further questions, your honor,” as Chris returned to his seat.

The following morning, Chris once again stood in front of the witness box. This time, sitting in the witness box was forensic expert, Miss Abigail Washington.

Chris scratched his chin thoughtfully, then asked, “Miss Washington. You concluded in your notes, after extensive D.N.A. and forensic testing that there was no sign of a struggle between the defendant and the deceased. Is this correct?”

“Yes. That is correct,” replied Abigail.

“You also stated that there was only one set of fingerprints on the balcony railing,” said Chris. “Is this also correct?”

“Yes,” replied Abigail once again.

“Could you please tell the court, whose fingerprints they belonged to,” Miss Washington? asked Chris.

“They belonged to Miss Rodwell,” answered Abigail confidently.

Chris turned and walked towards the gallery, as he asked, “From your extensive analysis of both the defendant and the deceased, did you discover any of the defendant’s D.N.A. on the deceased, or vice versa?”

No,” answered Abigail. “There was none of each of their D.N.A. on each other at all.”

“No further questions,” said Chris to the judge as he returned to his seat.

Walking over from the bar table carrying two large photographs the following morning, Chris approached Doctor Max Clinger, who was sitting in the witness box. Chris looked from photo to photo, before handing one of the photos to Doctor Clinger.

“Doctor Clinger. Is this the photograph that Detective Daley provided you to base your bio-mechanical report on?” asked Chris.

At the same time the photo, which was of Virginia lying parallel on the glass awning and covered by a sheet was displayed on large Television monitors around the courtroom. This caused some members of the gallery to gasp, while Elaine quickly looked away, unable to look at it.

Doctor Clinger studied the photo briefly, before answering, “Yes. This was the photo.”

Chris then handed Doctor Clinger the second photo. The second photo which was an image of the bloodied glass awning with two shattered and bowed panels running perpendicular to the building was also displayed on the screens around the court.

“Were you at any time given this photograph as part of your analysis?” asked Chris.

“No. Definitely not,” answered Doctor Clinger definitively, as he looked up from the photo.

Chris turned to Detective Daley, shooting him a wry smile, before turning back to Doctor Clinger and continuing, “We have heard from an expert witness that the original landing position or place of impact on the awning was perpendicular to the building.” Chris pointed up at the court screen and continued. “As those clearly bowed and shattered panels illustrate in the second photo.”

Chris paused in front of the Jury, facing Doctor Clinger as he continued.

Through The Eyes Of Love

"We were also advised that the body was moved into the more parallel position, on which your bio-mechanical report was based."

"My question to you is," Chris said. "Given this new information. If you were given this second photo as part of your analysis, would it have changed the outcome of your findings?"

"Yes," answered Doctor Clinger.

"How?" asked Chris.

Doctor Clinger paused thoughtfully, before answering, "I originally concluded, based on the landing position of the body, that it was most probable she was thrown from the balcony. Given this new information, I would now conclude that it was highly probable that she jumped."

Gasps echoed throughout the courtroom. Elaine sat shaking in her seat. Glancing across at Detective Daley with a broad smile, Chris proclaimed, "No further questions, your honor."

Later that day, the courtroom was packed with media and the general public. Elaine sat quietly in the front row of the gallery, just behind where Chris and Jamie sat at the bar table. Towards the back of the gallery, Katie and Stella sat nervously.

The jury entered the room from a side door and took their seats.

"Have you reached a verdict?" the judge asked the head juror.

"Yes your honor." replied the head juror

The head jury handed a piece of paper to the bail clerk, who in turn handed it to the judge, who briefly inspected the piece of paper.

Jamie sat motionless in his seat, trying to keep it together. The judge addressed the jury, asking, "On the single count of murder, how do you find the defendant?"

An unbearably long pause ensued, as everyone held their breath for what seemed like forever.

“Not Guilty.” proclaimed the head juror.

Pandemonium erupted as the media scrambled to break the news on their phones and tablet devices. Chris slapped Jamie on the back with joy, but Jamie remained motionless, with his elbows on the table and his hands in front of his face, prayer-like.

Katie and Stella ran over to Jamie who was still frozen and emotionless. He finally lowered his hands and simply glanced up towards the ceiling; thinking of Virginia, as Katie and Stella hugged him.

Right behind them, Elaine let out a painful wail, before collapsing onto the floor. Security ran to Elaine’s aid, as the media and others filed out of the courtroom.

A short time later, Jamie emerged from the courthouse, flanked by Chris, Katie, and Stella. They made their way to the top of the stairs, where a pack of reporters and photographers stood. Chris hushed the crowd by saying, “One at a time please.”

“How do you feel, now you’ve won?” a male reporter asked.

“There are no winners here,” Jamie said, after a moment to reflect. “Virginia’s mom lost a daughter, I’ve lost a girlfriend, and the world has lost a beautiful soul.”

“Are you angry at the police for putting you through this?” A female reporter asked.

“No,” Jamie said bluntly. “It all comes down to how you frame things. You see. I used to see the world through the lens of anger and hate, but thanks to a beautiful young lady, I’ve learned to see it through the eyes of love.”

“So where to now?” yelled a different male reporter.

Jamie looked down at his wrist and said, “A tattoo shop,” before looking across at Stella and adding, “In Vegas.”

As the media looked around at each other, slightly puzzled, Jamie took two steps over to Stella, pulled her in close, and kissed her passionately, as several camera flashes went off.

Through The Eyes Of Love

“Well, you can never have too many P.A.Ls,” Katie said to Chris.

Early the following evening, Elaine sat staring at a photo of Virginia at home. Her dream-like state was interrupted by a knock at the front door of her apartment. She got up from the couch she was sitting on, walked over to the door, and opened it.

To her surprise, Katie was standing there, holding a gym bag, and a large, thin square package leaning against her leg. Elaine recognized the bag as Virginia’s gym bag.

“Jamie and I want you to have these,” said Katie in a sympathetic tone, as the two women exchanged a look that typified the grief they both shared. Katie leaned the thin box against the door and handed the gym bag to Elaine.

“There’s something in the pocket for you,” Katie said. “Have a think about it.”

Katie turned and silently left, leaving Elaine staring at the thin package, before placing both the bag and package inside the door.

With the door closed Elaine pulled a piece of paper from the pocket of the bag. She unfolded it, noticing that it was an airline ticket for her. She stared at the ticket for a moment with a look of shock on her face, before putting the ticket back in the bag pocket, then slowly unwrapping the package.

Tears streamed down Elaine’s face as she saw the beautiful frame encasing Virginia’s cheerleading jacket inside. In Elaine’s mind, Virginia was finally home. Elaine looked down at the bottom of the frame. Engraved was a plaque that read, “ In our hearts – For Eternity.”

“Someday In The Future”

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

“Touch the Stars”

Sweeping over Kani Island in the Maldives, dozens of over-water bungalows with thatched roofs sat on either side of a long timber walkway stretching for over one hundred meters over the water on a glorious day in this tropical paradise.

In the lavish bathroom of one of the bungalows stood Jamie, wearing board shorts and a Hawaiian shirt. Jamie looked down at the inside of his left wrist and stared lovingly at a red tattoo with just a single word, “LOVE”.

In the distance, his phone rang. He briskly walked through the lounge area and out onto the balcony. Awaiting him was a spectacular view of turquoise water stretching all the way to the horizon. Sitting on a small table on the balcony was his phone and laptop.

Open on his laptop was a PDF of a movie screenplay titled “Through the Eyes of Love – by Jamie Broadway.” Jamie picked up his phone and answered it.

“I thought it might be you,” Jamie said into his phone.

“How’s the final draft of the movie coming along?” inquired a mature male voice on the other end of the phone.

Through The Eyes Of Love

“Sending it as we speak,” said Jamie, as he attached the PDF file to an email and pressed send. With his left hand leaning on the table, we see a brand-new wedding band shining on his third finger; but who is the girl?

“The final instrumental mix of the new song for the credits should arrive any minute,” said the male voice. “We can record the vocals when you’re back.”

Sure enough, Jamie’s phone beeped in his ear, with an incoming message. He glanced at his phone. On the screen, a music file titled “Touch the Stars” was displayed.

“Got it,” said Jamie.

From the distance, Stella’s voice rang out saying, “Hurry up Jamie, or we’ll be late!”

Jamie looked up to see Stella, Katie, and a local skipper in a speedboat, floating in the shallows just off the bungalow. As Jamie unbuttoned his shirt, he noticed a small reef-tip shark swimming past the bungalow. He looked back up at Stella, who was tapping her watch to signal they were late. Glistening off the water were Stella’s brand-new wedding and engagement rings.

Jamie removed his shirt and threw it into a backpack sitting on the chair, as he said into his phone, “I’m about to head into a meeting with some locals, so I have to run.”

“Good luck.” said the male voice, as Jamie hung up the call and tossed his phone into the bag, before zipping it up. Jamie walked over to the railing and tossed the bag to Stella in the boat.

He quickly shut down his laptop as Stella removed his phone from the bag and pressed play. Bellowing from the boat’s stereo, an up-tempo pop/rock song rang out over the water, as Jamie launched himself off the balcony railing and into the water.

A few seconds later, Jamie burst out of the water like an explosion, as he sang...

*“Well, I’m - Thinkin’ about you every night and day.
And I’m - Sayin’ things I never thought I’d say.”*

Jamie climbed up the boat ladder, looked at Stella, and whispered, “I love you,” before he continued singing...

*“I feel like I could almost touch the stars.
I’ll keep reachin’, up with open arms.”*

Once Jamie was onboard, the boat sped off, as Jamie sang the chorus...

“So come in. Be my angel. Make yourself at home.”

Suddenly, the boat listed violently, causing Stella to fall off balance. Jamie caught her as he sang...

“Once you fall into my arms, I’ll never let you go.”

They kissed. Stella smiled broadly at him, as he sang...

“When you smile, I feel as if I have just come in from the cold.”

“So take my hand and we’ll fly away. We’ll never be alone.”

Jamie pointed up ahead at a small island in the distance as the boat plowed through the water, while Stella took over singing...

*“Well I – Wish for you, before you came along.
When I – Wished upon a star when I was young.”*

Katie joined in, harmonizing with Stella as they sang...

Through The Eyes Of Love

*"Star light, star bright. First stare I see tonight.
Send me an angel, and together we'll take flight."*

The boat began to slow as it approached the island. Siting prominent near the shoreline was a school building, partly renovated. A sign above the school read, "The Virginia Rodwell School for the visually impaired."

On a large brick wall out the front of the school, two painted eyes and the outline of the word "love" stood out. They all stared at the eyes on the wall, which were curiously familiar. They admired the half-painted mural and the school's facade as they all sang...

*"So come in. Be my angel. Make yourself at home.
Once you fall into my arms, I'll never let you go.
When you smile, I feel as if I have just come in from
the cold.
So take my hand and we'll fly away. We'll never be alone."*

The boat pulled alongside the pier as more than twenty children aged between eight and fourteen, all wearing glasses ran from the building, rushing to greet Jamie, Stella, and Katie.

Jamie hopped off the boat, then helped Stella off, before offering his hand to Katie, and assisting her off the boat, as she sang...

*"And now - You're here with me, so it seems dreams
come true.
Your love - Has struck me like a bolt out of the blue."*

They all made their way over to the building, with Jamie play-wrestling with the kids, as he and Katie sang...

"Here we are now, we'll never be apart."

Just then Elaine and Marco appeared from the school, carrying tins of red paint and paintbrushes. All five of them glanced skywards as they sang in unison...

"You're our angel, forever in our hearts."

Elaine and Marco handed Katie, Stella, and Jamie brushes and paint, as they all began coloring in the word love on the wall while singing...

"So come in. Be my angel. Make yourself at home.

Once you fall into my arms, I'll never let you go.

When you smile, I feel as if I have just come in from the cold.

So take my hand and we'll fly away. We'll never be alone."

With the word love now completely colored red, Marco grabbed his iPhone from his pocket as he walked backward away from the wall. Jamie, Stella, Marco, and all of the children gathered in front of the freshly painted mural, where it was now clear that the eyes painted on the wall were Virginia's.

Marco took a photo of the group in front of the mural. As if our view was from the point of view of a bird taking flight, our view soared high above the group. Our view was then encircled by two rings; as if we were looking through a pair of glasses.

Those circles then morphed into two love hearts, as if someone was watching over them from high above. Looking ... Through the eyes of love.

THE REPRISE

Back in the recording studio many months later, Jamie adjusted his headphones in his usual fashion; one ear covered – one uncovered as he stood in front of a music stand and Rode microphone in a glass vocal booth. As Jamie fiddled with the music stand in front of him, Stella's voice cut through his headphones.

"Jamie," inquired Stella. "Why are half of my lyrics missing?"

Jamie looked across at the next vocal booth where Stella was standing with her hands on her hips, looking through the glass at Jamie.

"Just sing what's on the page sweetie," Jamie said with a smirk.

Stella's confused expression suggested that she wasn't sure what was about to happen, but clearly, Jamie was. Jamie turned to the studio control room, where Sean Campbell was tweaking knobs on the mixing desk.

"Let's do it," said Jamie.

Sean looked up from the desk, smiled, and pressed play on the computer.

The familiar and very beautiful piano introduction for "The One" began playing. Jamie smiled as he stared at Stella, who was looking down at the lyrics on the page in front of her. She sang...

"I see your smiling face."

Stella turned towards Jamie, waiting, as the music continued. He sang...

"You touched my heart with your warm embrace."

Stella smirked at Jamie through the glass, as he continued singing...

"I promise to always be there for you."

Stella looked back down at the lyrics on the page. She noticed that the next few lines were written on the page, so she sang...

"I'll be anything that you need me to.

I want you and nobody else.

Don't want to be here all by myself."

Stella once again glanced across to Jamie; expectant. He sang...

"This is our chance, girl you will see.

With all your love, you've put a spell on me."

Jamie and Stella both gazed lovingly at each other as they sang in harmony...

"Can I be the one?"

Stella continued staring at Jamie expectantly as he sang...

"To lift you up and make your troubles seem small."

Through The Eyes Of Love

Once again, they harmonized beautifully together singing...

"Can I be the one?"

Stella smiled, relaxing into the song as she sang...

"To take you away from it all."

As the romantic musical interlude between the first chorus and second verse played, Stella removed her headphones, exited her vocal booth, and made her way into the vocal booth where Jamie was.

Simultaneously, the orchestral arrangement came to life, as Jamie sang...

"From now until the end.

You'll always be the one for me, my best friend.

I never knew that I could feel this way.

Girl deep inside, my love grows stronger each day."

Jamie stepped slightly back from the microphone as Stella stepped forward, smiled lovingly at him, and sang...

"It's time to speak my mind, can't wait anymore."

"Our love's a treasure that is worth dying for."

"I'll take a deep breath and I'll cross my heart."

"I'm yours to have and hold, till death do us part."

Jamie smiled, as he grabbed Stella's hand. They both sang...

"Can I be the one?"

Jamie grabbed hold of Stella's hand as he sang...

"To lift you up and make your troubles seem small."

Staring into each other's eyes, they both sang...

"Can I be the one?"

Once again, Jamie and Stella's voices blended in perfect harmony, as they sang...

"To take you away from it all."

As the arrangement stepped up a gear into the middle-8 of the song, Stella glanced up at Jamie. He smiled lovingly at her, nodding at her. She took a deep breath and sang...

"Now is the time and here is the place, for us to be as one."

"See it written all over my face."

Now standing face to face, with tears welling in both their eyes, they sang...

"I'll never break your heart."

While the orchestra, accompanied by a stunning saxophone solo played, Jamie and Stella leaned in, their lips so close, finally engaging in a passionate kiss as the romantic song continued without them.

THE END