

The Chalk Boy

By

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Cast of Characters

<u>Penelope (Penny) Lauder:</u>	15, maladjusted and searching for meaning.
<u>Breanna Stark:</u>	15, Penny's best friend. Introspective and somewhat naive.
<u>Lauren Radley:</u>	15, a nice Christian girl. Also plays MOM, GILL, and MRS. CHALK.
<u>Trisha Sorensen:</u>	15, an athlete and Breanna's former best friend. Also plays MISS MURKOWSKI, JEFF CHALK, and DOCTOR SALISBURY.

Scene

Nothing but chalk boards make up the playing space. There should be lots and lots of shadows around the perimeter of the playing space for actors to move in and out of. There may be a cleverly placed prop table, covered with odds and ends. Chairs and other small props will be brought on stage to suggest other locales when needed.

Time

Clear Creek, Washington. The present-ish.

ACT I

As the audience enters the space there is horrible top 40 pop music playing. Two teenage girls are drawing on the chalkboards. They occasionally giggle, dance a little, make a comment to one another, but they pay little attention to the audience.

LAUREN RADLEY is a perky girl-next-door in designer jeans. She has a gold crucifix necklace on, which she rubs whenever she feels uncomfortable. **TRISHA SORENSEN**, her friend, is pretty but slightly tomboyish in track pants and a tee shirt that reads, "Christian Athletes".

They are drawing feverishly on the chalkboards now, as if a time limit is upon them. They draw houses, a school, a football field, a McDonald's, and, finally, a little creek.

As the audience is seated and the music comes down the girls quickly fix their hair and check their outfits one last time and walk to the edge of the stage. They smile. They are giving some sort of presentation.

LAUREN

Hello. We'd like to thank you all for coming to this event. I'm Lauren Radley and this is Trisha Sorensen. We're here representing The Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

TRISHA

Hi. You all look really nice. I hope you enjoyed the Orangeade in the lobby. I made it.

LAUREN

Before we get started we'd like everybody to join hands for a prayer. Go ahead! Don't be shy.

(Lauren and Trisha link hands and bow their heads.)

Hey, god. It's me, Lauren Radley. I hope you're well. Please look over me and my family and Trisha Sorensen and her

(MORE)

LAUREN (cont'd)

family, lord. Please forgive us our trespasses, lord. We care not what we do. Please look over the awesome people in the world, lord, and take pity on the other people. Last of all, please help us understand recent events and gain wisdom from them, lord. Let us reach catharsis through your love. Okay, thanks. Bye, god.

TRISHA

Bye. Amen.

LAUREN

Okay. So. We're here to tell you about Clear Creek, Washington and the events that unfolded there.

(Trisha writes, "Clear Creek, Washington" on the chalkboard.)

Part One. *The Town that Dreaded Sun Down.*

(Trisha writes "Part One" on the board. Lauren points to the drawing of the school.)

This is Clear Creek High school where we go.

TRISHA

(Pointing to the each thing.)

There's our football field. GOOOOOO Vikings! And there's our McDonald's.

LAUREN

How do you describe a place like Clear Creek?

TRISHA

It's a shit hole.

LAUREN

Have you ever been to Disney World? It truly is magical there. It's the magic kingdom. But then you leave and you're in *Orlando*. Orlando is not magic. Orlando is strip malls and chain restaurants. Clear Creek is kind of like that.

TRISHA

But without the magic kingdom. Or the beaches.

LAUREN

Right. No beaches. We have a creek though. Clear Creek. Which is sort of a misnomer, really, because it's actually full of cheeseburger wrappers and old tires.

TRISHA

Yeah, I guess it used to be different, like there were all of these farms and stuff. My grandma can remember when there were no highways here. She keeps a candy dish of Lithium on her dining room table and drinks a twelve pack of Bud Light every single day so...

LAUREN

One thing that's awesome about Clear Creek is that we have every restaurant you could ever want. They just opened a Taco Bell slash Pizza Hut on Piney Street, which was really exciting.

TRISHA

Oh. We forgot to draw Taco Bell.

LAUREN

What?

TRISHA

I wish we were there right now. I want a grilled stuffed burrito.

LAUREN

Trisha...

TRISHA

Huh?

(Lauren subtly nods toward the audience as a reminder for Trisha to stay on task.)

We'll just go after.

Their attention returns to the audience.

LAUREN

Anyway, where was I? Basically, Clear Creek is one of *those* towns. You know the ones. They all look exactly the same from the highway at night, forming a dotted line across America's grossly obese belly.

TRISHA

Wow. That's really poetical.

LAUREN

Thanks, Trish.

(To audience.)

Clear creek is where the events you are about to witness took place and it's these events that make Clear Creek a little different. Beneath it's banal exterior, this town hides a nasty secret. Part One.

TRISHA & LAUREN

Day One.

Lauren makes one mark on the chalk board.

TRISHA

No big deal. Probably nobody notices except for, like his mom.

TRISHA & LAUREN

Day two.

Lauren makes a second mark on the board.

TRISHA

The police are called.

LAUREN

People start looking. The mall. The woods. They have dogs that sniff the wet grass.

TRISHA & LAUREN

Day Five.

Lauren updates the tally on the board to five.

TRISHA

By this time it's all over the news. People started to walk quicker.

LAUREN

And lose sleep. I haven't slept.

TRISHA

Me neither.

TRISHA & LAUREN

Day Seven.

Lauren brings the tally on the board to seven.

TRISHA

I heard the football players telling each other faggot jokes. I think they were just trying to forget that they might be next. Chickens.

LAUREN

And it's around this time that my mother goes bananas. She seems like she's afraid somebody's watching her. Following her or something? She's like Jamie Lee Curtis in her own personal *Halloween*.

TRISHA

Right, like she could get away with wearing high waisted bell bottoms.

I know, right?
LAUREN

Day Eight.
TRISHA & LAUREN

Lauren brings the tally on the board to eight.

LAUREN
Paranoia, paranoia, paranoia. Total lock down.

TRISHA
So much for our Youth Group trip to Orcas Island.

LAUREN
We'll start on day eight. This is our English teacher, Mis Murkowski, who we think is a paranoid schizo.

Lauren looks at Trisha expectantly.

TRISHA
What?

LAUREN
Do your Murkowski for them.

TRISHA
You do it. You're the actress.

LAUREN
Yes, but your Murkowski impression is funnier.

TRISHA
I think you're being modest.
(To audience.)
Lauren played Emily Webb in the Spring production of *Our Town*. She was SO good. You don't even know.

LAUREN
Will you just do it, please?

TRISHA
Okay, okay.

Trisha's posture changes as she clears her throat. she is about to transform.

LAUREN
Wait.

TRISHA

What?

LAUREN

You forgot Murkowski's glasses.

(To audience.)

These glasses are gorgeous.

Lauren has retrieved the ugliest pair of glasses in the entire world. She hands them to Trisha.

TRISHA

Ugh. Fine. Day eight.

LIGHT SHIFT AS WE TRANSITION TO:

We are inside a classroom full of teenage chattering.

Trisha has transformed fully into Miss Murkowski, who address her class.

Lauren looks onto the scene but is not really part of it, though she may provide sound effects.

TRISHA

Eyes here, class. Eyes on me.

(The noise begins to subside.)

Okey-dokey. I have a very important announcement to read on behalf of the Sheriff's Department, so listen closely.

(She reads from her hand as if it were a sheet of paper.)

In light of recent events all persons under the age of eighteen must go home directly after school.

(Groans. Miss Murkowski shushes them.)

No, none of that. This is for your protection.

(She continues reading.)

A strict curfew will be in place from sun down to sun up until further notice. Any persons not adhering to the curfew will face disciplinary action including, but not limited to, a two-hundred dollar fine. The curfew is in effect immediately. Thank you. Sheriff Dick Sparks. Sheriff's Department. Clear Creek County.

(She is finished reading.)

Boys and girls, it is imperative that you be careful out there. These are such dangerous times. As immortal as you might feel, you could be taken just like that.

(She snaps her fingers for emphasis.)

When I was your age I knew a girl, Erica Morrielli, and she disappeared. They looked for days, but eventually had to

(MORE)

TRISHA (cont'd)

admit defeat. *She ran away, we told ourselves. Girls run away all the time.* Two months later they found her corpse in an abandoned freezer. HER FACE HAD BEEN SCRAPED OFF. That's when I learned that these things happen all of the time and could happen to any of us. Why, I might be scooped off the street and thrown into the back of a van. It could happen. Somebody could drive me to some secluded location, tie me up, and abuse me in more ways than you could even imagine. It's a simple fact. I could be abused, sexually. I could be shot. I could be stabbed, starved, thrown into a well, frozen, dismembered... anything, really. But, lucky me, I know a trick.

(She retrieves a set of keys.)

Everybody take out your house keys. Now, you place the keys between two fingers like so. See how sharp and jagged that is? You can use that to gouge out the eyes of an attacker. Now I want you to shout while you do it.

(She punches outward and shouts out like she were in a self defense class.)

No!

(The teens shout "no" in unison.)

NO!

(Again, the teens echo her.)

NOOOOOOO!!!

(Quiet.)

That's right boys and girls. If a stranger ever comes up to you, somebody that makes you feel uncomfortable, and lays a hand on you... I want you to pop their eye out. Just like a cork. POP! These are our times, boys and girls. These are our times.

(Pause.)

Okey-Dokey. Mark Temple will now grace us with his essay on *The Lord of the Flies*. Mark, whenever you're ready.

LIGHT SHIFT AS:

Trisha removes the glasses and is herself again.

Lauren applauds.

LAUREN

That was really good and scary accurate.

TRISHA

Thanks, Lauren.

LAUREN

Moving on. Ladies and gentlemen, we now have the slight misfortune of introducing you to Penny Lauder and Breanna Stark who are-

TRISHA

Total fucking bitches!

LAUREN

Trisha! Try not to curse so much. You're here representing the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

TRISHA

I'm sorry, but they make me so mad.

LAUREN

Trisha's just upset because Penny-

TRISHA

Shut up, Lauren!

LAUREN

Okay, fine. Anyway, let's just say these aren't exactly the most popular girls in school.

TRISHA

They worship the devil!

LAUREN

This is Penny.

(**PENNY** appears in a bubble of light. Her look is sort of punky promiscuous.)

Penny is a little white trash and sort of a s-l-u-t, or so they say. She doesn't have a dad that I know of but her mom is, like, really young. She teaches my mom's pilates class. This is Breanna.

(**BREANNA** appears in a bubble of light. In contrast to her friend, Breanna is covered up in baggy skater's clothes like a boy.)

Breanna's family is sort of loaded, but nobody really likes her because people say she's a lesbian.

TRISHA

It's true. Breanna Stark used to be my best friend... I mean, we played lacrosse together and stuff. But then she grabbed my tit at an eighth grade sleepover.

LAUREN

You never told me that.

TRISHA

That was before we became friends and I became a Christian.

LAUREN

Oh.

(To audience.)

Anyway, that's enough exposition. We'll be back in a bit.

Kisses, bitches.

TRISHA

Lauren and Trisha exit.

LIGHTS SHIFT AND:

Penny and Breanna stand facing one another in a clearing.

They each hold a bottle of cough syrup.

One, two, three... GO.

PENNY

Penny starts to drink her cough syrup but sees that Breanna does not.

Will this work?

BREANNA

Yes, I told you it would, now just drink it. God! One, two, three, GO.

PENNY

They both chug their entire bottles.

Breanna almost gags.

It's hard to drink. Harder than Vodka.

BREANNA

John Stratton said it, like, totally fucked him up. Like he couldn't even walk.

PENNY

Wow.

BREANNA

I know, right?

PENNY

Should we have done that? I have a quiz tomorrow.

BREANNA

What quiz?

PENNY

A quiz in Algebra. BREANNA

There's no quiz in Algebra. PENNY

Yeah, there is. BREANNA

Shut up. No there isn't. PENNY

Yeah, there is. I told you like twenty times. BREANNA

When? PENNY

Like, twenty times. Plus we have curfew. BREANNA

Like I give a turd about curfews and quizzes. PENNY

I wish you'd listen to me more often. BREANNA

You should be less boring. You know all the guys at school said they'd never even talk to you if you didn't give oral? PENNY

Who said that? BREANNA

Lots of guys. PENNY

Which guys? BREANNA

I can't say. PENNY

I don't give oral. BREANNA

Yes huh. PENNY

I do not. BREANNA

Do too.

PENNY

Who?

BREANNA

Mark Temple.

PENNY

Just once.

BREANNA

So?

PENNY

So what?

BREANNA

So you give oral, that's what.

PENNY

Only once!

BREANNA

But if you didn't then no guys would talk to you and that's my point. You're boring and sometimes I question why I'm friends with you.

PENNY

So don't be.

BREANNA

Maybe I won't anymore. Maybe I'll hang out with Trisha Sorensen like you used to.

PENNY

Go ahead. Everybody would talk shit about you because everybody knows that Trisha pooped her pants at the Hot Springs and wiped her butt with a newspaper.

BREANNA

That's just a rumor.

PENNY

How would you know?

BREANNA

Because I'm the one who made it up.

PENNY

Penny!

BREANNA

PENNY
What? She's a bitch.

BREANNA
You are such a whore.

Penny suddenly grabs Breanna by the hair.

PENNY
Don't you ever call me that.

BREANNA
Sorry! God.
(Penny releases her.)
That really hurt.

PENNY
I meant it to.

BREANNA
God.

PENNY
Well...

BREANNA
What?

PENNY
You shouldn't have called me that. And stop saying "god" after everything. It's so annoying.

BREANNA
Sorry.
(Beat.)
People threw food at her in the cafeteria. We all called her "shit stain".

PENNY
What do you care? I thought you two weren't friends anymore.

BREANNA
We're not. But, I mean, what did Trisha Sorensen do to you?

PENNY
Nothing. Shut up.

BREANNA
No, seriously.

Nothing. God!
PENNY

Will you just tell me?
BREANNA

All right, all right. Stop giving me the third degree. God.
So remember when you and me and Stubby and Trisha and Jeff
were at The Olive Garden last Spring?
PENNY

Yeah.
What?
(Pause.)
BREANNA

I let Jeff Chalk finger me under the table--
PENNY

Oh my god, gross!
BREANNA

-And I didn't want Trisha to tell anybody!
PENNY

Penny, I know her. She wouldn't have told anybody.
BREANNA

Now she won't.
PENNY

Gross.
BREANNA

Shut up, Breanna.
PENNY

You are nasty.
BREANNA

I said shut up!
PENNY

Fine, jeez. You know, I don't see why you let Jeff do that.
Do you like him or something?
BREANNA

I don't know.
PENNY

You deserve better. Somebody who laughs at your jokes.
Somebody who appreciates your nature.
BREANNA

(The cough syrup high kicks in at this
precise second.)
Somebody who likes the way the sunlight bounces off your
golden hair.

(Beat.)
I feel dizzy.

PENNY
Yeah, well you just drank a whole bottle of cough medicine.
Dizzy is the goal, I guess.

BREANNA
I can see everything breathing.

PENNY
You retard.

BREANNA
Why are you so mean to people?

PENNY
Who knows?

BREANNA
Do you see that now? Everything is breathing.

PENNY
Yeah. Breanna?

BREANNA
Yeah?

PENNY
I think we should do it now.

BREANNA
Okay.

PENNY
Do you have the stuff?

BREANNA
Yeah.

PENNY
Then let's begin.

(The lights dim as eerie music begins to
play under the following scene. Penny
pulls a fancy looking knife from her
bag.)
We start by drawing a pentagram in the earth with the sacred
dagger.

(She hands an ornate dagger to Breanna,
who uses it to carve a pentagram into

the earth. Penny opens her backpack and retrieves five white candles and places one at each point of the pentagram's star. She looks at Breanna's work.)

That's a star of David, stupid. Do it over!

Breanna erases her work with her sneaker. She draws it again while Penny lights candles and sets them on each point of the pentagram's star.

Breanna unfolds a purple cloth. They sit on it.

BREANNA

(Chanting.)

This purple cloth is for protection.

PENNY

This purple cloth is for protection.

(Penny lights a black candle.)

Visit us, spirits. Bless us with your patronage.

PENNY & BREANNA

With this candle we invoke thee.

Penny pulls a metal bowl from her bag. Breanna pulls a plastic bag full of garlic from hers.

PENNY

We offer you this metal bowl full of garlic.

BREANNA

Speak with us.

Penny pulls a goblet from her bag.

PENNY

Did you bring the ceremonial wine?

(Breanna pulls a box of wine out of her bag. She pours some into the goblet.

Penny pricks her finger and squeezes the blood into the goblet.)

Breanna, give me your finger.

(Breanna timidly offers her finger. She lets out a tiny yelp as Penny pricks it. Breanna lets the blood drip into the goblet.)

Okay. Lie down.

(Breanna lies with her head in Penny's lap. Penny calls to the heavens while the music reaches a crescendo.)

We call the spirit of Jeff Chalk. Speak through this girl, Jeff. If you have left this mortal coil, enter our circle! Speak through his girl, Jeff Chalk! So mote it be! So mote it be! SO MOTE IT BE!

The music stops. Pause.

BREANNA

I don't feel good.

PENNY

Be serious.

BREANNA

I am serious. I think I'm gonna barf.

Breanna crawls to the edge of the stage and vomits.

PENNY

Idiot. You broke the circle. God!

BREANNA

Sorry. It's all that cough syrup.

PENNY

You can't handle your drugs. The cough syrup was supposed to enhance it.

BREANNA

I'm sorry.

PENNY

This sucks.

BREANNA

We can try again.

PENNY

It's no use. We're not powerful enough. We need four so we can call the corners.

BREANNA

Call the what now?

PENNY

CORNERS. Don't you read any of the books I give you? I swear... You have to call upon the powers of the North, South, East and West. Like in *The Craft*.

BREANNA

Right.

(Pause. Penny turns from Breanna and sulks.)

Penny, you hardly knew him.

PENNY

It seems that way but you don't know everything. Ever since that time at The Olive Garden I just... I love Jeff Chalk. I mean, I think I love him, kind of.

BREANNA

Wow.

PENNY

Right? And now I might not ever... I mean, I might not ever be able to talk to him again. If he ran away he might not come back. And if he's...

BREANNA

Don't.

PENNY

Well, he's been missing for over a week.

BREANNA

Search and Rescue is looking.

PENNY

So? Did they ever find me all those times I ran away? Search and Rescue didn't find me and I was just at Foot Locker. God, I'm freaking out.

BREANNA

It's okay.

PENNY

What if he's dead?

BREANNA

I'm sure he isn't. Anyway, you're better off without him. Guys are shit. I hate how girls are supposed to be these, like, flavorless non-people, these meek little things, just so we can be some dude's cum bucket and squirt out his awful babies.

PENNY

You've never been in love.

BREANNA

Maybe I haven't. But anyway, I'll never wear high heels.

PENNY

Don't be stupid. God!

BREANNA
Sorry. What will make you feel better.

PENNY
I don't know. I think my high wore off.

BREANNA
I know what we can do-

PENNY
I'm just gonna go home.

BREANNA
-We can go to Albertson's and do whippets!

PENNY
I don't wanna.

BREANNA
Come on.

PENNY
Who are you taking to the Harvest Dance?

BREANNA
What? I'm not going to that.

PENNY
If Jeff is alive... I mean, do you think if he comes back he'll ask me to the Harvest Dance? You're right. He's alive. Everything is gonna be fine. I'm gonna marry him some day.

BREANNA
It's dark. We should leave.

PENNY
Penelope Chalk...

BREANNA
I'm barfing to death.

PENNY
Mrs. Jeffrey Chalk...

BREANNA
LET'S GO.

PENNY
All right, already. God!

BREANNA
(As they exit.)
I think you're still high.

They are gone.

Lauren and Trisha reenter. They continue their presentation.

TRISHA

See? Total freak show.

LAUREN

Okay, now I don't want you to think I'm a b.i.t.c.h. because I would never make fun of somebody for being poor, but Penny Lauder lives in one of those manufactured homes they advertise on television.

TRISHA

It's so sordid.

LAUREN

You don't have to be mean.

TRISHA

She makes my skin crawl.

LAUREN

(While retrieving a pair of sweat pants and a remote control.)

I know. Here. Help me get into these sweat pants.

(Trisha opens the sweat pants and helps Lauren step into them. Lauren puts a scrunchy into her hair.)

Penny's mom always wears sweat pants. Like, always. And her hair is always pulled back into a scrunchy. She'd actually be really pretty if she'd only try. She's really young for a mom. Like, thirty-one or thirty-two. She went to Clear creek High School with my second cousin Rachel who said she was actually really popular.

TRISHA

Who knew?

LAUREN

Here is a picture of what life is like in the Lauder household. Part Two.

(Trisha writes "Part Two" on the board.)

DANCE MUSIC PLAYS. LIGHTS SHIFT TO:

Lauren has transformed into Mom, who is furiously doing pilates. She hears a noise and stops exercising.

LAUREN

Hello?

(She turns off the music with the remote control.)

Is somebody there? Penelope is that you? Hello?

Penny enters with Breanna. Mom is frightened and jumps.

PENNY

Yes, it's me. God!

LAUREN

You scared the shit out of me.

PENNY

Sorry.

LAUREN

Hello, Breanna. How is your mother?

BREANNA

She's sort of been-

LAUREN

Penelope, do you know what time it is? What the hell were you thinking?

PENNY

It's just eight.

LAUREN

There's a curfew. You think I don't know? Let me tell you something, I know everything. I got eyes on the back of my head and ears like a fox so don't you try anything.

BREANNA

Sorry, Mrs. Lauder. We were just doing one of our spells and lost track of time. Won't happen again.

LAUREN

You see that it doesn't. And I don't like this witch stuff, Penelope, not at all. I told you that already.

PENNY

Wicca is my religion, mother.

LAUREN

You're a Lutheran and you know it. Witchcraft or whatever is a, I don't know, a hobby. I gotta tell you, I'd prefer you take up water polo or something.

PENNY

I'm not a Lutheran and neither are you.

LAUREN

I am so a Lutheran!

PENNY

Oh yeah? When do you ever got to church?

LAUREN

I go plenty.

PENNY

Like when?

LAUREN

PLENTY.

PENNY

And when exactly did you decide to become a Lutheran again? When did you have that great epiphany that you should be a Lutheran?

LAUREN

You think you're so cute.

PENNY

Well...

LAUREN

You know that Grandma and Grandpa are Lutherans and their parents before them. Don't change the subject.

PENNY

I can't remember what the subject is.

LAUREN

I'll tell you, miss smarty pants. You just waltzed through my front door after curfew when something absolutely bonkers is happening in this town. That's the subject. And what if you'd been caught? Picked up by the police? They'd fine me. Deem meet an unfit mother and take you away maybe. You want that? And don't call me "mother". It's passive aggressive the way you say it and I don't like it. My name is mom.

PENNY

I'll call you mom if you call me Penny.

LAUREN

Fine. Have it your way. But I'll have you know Penelope was married to Odysseus. I mean, she was only a queen for Christ's sake.

PENNY

I know, I know. Jesus! What's for dinner?

LAUREN

I didn't cook.

(Penny glares at her.)

I was too nervous! You had me biting my nails, girly. Anyway, from the looks of that gut I'd say you've had enough. If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times. If you don't stop gaining weight no boys will ever ask you out.

PENNY

Mom, please...

LAUREN

I say these things out of love. Do you want to die alone? Hmm? If you keep eating garbage do you know what will happen? One day you'll put on that special little black dress and you'll take a look at yourself in the mirror and it'll look like you're trash bag full of hamburger meat. I promise you that.

PENNY

Stop nagging, please. I'm hungry and so is Breanna.

LAUREN

Well, Breanna lives in that great big house up on Hillcrest so I'd bet she's got food there. In a two thousand dollar stainless steel fridge!

BREANNA

(Quietly.)

They bought it at Sears.

LAUREN

As for you... microwave some popcorn. NOT the Butter Lover's.

PENNY

Breanna is staying the night here.

LAUREN

I didn't say she could do that.

PENNY

Please?

BREANNA

If it's okay.

PENNY

You can't send her home in the dark. Kids are dropping like flies.

LAUREN

That's not funny.

PENNY

I didn't mean it to be.

LAUREN

That poor boy is out there in the dark somewhere tonight. Think about that.

BREANNA

We're really sad about Jeff.

LAUREN

Bless your heart. See, Penelope? Why can't you be more like your friend here? At least she knows how to act like a lady.

BREANNA

Wow.

PENNY

Can she stay the night or not?

LAUREN

I'm sorry, girls, but it's a school night. I'll drive you home, Breanna. I have to go out anyway. I'm all out of Crystal Light. Just let me get cleaned up.

(Lauren, as Mom, exits.)

PENNY

Brown noser.

BREANNA

Stop.

PENNY

Well, you are.

BREANNA

I was being polite. You want her to like me, don't you?

PENNY

Like you, not hump you. She practically gets wet every time you come here.

BREANNA

Gross!

Tell me about it. PENNY

Pause.

I don't want to go home. BREANNA

I know. This sucks. PENNY

I don't want to be alone. I want to sleep with you. I hear noises at night. A man. When I'm lying in bed I can hear his footsteps in the driveway. Footsteps in the gravel. BREANNA

There's no man in your driveway. PENNY

I know what I hear. BREANNA

Look, I wish you could stay too, but you can't. Anyway, we need to think of a way that we can help find Jeff. Like something nobody's thought of. PENNY

I don't really think he's alive. BREANNA

What? PENNY

I'm sorry, but I don't. I was trying to make you feel better, but I don't believe it. Not anymore. BREANNA

God, Breanna! PENNY

Well, you know what happens to people who disappear around here just as well as I do. BREANNA

Shut up. PENNY

Are you mad? BREANNA

Yes. PENNY

BREANNA
Do you hate me?

PENNY
Yes.

BREANNA
I'm sorry.

PENNY
It's fine.

BREANNA
Maybe I'm wrong and he's okay.

PENNY
No. You don't get to do that. You don't get to take things back when you upset somebody.

BREANNA
Okay. Then I think Jeff Chalk is dead. I think something really shitty happened to him and now he's dead. Happy? Man, I let you walk all over me and I never say anything just because I want you to like me, or whatever.

PENNY
Dumb bitch.

Lauren, as Mom, enters with her car keys.

LAUREN
Okay. Let's go. Penelope, I want you to lock the doors behind us, all right?

PENNY
Okay.

LAUREN
And I want your homework started by the time I get back. Do you understand?

(Penny and Breanna are locking eyes.)
Look at me. HEY! Grades are important. I don't want you to ruin your life the way I ruined mine.

PENNY
Okay, okay.

LAUREN
I'll be back in a half an hour. Love you!

Lauren, as Mom, exits.

PENNY

(Quietly.)
Get. Out. Of. My. House.

Breanna sheepishly leaves.

Penny paces back and forth slowly,
thinking.

PENNY

Mrs. Chalk. Mrs. Penelope Chalk. Penelope Louis Chalk.
Penelope Lauder Chalk.

She continues to pace and talk to
herself as Trisha enters and
observes her. Penny doesn't see
her.

TRISHA

(To audience.)
Charming.

(During the next few lines she sets up
for the next scene, placing a television
and chair. She puts on a men's track
jacket and baseball cap, but does not
transform.)

So this is sort of a sub section of Part Two. Let's call it
Part Two A.

(She adds an A next to where "Part Two"
is written.)

Around this time it's pretty common for us girls to sleep
over at each others houses in big groups. Even on school
nights. Not because we're all bull dykes like Breanna Stark,
but because it just feels safer. Fun fact. The noise that
Breanna heard was actually her own eyelashes brushing
against her pillow case and not a man's footsteps in the
gravel like she thought. She never figured that one out. I
know this because I'm the narrator and I'm
whatchamacallit... omniscient.

(She sits down in the chair with the
television in her lap.)

Anyways, this is the dream that Penny had that night.

LIGHTS SHIFT TO:

We are somewhere dark and surreal.
Strange noises drift quietly from
the shadows.

Trisha has transformed into Jeff
Chalk. She sits in the chair with
the television in her lap. She
dully flips through the channels,
transfixed.

Penny, who has been pacing through all of this, notices her.

PENNY

Jeff?

TRISHA

I can't get ESPN down here. It totally sucks.

PENNY

Where are we?

TRISHA

A hole. A basement?

PENNY

Are you hurt? Something is different about you.

TRISHA

I'm bored. I've been spending most of my days asleep. Waiting for something to happen. Nothing ever happens around here. I guess this is something though, isn't it?

PENNY

I don't understand. Is someone holding you here or--

TRISHA

He gave me this tv to watch. No cable though. I've been watching a lot of *M.A.S.H.* That shit is always on.

PENNY

Come back with me. You know, you're more popular than ever. Suddenly everybody thinks you're like the greatest guy who ever lived. I got called into the principal's office to talk to the police. They don't have a fucking clue.

TRISHA

I'm kind of lucky when you think about it. When I get out of here I'll be like a total celebrity. In the papers and shit.

PENNY

You're already in the papers. Listen, I was wondering... do you like me?

TRISHA

You seem sad a lot of the time.

PENNY

I am. Aren't you?

TRISHA

Not really. Wanna watch *The Price is Right*?

PENNY

Sure.

(She watches television with him.)

When it happened the first time I couldn't tell if you really liked me at all. I'm still not sure.

TRISHA

Ssh.

PENNY

What you did, I've never let anybody do that to me. And I really like it when we meet by the creek but I don't know why we have to keep it a secret.

TRISHA

This dude comes down here sometimes. He's okay. At first I thought this was all some kind of gay thing because he asks to touch my face all the time. That's it. Just touch my face. I thought it was creepy at first, but now I'm used to it. I mean, as long as he doesn't do anything else. It's funny, I'm so used to being told what to do. I guess I was used to it. Down here though... I mean, at least he asks me first. The guy loves me. Not in a gay way. I think he's just lonely. Anyway, he gets me whatever I want as long as I let him touch my face and I talk to him when he wants, and like that.

(She smacks the side of the television.)

I'm thinking of asking for cable. Man, it's gonna be awesome when I go back. Things will be different because I'm different. Something different finally happened to me.

PENNY

I wish you'd touch me like that. I'd like it.

TRISHA

I'm watching my show.

PENNY

Come back with me.

TRISHA

I can't. Everything is gonna be different now.

Penny exits.

LIGHTS SHIFT TO:

Trisha gets out of Jeff drag as Lauren enters and joins her. They continue speaking to the audience.

LAUREN
So here's the 411 on Jeff Chalk. He's not especially smart.

TRISHA
Or very interesting.

LAUREN
He's athletic.

TRISHA
He's all body.

LAUREN
Yeah. That body is... wow.

TRISHA
He's cute.

LAUREN
He's gorgeous.

TRISHA
Tell them about the horse girls.

LAUREN
There are these girls at school we call the horse girls. They're girls who live on farms, usually. They have greasy hair and Target jeans and are really quiet. Thing is, they all love horses. They sit there and draw horses in their notebook all day long, never talking to anybody.

TRISHA
There's five or six of them. Kelly Sanders is one.

LAUREN
I'm secretly kind of one of them. I mean, I love horses. My grandparents have this ranch in California. It's amazing there. When I was twelve I fell in love with this horse named Foggy. I'd, like, groom him and ride him and whisper all my stupid secrets to him. I felt so close to him, even though he was sort of quiet and aloof as horses tend to be. He was my best friend that summer, which must sound totally queer.

TRISHA
Horses are a metaphor!
(Lauren glares at her.)
I apologize.

LAUREN
Anyway, one day I was leading Foggy through a field when I slipped in mud and fell. It was quick as lightning and I guess the impact of my little body hitting the dirt must
(MORE)

LAUREN (cont'd)

have spooked him. He reared up his front legs and came down on me. Hard. His hoof hit me right on the ear. And I was wearing these really cute earrings I got for my birthday too. It was shocking because I'd trusted him so much, you know? I was like, F you, Foggy! I didn't go near him for the rest of the summer. But I wanted to. Because he was so beautiful. And the fact that he was all aloof and dangerous made me want to be near him even more. And, really, that is sort of how Jeff Chalk is.

TRISHA

He's also a shoe-in for Prom King in a couple of years.

LAUREN

Oh, and also, this one time, Jeff got a bloody nose in P.E. when Stubby hit him in the face with a volleyball and I saw Penny Lauder pick up the bloody tissue and put it in her pocket.

TRISHA

You lie.

LAUREN

For real.

TRISHA

What did you do?

LAUREN

Nothing, but it was really weird. I was P.O.'d at her. Like, really mad.

TRISHA

What she did was vomit worthy.

LAUREN

No, actually. Because I didn't want her to have it.

TRISHA

I'm dying. This is a train wreck.

LAUREN

Let's move on. Day twelve. Part Three.

Trisha brings the tally on the board to twelve as--

LIGHTS SHIFT. BOOTY SHAKING MUSIC AS:

Lauren and Trisha are dancing like women in a hip hop video, much too suggestively for girls their age.

TRISHA

The Harvest dance, bitches!

LAUREN

Trisha! No cursing! Oh! And Penny and Breanna are friends again. That's just how it is here. Go with it.

The music fades into a slow jam as Trisha and Lauren fade into the dark corners in the background.

On either side of the stage's rear, they slow dance with their backs turned to the audience. Their arms are crossed over their breasts and their hands caress their backs, creating the illusion they are each a couple slow dancing.

Penny and Breanna enter and awkwardly sway back and forth to the music.

BREANNA

Some dance. What kind of dance ends at 4:30 in the afternoon anyway?

PENNY

I love the theme. "Under the Sea". Ha!

BREANNA

Yeah, these butcher paper starfish make me feel like a mermaid.

PENNY

Look at Ashley.

BREANNA

Just because she's got huge jugs she thinks she's better than everybody.

PENNY

I would never wear that dress. What a skank.

BREANNA

I know. You could get hepatitis just from looking. I can't stand her.

PENNY

Me neither. Wait, who is she dancing with? Is that--

BREANNA

It's John Stratton. I thought he liked you. Guess not.

PENNY

Whatever. I don't care.

BREANNA

Me neither. Why are we here, anyway? I'd rather be doing, like, anything.

PENNY

I know, right? I wish Jeff were here.

BREANNA

I know.

PENNY

I had a dream about him, you know. I dream about him all the time now.

BREANNA

That's messed up.

PENNY

Do you think he would ask me to dance? If he were here, I mean?

BREANNA

You'd probably have to ask him. Guys suck that way.

PENNY

I think he would.

BREANNA

Maybe. We should cast a spell to make Ashley's breasts fall off.

PENNY

We can't do that. It would come back to us three times fold.

BREANNA

I know. It would just be fun, is all. Anyway, I know you and Jeff had some sort of... connection. But I think you're only hung up on him because he's gone now and the whole town's obsessed with him.

PENNY

That's not it. Anyway, why not obsess over him? He is the most popular guy in school.

BREANNA

Since when does that matter to you?

PENNY

I don't know. It's just... why does it have to be just us all the time, you know?

BREANNA

Oh.

PENNY

No, I mean, you're my best friend. But there are other people in the world besides just us.

BREANNA

Yeah, but we hate them.

PENNY

Yeah, but what if we don't have to. Seriously, sometimes it just feels like this whole town is just me and you and, like, two other people. Maybe we should broaden our horizons.

BREANNA

I don't want to. We both grew up here, we have fifteen years of experience that says we're better than them. We're getting out of here. Just look at how powerful our magic has gotten in the past six months.

PENNY

What magic? Nothing ever works.

BREANNA

You're so cynical.

PENNY

Whatever.

BREANNA

Seriously, Penny, I think you're really special. I think there's this sweet, sensitive, gorgeous person inside of you that nobody notices. But I notice. I just wanted you to know.

PENNY

Wow. Thank you.

BREANNA

I'm serious. I wish you saw yourself the way that I see you.

(Pause)

Quiet! Here comes Trisha Sorensen.

Trisha dances downstage from her shadowy corner.

What's up, ladies? TRISHA

Hey, Trisha. PENNY & BREANNA

Some dance, huh? TRISHA

Yeah, it's awesome. BREANNA

Have you guys seen Mark Temple? TRISHA

No. Thank God. BREANNA

Oh, right. I forgot you gave him a bj. TRISHA

I did not! BREANNA

Oh. I'm sorry. Was I not supposed to know that? Well, I know a lot, Breanna Stark. TRISHA

Leave us alone. PENNY

I'm not doing anything. Anyway, if you see Mark tell him I'm looking for him. I think he's avoiding me. TRISHA

I can't imagine why. BREANNA

Hey... TRISHA

Hey what? BREANNA

You didn't happen to hear a rumor about me, did you? TRISHA

No, not at all. BREANNA

Whatever. I'm gonna go find Mark. Kisses, bitches. TRISHA

Trisha retreats to her shadowy corner and continues to impersonate a slow dancing couple.

BREANNA

I hate her.

PENNY

You and everybody else.

BREANNA

Let's hit the snack table. I want some calamari.

PENNY

I'm not allowed.

BREANNA

You're not fat.

PENNY

Tell that to my mom.

BREANNA

She hates fat.

PENNY

I know. God! It's like she's pushing me to purge.

BREANNA

Well, do you want to dance?

PENNY

What? With you?

BREANNA

Sure.

PENNY

We can't do that. What would people say?

BREANNA

What do you mean? Lots of girls are dancing together.

PENNY

(Looking around.)

Okay, I guess.

(They begin to awkwardly slow dance.)

I'm glad we're friends again.

BREANNA

Me too. Let's never fight again.

Breanna lays her head on penny's shoulder. They slow dance for a minute.

Lauren approaches them.

LAUREN

Hi, guys.

PENNY & BREANNA

Hi Lauren.

LAUREN

It's weird that Jeff's not here, isn't it?

PENNY

Yeah.

LAUREN

I kind of wanted him to ask me, but...

PENNY

I think a lot of girls did.

LAUREN

Yeah, well. Anyway, I want to ask you something. This is kind of awkward. Did either of you spread a rumor that Trisha had an accident in her pants?

PENNY

What? No.

LAUREN

No, I know. That's what I told her too, but... she thinks you did it, Breanna.

BREANNA

Me?

LAUREN

Because you're not friends anymore. Her feelings are really hurt. I mean, she's actually really sensitive.

BREANNA

Right.

LAUREN

Can I ask you guys another question? You don't have to answer.

PENNY

Okay.

LAUREN

Are you guys really witches?

PENNY

Yeah.

LAUREN

Oh. Well, I want you to know that you're always welcome at youth group. It's really fun. We meet at the flagpole in the lawn every morning if you ever---

BREANNA

Thanks.

(To Penny.)

Let's go.

PENNY

Okay.

LAUREN

Anyway, bye. Have fun!

Penny and Breanna exit.

Trisha approaches Lauren.

TRISHA

Why were you just talking to Breanna and Penny?

LAUREN

I wasn't.

TRISHA

Then what the fuck was that I just saw? I thought I told you not to talk to them.

LAUREN

Who are you cursing at right now? Seriously, it must be someone else.

TRISHA

You're supposed to be *my* friend.

LAUREN

I am.

TRISHA

Then why were you just chatting it up with that carpet muncher and that trailer trash?

LAUREN

Look, I was just trying to find out if they were the ones who spread that rumor about you.

TRISHA

I already know that they were.

LAUREN

How?

TRISHA

Because Emily Grey told me that Penny told her. I told you that already. Man, I'm gonna kick Penny Lauder's ass!

LAUREN

Did it ever occur to you that people wouldn't spread rumors about you if you were a little nicer to them?

TRISHA

I AM NICE. I mean, I try to be nice but some people make it really hard. They're such freak shows! Especially Breanna. God, I hate her! It's like, she knows this person who *used* to be me, but isn't me anymore. You know? I wanna be like, *you don't know my fuckin' life, bitch!*

LAUREN

I think they're kind of interesting.

TRISHA

What? I'm gagging.

LAUREN

I know they're going to hell and everything, but at least they don't care what anybody thinks of them. That's more than I can say for some people around here.

TRISHA

Fine. Hang out with them. Sacrifice cats. See if I care. I'm gonna go find Mark.

Trisha exits.

Lauren looks to the audience.

LAUREN

That's terrific. You try to help somebody on they poop on you. Anyway, Part Three, I guess. Day fourteen. Two weeks in.

She brings the tally on the chalkboard to fourteen and writes "Part Three".

LIGHTS SHIFT. CREEPY MUSIC...

Behind the football field Penny and Breanna play with a ouija board.

Stop moving it. BREANNA

I'm not moving it. PENNY

Well, I'm not moving it. BREANNA

I know. PENNY

(Suddenly putting on her mysterious voice.)
It's the spirits. They're all around us, called upon by our magicks.

Creepy. BREANNA

Do not fear the spirits, Breanna. PENNY

Okay. BREANNA

Now ask your question. PENNY

Now? Just, like, ask? BREANNA

Ask. PENNY

Okay. Um... spirits? Does John Stratton like Penny-- BREANNA

Breanna! PENNY

-- Because he was dancing with Ashley. BREANNA

You can't ask the spirits that! God! PENNY

Why not? BREANNA

Because it's totally trivial, is why. PENNY

It's not trivial to me. BREANNA

Ask them something else. PENNY

Fine. BREANNA

(Pause.)
I can't think of anything.

Let me. PENNY

(Mysterious voice.)
Spirit world, tell me... is Jeff Chalk still alive.

As the indicator begins to move
they read its answers in unison.

The lights dim. Music.

Yes. PENNY & BREANNA

Did he run away? PENNY

No. PENNY & BREANNA

Was he abducted? BREANNA

Yes. PENNY & BREANNA

Where is he now? PENNY

U-N-D-E-R-G-R-O-U-N-D. PENNY & BREANNA
Underground.

Buried? BREANNA

No. PENNY & BREANNA

In a cellar? PENNY

Yes. PENNY & BREANNA

Will somebody find him? PENNY

Yes. PENNY & BREANNA

When? PENNY

S-O-O-N. Soon. PENNY & BREANNA

Soon? Soon, *when*? PENNY

S-O-O-N. PENNY & BREANNA

When the fuck is soon? Today? PENNY

Yes. PENNY & BREANNA

Is he okay? PENNY

(The indicator begins to spin around on the board furiously, not landing on anything.)

IS HE OKAY?

Penny... BREANNA

I said, is he okay? PENNY

The indicator lands on "goodbye".

Goodbye. Shit, Penny. That was really creepy. BREANNA

Oh my god. Jeff is alive. PENNY

Penny-- BREANNA

PENNY

My dream wasn't a dream. It was a prophecy.

BREANNA

Prophecy?

PENNY

Like when you see the future?

BREANNA

I know what it means.

PENNY

Don't you see? This means our magic is getting stronger.

BREANNA

Quiet. Here comes Trisha Sorensen.

Trisha enters with Lauren behind her.

TRISHA

Well, well, well. If it isn't he bitches of Eastwick.
Sacrificing cats?

LAUREN

Trisha...

TRISHA

(To Lauren.)

Quiet, you.

BREANNA

What do you want, Trisha?

TRISHA

Nothing. I just thought I smelled cheap hair product out here. Now I know why.

BREANNA

Just leave us alone.

TRISHA

I'm not bothering anyone. Am I bothering anyone, Lauren?

(Lauren opens her mouth to respond but

Trisha cuts her off when she notices

Penny sitting pensively.)

Why is she being so quiet?

BREANNA

Lauren, get her away from us, please.

TRISHA

(To Penny.)

I know it was you who started that rumor about me. I just want you to know I plan on telling everybody about Jeff Chalk and the Olive Garden. I mean *everybody*.

BREANNA

You tell anybody that and I'll beat the shit out of you.

TRISHA

Excuse me?

BREANNA

You heard me.

TRISHA

Protecting your pig dyke girlfriend? You want to fight me?

BREANNA

That's what I said.

TRISHA

I'd like to see you try, hag.

BREANNA

Bitch.

TRISHA

LESBO. God, what happened to you? You used to be normal. I can't believe I was ever friends with you. Consider your membership to the secret society of super awesome sisterhood officially revoked.

BREANNA

I don't care.

TRISHA

WE TOOK A BLOOD OATH.

Penny comes between them.

PENNY

You know what? I'm sorry. I started that rumor and I shouldn't have so... I'm sorry.

TRISHA

What?

PENNY

Yeah, i was scared you would tell people about Jeff and I guess I just sort of freaked out. I'm sorry. Friends?

LAUREN

See, she apologized Trisha. Let's just go now.

TRISHA

(To Penny.)

What are you trying to do?

PENNY

Nothing. I'm just apologizing.

TRISHA

You're up to something. I can tell.

PENNY

I'm being sincere. I swear.

LAUREN

(Placating Trisha.)

See, that's nice.

(To Penny.)

Apology accepted, Penny.

TRISHA

Will you just shut the fuck up, Lauren? You're always *blah, blah, blah* and I'm sick of it. You think you're so much better than everybody else.

LAUREN

No I don't! I... you know what? No. That's it. I can't help you anymore, Trisha. God knows I've tried, but I just... You're a heathen, plain and simple. AND EVEN JESUS HAD LIMITS. I'm leaving.

Lauren exits.

Trisha calls after her.

TRISHA

Good riddance!

(Back to Penny.)

You think you're so cool. I don't know what Jeff saw in you.

PENNY

Jeff?

TRISHA

Jeff. *Jeff* Jeff. He told me he was going to ask you out.

BREANNA

You're an asshole.

TRISHA

I'm totally one-hundred percent serious. That was before he disappeared, of course. Poor Penelope Lauder. The one boy who liked her disappeared and then she spent the rest of her life alone with her cats and her satanism and her pig dyke life partner.

BREANNA

Shut up, shit stain!

PENNY

Jeff was going to ask me out?

TRISHA

Maybe he was and maybe he wasn't.

PENNY

Was he?

BREANNA

Get out of here, Trisha.

TRISHA

No!

Breanna grabs her by the hair and yanks her as hard as she can. She does not let go.

BREANNA

I said... Get. Out. Of. Here.

Breanna throws Trisha to the ground, releasing her.

TRISHA

You're gonna be sorry you did that. Just wait until you hear what I just heard, you stupid bitch!

Trisha retreats into the shadows, where she begins to transition.

BREANNA

What a fucking asshole.

PENNY

I had to get rid of her. I don't feel good.

BREANNA

Penny, what's wrong?

PENNY

I have a funny feeling, I guess.

BREANNA

What kind of feeling?

Trisha suddenly reenters the light
as Miss Murkowski.

TRISHA

Penelope! Breanna! What did you do to Trisha Sorensen? I
just saw her crying!

BREANNA

Nothing, she--

TRISHA

-- Never mind that now. Come with me into the gym. Something
has happened.

LIGHTS SHIFT AND...

We are in the gym. Anxious chatting
fills the air.

TRISHA

Okey-dokey. Listen up, boys and girls. Eyes here. Eyes on
me.

(The chattering doesn't stop so she
blows into a whistle. It stops
immediately.)

Listen to me. I hate to be the bearer of bad news. There's
been a break in the Jeffrey Chalk case. I want you all to be
on guard. Mrs. Chal was collecting her mail, when...

(Lauren, as Mrs. Chalk has appeared in a
bubble of light. She is dressed in a
bath robe and holds a manila envelope.
She opens the envelope and peers inside.
She screams. She puts her hand in the
envelope and slowly lifts its contents.
It is a human finger. She faints.
Her light goes out.)

Police and search parties will continue to look for the rest
of Jeffrey, but I regret to inform you he is presumed dead.

(Strangely, Miss Murkowski begins to
speak in gibberish.)

*Blah blah blobbity-blah. Blah blah blah... blah. In the
meantime, blah blah blobbity-blah...*

Miss Murkowski's gibberish begins
to fade out until--

LIGHT SHIFT...

In the car. Lauren, as Mom, drives Penny and Breanna home. She is in a panic.

LAUREN

Right here in our own town! Breanna, I want you to try calling your parents again as soon as we get to the house.

BREANNA

I just don't know where they could be. I hope they didn't go away for the weekend without telling me again.

LAUREN

They wouldn't do that, sweetie.

BREANNA

Sure they would. They do it all the time. They go to, like, conventions.

LAUREN

I went to a science fiction convention with my sister last year. She just loves *Star Trek*.

BREANNA

Yeah, not that kind of convention.

PENNY

Breanna's parents are swingers.

LAUREN

Penelope!

PENNY

What? It's true.

LAUREN

That is not true. Is that true, Brenna?

BREANNA

Yes.

LAUREN

Rich people are crazy.

PENNY

Mother!

LAUREN

I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Breanna. I'm just a little anxious. I need a Valium or something.

PENNY

At your stress level a person needs black tar heroin.

LAUREN

PENNY. Do you understand what's happened? Right here in our own town? You girls don't know how lucky you are to be young and healthy. Each day of life is a gift. It's a cliché, but it's true.

(To Penny.)

And you! You were a blue baby, Penelope, blue as a damn Smurf and you almost died.

PENNY

Please don't tell this story. It's so gay.

LAUREN

Penelope!

PENNY

What? God!

LAUREN

You're cousin Seamus is a gay and I don't think he'd like to hear you talk that way.

PENNY

What guy would sleep with Seamus? He has a birthmark on his face that makes him look like a burn victim.

LAUREN

Well, I don't like it.

PENNY

Just please don't tell the story. I feel awful

BREANNA

I'd like to hear it.

PENNY

God!

LAUREN

You were blue. I don't know what causes it, something to do with nitrates in the blood or some such thing, but you sure were blue which apparently really bad in infants. Not to mention your umbilical cord was strangling you as you emerged from the womb... *blah blah blobbity blah...*

(Her language begins to devolve into gibberish as something strange happens to the lights. Penny stares out her window.)

Blah blah blobbity blah blah blah...

(Slowly, as if in a dream, Trisha appears in a bubble of light as Jeff

Chalk. She is missing a finger. She waves at Penny slowly. Penny, confused, waves back. Trisha disappears as the lights go back to normal.)

Blobbity blah blah blah. So, yeah, you're lucky to be alive, Miss Tough Stuff. And I'm lucky too.

BREANNA

That is such a sweet story.

LAUREN

Bless your little heart.

PENNY

I don't feel good.

LAUREN

What's wrong? Did you eat too much at school?

PENNY

I'm gonna be sick.

LAUREN

What?

BREANNA

Oh my god.

PENNY

Pull over.

The car stops. Penny gets out and runs to the edge of the stage and vomits. Lauren calls to her.

LAUREN

Are you okay, honey?

(Penny wipes her mouth but doesn't answer.)

Penelope?

PENNY

Yes, I'm fine.

Penny gets back into the car.

LAUREN

Do you want to lie down in the back seat?

PENNY

I said I was fine. Just drive. God!

(Lauren starts the engine. They drive in silence for a way.)

(MORE)

I'm gonna have a baby.

PENNY (cont'd)

Lauren and Breanna stare at her.

What did you just say?

LAUREN

I'm having Jeff Chalk's baby. I don't want to talk about it.

PENNY

Silence.

Trisha enters and speaks to the audience.

Go have some Orangeade. Come back in ten minutes.

TRISHA

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

Lauren and Trisha continue their presentation.

LAUREN

Welcome back.

TRISHA

Hi. Hello.

LAUREN

Is everybody comfortable?

TRISHA

Did you have some Orangeade?

LAUREN

Awesome. Let's start. This is twenty days in now.

(Trisha brings the tally on the board to twenty.)

Complete and utter chaos. Everywhere you go it's stangely quiet, but you can feel terror just beneath. It's weird, Jeff Chalk was just plain old Jeff Chalk from school, and now... Now he is a local obsession. Not just for us, for for everybody. Part Four.

(Trisha writes "part four" on the board.)

Ready, Trisha?

TRISHA

Yep.

LAUREN

Ready, set, go.

Lauren exits as Penny enters and--

LIGHTS SHIFT TO...

The same clearing from Act One. Penny and Trisha stand facing one another. Trisha has a bottle of cough syrup.

PENNY

One, two, three... GO!

Trisha chugs it.

TRISHA

Sick!

PENNY

It totally works though. You get so fucked up.

TRISHA

Really?

PENNY

Absolutely. I would do some too, but the baby and all...

TRISHA

Yeah. You know, I was at Old Navy and they had the cutest baby clothes. They had this pink hoodie that says "hot stuff" in rhinestones, only it's for a baby!

PENNY

Wow.

TRISHA

We should totally go.

PENNY

Okay.

TRISHA

Oh my god, I'm glad we're friends now. Lauren never does anything like this. We probably would've been friends sooner if you weren't spending so much time with that lesbian pig, Breanna Stark.

PENNY

She won't get off my tit. Every time I turn around she's there begging for my attention. People ask me if I'm afraid to have a baby and I tell them I already have one.

TRISHA

She probably has a big crush on you. Breanna Stark is a dyke. Everybody knows that.

PENNY

She's okay. She's just freaked out by everything that's been happening.

TRISHA

Mark Temple said she gave, like, the worst head ever. She must be a dyke.

PENNY

So? I think it's okay to be gay as long as you, like, keep it to yourself.

TRISHA

Gross.

PENNY

Anyway, I don't have time to coddle her. I've got my own shit to deal with, you know? They haven't found Jeff yet. Just his finger. I wonder what he would say. Do you think he'd be happy or do you think he'd want to get rid of it?

TRISHA

Men hate babies.

PENNY

That's not true.

TRISHA

Oh yeah? Where's your father? Where's mine? Face it. Men hate babies.

PENNY

Still. I'd like to find him and tell him. I never told anybody this, but before he was gone we would meet in secret sometimes. Down by the creek. We didn't talk much though. We mostly just kissed. He was a really wet kisser. I had to wipe my face with my sleeve. Sometimes it was more than that. He'd put his finger in me or I'd give him a bj... But all that time, every time we were together, he never gave me any indication as to how he really felt about me. If he just would've touched me in a certain way, just maybe touched my face in a gentle way, I would have known. No such luck.

TRISHA

Guys never tell you how they really feel. They're pricks that way.

PENNY

I guess.

TRISHA

I feel weird.

PENNY

I wonder if there's a way I can communicate with him...

TRISHA

Penny?

PENNY

By magic, I mean.

TRISHA

I feel bad.

PENNY

I'll consult my book of shadows.
(Trisha groans and crawls away from Penny.)

Are you even listening to me?

TRISHA

I feel dizzy.

PENNY

Of course you do. That's supposed to happen. But does it feel good?

TRISHA

No.

PENNY

Pay attention to your body. How does it feel?

TRISHA

I guess it feels good.

PENNY

Yeah?

TRISHA

Yeah. It feels good.

PENNY

Good.

Lauren enters.

LAUREN

What are you guys doing here?

TRISHA

What are you doing here?

LAUREN

I come here to study sometimes. What happened to you, Trisha? You look awful.

TRISHA

I'm fucking trippin'!

LAUREN

You drank cough syrup?

(Trisha laughs uncontrollably.)

Awesome. That's brilliant, Trish. Next I suppose you'll become a meth head.

PENNY

Don't overreact. It's no big deal.

I'm not overreacting!

LAUREN

What, you never get high?

PENNY

No, actually, I want to go to Stanford so I try not to be totally bombed all the time.

LAUREN

DON'T JUDGE ME.

TRISHA

I know! God!

PENNY

Penny, are you high too?

LAUREN

No. I'm pregnant.

PENNY

That's why I was asking. I'd have to tell the authorities if I thought you were in danger of hurting your unborn baby.

LAUREN

Shut the fuck up, Lauren.

PENNY

Yeah. Leave us alone.

TRISHA

I have to go, anyway. I'm memorizing my lines for the play. I got the lead. We're doing *Wit*.

LAUREN

Lauren exits.

PENNY

Bitch.

TRISHA

She's just jealous because she liked Jeff.

PENNY

Her?

TRISHA

Didn't you know?

PENNY

No.

TRISHA

I thought everybody knew that. Hey, who do you think the most popular boy is now that Jeff is dead?

PENNY

Nobody knows if Jeff is dead.

TRISHA

Sorry. *Probably* dead, then.

PENNY

I don't know. Mark Temple?

TRISHA

I think so too!

PENNY

Trisha, let's do a spell.

TRISHA

I can't. I'm a Christian.

PENNY

No, you aren't.

TRISHA

Well, I'm trying to be but I'm having a crisis of faith or something. Turns out it's a lot harder than I thought. There's a lot of rules to learn. Things I'm not supposed to do.

PENNY

You don't have to participate. You can just be my helper.

TRISHA

Uh, okay. What sort of spell should we do?

PENNY

Well, I found this protection spell for pregnancy and I sort of want to try it.

TRISHA

I feel like shit, Penny.

PENNY

Do you want to help or not?

TRISHA

Okay, okay.

PENNY

I mean, it's not all that involved or anything. It's just a precaution, is all.

TRISHA

Against what?

PENNY

Well, it's like, what if everything that's been happening around here, everything negative, what if it could, like, effect the baby? What if the baby was born sad? Like I was.

TRISHA

That's stupid. People aren't born sad.

PENNY

I think I was. Have you ever noticed that some people have, like, an essential quality? Sadness or happiness or anger or whatever. On the happiest day of my life, I think you'd still be able to sense a little hint of sadness, just under the surface. Like it's always there. That's what I mean.

TRISHA

I think I was born pissed off. Maybe it's hormonal, but most of the time I just want to punch people in the face.

PENNY

Anyway, I don't want to pass that on.

TRISHA

Okay, okay. What do we do?

Penny rummages through her bag and retrieves an apple, a dagger and a green candle.

She passes the candle to Trisha.

PENNY

Here. Light this.

Trisha lights the candle.

Penny cuts the apple in half.

TRISHA

This candle smells like Pine-Sol.

PENNY

Pine is for fertility. The green is for luck. Okay, come over here.

(Trisha comes closer to Penny.)

I'm going to lay me head in your lap.

(Penny hands half of the apple to Trisha.)

You rub this on my belly and while you do it imagine that all the negative energy from inside me is getting sucked

(MORE)

PENNY (cont'd)
into the apple. All of the sadness, all of the fear, into
the apple...

Penny lifts her shirt and Trisha
rubs the apple on her bare tummy.

It is quiet for a long time.

TRISHA
I feel so gay right now.

PENNY
Ssh. Okay, that's good. Now bury that half somewhere.
(Trisha searches for a good place to
bury the apple.)
Now I fill the other half with my positivity and all my
hopes for the future.

(She closes her eyes tightly and "fills"
the fruit.)
And I eat it.

(She takes a bite and is quiet for a
moment.)
Okay. I feel a lot better about things now.

TRISHA
(Holding her tummy, trying not to be
sick.)
Great. That's awesome.

PENNY
Blessed be!

TRISHA
Yeah. Blessed be. Whatever that means.

LIGHTS SHIFT. EERIE MUSIC AS...

Penny exits as Trisha turns to the
audience.

TRISHA
The night of the twenty-second day. Part Five.

Trisha updates the figures on the
board and exits.

Breanna appears in a bubble of
light. A candle burns as she pours
powders and liquids into a mortar
and pestol. She stirs and chants.

BREANNA

I stir, I change, I manifest. Penelope's love that suits me best. I stir, I change, I manifest, Penelope's love that suits me best. I stir, I change, I manifest, Penelope's love that suits me best.

She continues to chant sotto voce as Lauren appears in a separate bubble of light somewhere else. She is praying.)

LAUREN

Dear God. Hi. It's me, Lauren Radley. I hope you're well. I'm fine. Okay, I'm not really fine, that's an overstatement. I'm trying to understand your plan for me. For all of us. You have one, right? No, I know you do. It's just that sometimes the world seems like it's an orderless place where nothing ever happens for a reason, and that the best we can hope for is to hunker down and hope for good luck. But I know that can't be the case, right? Of course not. You have a plan for me. Just, please lord, help me understand what it might be. Love, Lauren Radley.

Lauren's bubble pops out.

Penny appears in Breanna's bubble. She is naked and wrapped in a sheet.

BREANNA

I stir, I change, I manifest, Penelope's love that suits me best...

PENNY

Breanna?

(Breanna is still chanting.)

It's the weirdest thing. You'll never believe it. I was trying to sleep but I felt... feverish. And then i realized. I am head over heels in love with you! Isn't that funny? You were right in front of me all these years.

(Breanna is still chanting.)

BREANNA. Look at me.

(Breanna stops chanting and looks at her. Penny opens the sheet.)

Come here.

(Breanna crosses to Penny, who wraps the sheet around them both, enveloping them. There is quiet romantic music. They slow dance. Breanna lays her head on Penny's shoulder.)

I need you, Breanna. I've always needed you. I just never knew it before.

They continue to slow dance for a while.

Penny kisses Breanna. It is soft at first, but gathers intensity.

They sink to the ground in the sheet, in a heat of passion, as--

MUSIC STOPS. LIGHTS TO NORMAL AS...

We are in Penny's bedroom. The two girls are in bed, restless.

PENNY

Stop touching me. God!

BREANNA

I can't help it. Your bed is small.

PENNY

I need to sleep.

BREANNA

Well, so do I. Stop talking, why don't you?

PENNY

You stop talking.

BREANNA

Fine.

PENNY

God!

(It is quiet for a moment. Penny sits up.)

I can't sleep.

BREANNA

Me neither.

PENNY

Everything is so shitty lately.

BREANNA

I know. It's weird that things are going back to normal, little by little. Mark Temple told me that the boys are going to stand in front of AM/PM tonight until someone buys them beer. Just like before. Jeff was their friend! Also... If he's dead, and I'm not saying that he is, whoever did it... I mean, he'll probably do it again. And this person obviously likes boys so Mark and those guys are really just sitting ducks when you think about it.

PENNY

I can't let myself believe that. That everything will go back to normal. People can't accept this, just let it happen. We're talking about human life here. that has value, right? It's worth something, isn't it?

(Beat.)

I have nightmares all the time now. About fingers. Fingers inching up my leg and into me, digging through my insides. I give birth and the baby is just a finger. An over-sized bloody finger in a placenta.

BREANNA

I wish we could get out.

PENNY

Me too.

BREANNA

We could, really.

PENNY

How?

BREANNA

Maybe we could stay with my brother in Portland.

PENNY

Danny lives in a dorm. I don't think he'd take us in.

BREANNA

Maybe he would, just until we found jobs and a place to live.

PENNY

What kind of jobs could we get?

BREANNA

We could be like professional witches, casting spells for people and giving psychic readings. Like Sylvia Browne on The Montel William Show. Ooh... or we could work at Urban Outfitters!

PENNY

Be realistic. If we ran away we'd end up junkie hookers like in all those Lifetime movies.

BREANNA

Maybe. So I saw you and Trisha Sorensen again yesterday. Are you guys, like, friends now?

PENNY

I don't know. Kind of, I guess. I was thinking that she could join our coven.

BREANNA
Really? Do you think she has the gift?

PENNY
Not necessarily, but neither do you.

BREANNA
Yes, I do!

PENNY
No. You don't.

BREANNA
Whatever. That's cold.

PENNY
Anyway, I'm sick of only having one friend.

BREANNA
I thought I was your best friend.

PENNY
You are.

BREANNA
Look, I just don't think you should trust her so easily. She thrives on drama.

PENNY
We're just going shopping for baby clothes.

BREANNA
Just be careful. I've known her my whole life. Believe me, I'm just trying to protect you.

PENNY
I appreciate it. As annoying as it is sometimes, secretly I'm glad I have you to look after me.

BREANNA
(Touching Penny's face, gently.)
You're my best friend and... I mean, I love you.

PENNY
I love you too.
(Breanna inches in and kisses Penny. Penny kisses her back for a moment. She wakes up to what is happening and breaks free.)

What the--

BREANNA
I'm sorry.

PENNY
Breanna, are you--

BREANNA
I don't know why I did that.

PENNY
Are you a lesbian?

BREANNA
Are you kidding? No way.

PENNY
Seriously, are you?

BREANNA
I already said that I wasn't.

PENNY
It's cool if you are. Seriously, Chad in my French class is gay and he's awesome.

BREANNA
I'm not a lesbian!

PENNY
Okay, okay!

BREANNA
At least... I don't think so. It's confusing.

PENNY
What's confusing about it? You're either a lezzy or you're not. Do you like boys or girls?

BREANNA
Neither. I don't like people. Like, at all. The more I think about it, the more I think people are just pretty unremarkable. When I was little my family went to Disney World and we saw this 3-D movie. I don't remember what it was about but I remember that Michael Jackson was in it. What I do remember is that feeling of seeing something new. Not something under the surface, but over it. I think most people aren't wearing their 3-D glasses, you know? They can't see all that extra stuff. And if a person *is* wearing their glasses it makes what other people see, like, really boring. I think... I think you're the only remarkable person I know.

Breanna...

PENNY

BREANNA
Does that make me gay? I mean, I do love you and everything.

PENNY
I don't know.

BREANNA
I don't know either.

Breanna touches Penny's face again.

PENNY
Please stop touching my face. It makes me really uncomfortable.

BREANNA
I'm sorry.

PENNY
Seriously, why do you keep doing that?

BREANNA
I just wanted to.

PENNY
Did Trisha say something to you?

BREANNA
No. I don't know.

PENNY
Because I said something to her and... oh, man. I'm gonna kick her ass!

BREANNA
No. I don't know what you're talking about, I really don't.

PENNY
Liar.

BREANNA
I promise.

PENNY
Then how do you know?

BREANNA
Lets just go back to sleep.

PENNY

Tell me!

BREANNA

All right. Fine. I watched you walking with Trisha yesterday and I followed you guys into the woods. I heard everything. I'm sorry.

PENNY

Bitch.

BREANNA

I'm sorry!

PENNY

Dyke!

BREANNA

Listen, Penny--

PENNY

--No, you listen. You took something private, an intimate secret I shared with Trisha, and you used it to make me be gay for you! What's wrong with you? Do you really think I would ever do that? With you? Just get out of here. God!

BREANNA

It's almost one in the morning.

PENNY

I don't care. I want you gone.

BREANNA

I understand that you're pissed off, I really do, but it's not safe out there.

PENNY

GET OUT.

It is quiet, as if Breanna is trying to decide how to proceed. After a moment she crosses to exit.

BREANNA

I really am sorry.

PENNY

You're gonna be even sorrier. I'm gonna tell everybody about tonight. I'm gonna tell them all you're a fat dyke. Now get out of my room!

Breanna exits.

Fucking dyke.

BREANNA

LIGHTS SHIFT AS...

Penny exits as Trisha enters with binoculars. Crickets chirp as Trisha speaks to the audience, looking through her binoculars.

During her speech we see Breanna appear in the shadows with her thumb out. She is hitch hiking.

TRISHA

Yeah, so... that's Breanna Stark. Hitch hiking at 1:30 in the morning. In her pajamas. She might as well wear a sign around her neck that says "violate me". Then again, who would want to?

(Breanna disappears.)

In a town as small as this there is nothing good happening at 1:30 in the morning. Let's just check in with Clear Creek, shall we? Let's see what people are doing at the exact moment Breanna is hitch hiking. Fun! Penny Lauder is trying to fall asleep. Breanna doesn't know it yet, but her parents are still awake. Fighting. She'll sneak into the house but she won't need to. Her parents didn't even know she was gone. Miss Murkowski is also awake in her house on Ponderosa Street. She's been having nightmares, so she's having a glass of white wine and watching infomercials instead of sleeping. There are seventy-six people drinking by themselves in Clear Creek at this exact moment, though not all of them are shit faced. There are thirty-two men masturbating. One of them is John Stratton, who does like Penny Lauder and is fantasizing about her as he jerks it. It's funny how the sizes of their junk varies so much from body to body. This is something that will always cease to amaze me, I think. I'm not supposed to be thinking about stuff like this. I'm trying to have clean thoughts. But let's get serious. I'm not made of wood, people. Anyway, about seven or eight people get the shivers and the feeling like they are being watched. Guess what? Sometimes when you get the feeling you're being watched... it's because you're being watched. Just something to think about. Is this still Part Five? I lose track.

LIGHTS SHIFT TO...

Trisha has exited. At some point during her last speech two chairs have been set. A truck.

Lauren is driving. She is wearing a ball cap and work shirt. Maybe she has a mustache? She has transformed into Gill, a middle-aged trucker.

BREANNA

Thanks for the ride.

LAUREN

Young thing like you shouldn't be out this late. It's not right.

BREANNA

No, I know it's after curfew. I got into a fight with my girlfriend.

LAUREN

School night, isn't it?

BREANNA

Yeah.

LAUREN

Guess you probably heard about that kid.

BREANNA

He's in my class.

LAUREN

Not no more.

BREANNA

You don't know that.

LAUREN

Kid's mom got his finger in the mail. Boy ain't dead he's in a world of pain. Bet whoever did it would love a tasty bit like you.

BREANNA

It seems like whoever did it likes boys.

LAUREN

You mean he's some sort of homosexual?

BREANNA

I don't know.

LAUREN

Nah. Homo couldn't do that. You gotta have a stomach to cut somebody's finger off. You're probably too young to remember but there was a boy got killed six or seven years before this Chalk boy. You ever heard of Peter Calhoun?

BREANNA

Oh yeah. I'd forgotten about that.

LAUREN

Shouldn't forget about stuff like that. That's how people get away with it. There were kids before Peter too, you know. Goes back twenty-five years or so. Marcus Lister, they found his penis in the creek. And Dave Hooper was in the creek too, his face was--

BREANNA

--I don't want to know.

LAUREN

Guy must wait until people have forgotten. It's probably like Christmas for him. All that waiting, the anticipation, years and years, and then when the moment is right... SPLAT. He slices again.

BREANNA

I don't see you a person could do that.

LAUREN

I do.

BREANNA

You do?

LAUREN

It's about power. See, society's become really emasculating to us men. You got your women's rights, you black rights, your faggot's rights. What about us? Time was America was paradise for the white man. But that's been taken a way, see?

BREANNA

That's ridiculous?

LAUREN

You think so? Blacks and spicks got all our honest jobs. Came right in and took 'em. Women are wearing the pants in the household. Man, they run huge corporations now. Can't call a faggot a faggot without somebody saying you're a bigot. Our power's been taken from us. My guess is the killer is a white man sick of being kicked around. He's obsessed with having power. Not just power over any old body, but power of the grand prize in his eyes. He gets off on having power over good looking, rich, young white males. A white boy is still the holy grail in this country.

BREANNA

What about white *girls*?

LAUREN

Good for a fuck but otherwise who gives a shit?

BREANNA

Charmed. This is my house. Right here.

LAUREN

Jesus. You live in a palace. You're one lucky girl. Bet you're parents wouldn't be too happy to have you out hitching all hours.

BREANNA

No, I guess they wouldn't. Thanks for the ride.

LAUREN

Hey, a rich girl like you should try to fix herself up a bit. Could be a real knock out. You almost look like a boy in them clothes.

Breanna gets out of the car,
uncomfortable.

BREANNA

Thanks again for the lift.

LAUREN

Name's Gill.

BREANNA

Thanks, Gill.

LAUREN

You're welcome, Missy. What's your name?

BREANNA

Beverly.

LAUREN

Pretty name. Be seeing you, Beverly.

Breanna dashes off.

LIGHTS SHIFT AS...

Lauren removes the ball cap,
mustache and work shirt. She
becomes herself again and speaks to
the audience.

During the speech she is setting
the stage for the scene that is to
follow.

LAUREN

I'm on the yearbook staff. It's just a fun thing to do after school, you know? Plus, it will look really good on my Stanford application. Also, and I sort of hate to admit this, I want the yearbook to be full of people I actually like. Anyway, when we were planning the layout of the yearbook this year our club advisor, Mrs. Bard, she said to leave two pages blank. She said don't plan them. She said it was because every year at least one student dies and you have to leave room for their memorial. Last year I guess Michelle Lichter died of a heart defect. She passed away in her sleep one week before her first formal. The year before that Fred Percy died in a car accident while he was drag racing. He'd been drinking and drove his car off Horse Shoe Ridge. He couldn't get his seatbelt off and so he drowned. This year... Well. Day twenty-three. *The day. Part Six. The End.*

She writes this on the chalkboard and--

LIGHT SHIFT AND...

Penny appears, at the doctor's office. She is in stirrups.

Lauren transforms into Mom and marches up to her.

LAUREN

You little turd.

PENNY

What?

LAUREN

You're not pregnant. Well?

PENNY

I am so pregnant. I know it. Why else would I be putting on all this weight? Why else would I be throwing up all the time?

LAUREN

You're putting on weight because you eat like a hog. You should have heard Doctor Salisbury...

Trisha appears in a bubble of light. She wears a white coat and has a clipboard. She is Doctor Salisbury.

TRISHA

Well, she's not pregnant which frankly astounds me. May I be frank, Mrs. Lauder? She's no virgin. Not by a mile. Seriously, she is really beat up down there. I'd consider therapy for the girl. *Blah blah blobbity blah...*

LAUREN

I asked about the vomiting...

TRISHA

(Shrugging.)

Irritable bowel syndrome? Have her poop in this cup and bring it back to.

Trisha disappears.

LAUREN

Not being pregnant is good news, Penelope. Having babies is what women do to destroy their lives. Now you have a second chance! You can graduate and go to college and still have a family later if you want to.

PENNY

Get real. None of that will ever happen for me.

LAUREN

What am I gonna do with you? God knows I'm trying. I'm doing my best, but I feel as if I've lost touch with you. I see this person you've become and I don't recognize her. How many partners have you had?

PENNY

What?

LAUREN

Partners! How many sexual partners have you had?

PENNY

Just Jeff.

LAUREN

I don't believe you.

PENNY

I'm not lying!

LAUREN

Tell me.

PENNY

I don't know!

LAUREN
You don't know?

PENNY
No, I don't know. Are you satisfied?

LAUREN
Five? More than five?

PENNY
I don't know. Yes.

LAUREN
Oh lord. Penny, what is going on? Do you want to talk to a professional?

PENNY
No.

LAUREN
Well, then talk to me.

PENNY
Do you regret having me?

LAUREN
Sometimes.

PENNY
That's awesome.

LAUREN
Well, what do you want me to say? Raising children is the hardest job in the world, especially by yourself.

PENNY
I'll never regret having my baby. Not ever.

LAUREN
Penny, you aren't pregnant.

PENNY
Yes, I am.

LAUREN
I just don't understand you. Listen, Penelope. This is the best thing that could have happened. God, sometimes I wish that you were gay like your little friend. Men. They're the worst.

PENNY
Breanna is gay, by the way. She came onto me last night.

LAUREN

Did you two--

PENNY

No! Just because Breanna is gay doesn't mean I am.

LAUREN

I think you should try it.

PENNY

What? God!

LAUREN

I'm telling you now, nobody will ever treat you as good as Breanna does. These boys, when they're gone Breanna will still be there by your side.

PENNY

Stop talking.

LAUREN

Just try it! God, I'd never have to worry about you--

PENNY

Stop it! God!

LAUREN

All right, all right. Come on. Let's go.

PENNY

Where?

LAUREN

I have to take yo back to school.

PENNY

Can't I go home?

LAUREN

I think it's important to move on, don't you? Now that this mess is behind us?

PENNY

I don't want to move on. I wanna watch MTV and eat ice cream.

LAUREN

Why are you lying? About being pregnant?

PENNY

I'm not.

LAUREN

I just don't understand.

PENNY

Can't you see that I'm lucky? I'm going to be the mother to the most amazing guy's baby. And when Jeff is back we'll be together. We'll be a real family.

LAUREN

I wish I could tell you that you didn't have to lie. That you didn't have to manipulate people to make them stay with you.

PENNY

I know, mom.

LAUREN

I love you, Penny.

PENNY

I love you too.

LAUREN

Okay, then. Let's go.

They exit as--

LIGHTS SHIFT AND..

A school bell rings as all four girls enter and sit in their chairs, arranging a classroom.

Penny and Trisha sit next to one another. Lauren and Breanna are far off to either side.

BREANNA

Psst... Penny.

TRISHA

Fuck off, pig dyke whore.

BREANNA

I have to talk to you. Meet me at behind the football field after school, okay?

TRISHA

She doesn't want to talk to you.

LAUREN

Will you guys please be quiet? I don't want to get in trouble.

TRISHA

She told me you tried to finger her last night. That's disgusting Breanna Stark, and a sin. We both hate you.

BREANNA

You're the disgusting one, Breanna.

(The following rises until she is yelling.)

Your voice, your face, your hair, your black little soul, are all disgusting. I am not a pig or a dyke or a whore. I'm gay. Yeah, I'm gay, but so what? You're the most unlikable person ever. Everybody who has ever met you hates you. Try and figure out why, bitch--

LAUREN

--Seriously, be quiet.

BREANNA

Now if you don't shut up and mind your own business I will kick you so hard in your puffy vagina that you grand daughters will be STERILE.

TRISHA

That's it. I'm telling Miss Murkowski!

BREANNA

Go ahead! She hates you too!

(Trisha runs off into the shadows and Breanna sits next to Penny.)

Penny, you have to talk to me.

PENNY

I don't have anything to say.

BREANNA

I understand why you're upset, I really do--

PENNY

No, I'm not mad. I just, I don't know, I think it's easier to be alone right now is all.

BREANNA

Alone? What about Trisha?

PENNY

It's the next best thing. I can't even hear her when she talks anymore. Even when it's not about jeans, it just sounds like white noise.

LAUREN

That's mean, Penny.

PENNY

Mind your own business!

BREANNA

I'm sorry that I tried to manipulate you. I just can't stand not being near you all the time.

PENNY

Leave me alone.

Trisha, as Miss Murkowski, reenters from the shadows. She holds a crumpled tissue and occasionally blows her nose into it. She is crying.

TRISHA

Okey-dokey, class. I have an announcement. Eyes on me. Eyes here. I hate to be the bearer of bad news. Such an awful thing has happened. This morning the police recovered Jeffrey Chalk's body from the creek. It was weighted down and had been there for some time. It's so awful...

(She goes into a crying fit as her words devolve into gibberish.)

Blah blah blobbity-blah blah blah. The children are our future *blobbity-blah*. Each life is precious *blobbity-blah blah blah*. OH GOD!

(During this, Penny locks eyes with Breanna and then dashes from the room.)

Penelope! Where are you going?

(Breanna decides to follow her and dashes out behind her.)

Breanna Stark, get back here! Please? Girls. Don't leave me here all alone!

(She is hysterical. Lauren crosses to her.)

LAUREN

It's going to be okay, Miss Murkowski.

Lauren puts her arm around Miss Murkowski, comforting her.

TRISHA

Nothing is ever going to be okay. Oh God! I'm going to die!

LAUREN

No, you're not. Shh...

TRISHA

I am so!

LAUREN

No, none of that. Quiet, Miss Murkowski...

TRISHA

Will you call me by my first name?

LAUREN

Uh. Okay.

TRISHA

It's Beth!

LAUREN

Everything is going to be okay, Beth. Come on. Let's pray together.

(They kneel and hold hands.)

Our father, who art in heaven... Come on you know this, Beth.

They begin to pray together.

TRISHA & LAUREN

Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven...

The light changes strangely as they pray.

Penny appears on another part of the stage. She is down by the creek, which is now a world of water and police tape.

She is drawing a pentagram in the dirt with the sacred dagger.

TRISHA & LAUREN

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

They embrace for a moment and then exit as...

LIGHTS FINISH SHIFTING AND...

We are down by the creek at night. Penelope is lighting candles and placing them at the points of the pentagram.

Breanna enters with a flashlight and watches her.

BREANNA

I followed you. Don't be mad. So is this where they found him?

PENNY

Down there some.

BREANNA

I'm so sorry.

PENNY

Do you believe that a person can be born unlucky?

BREANNA

I think maybe we make our own luck.

PENNY

I think I was, maybe. Look what other people have, what you have, or what Lauren Radley has, or anybody for that matter. Clean houses and families that care and clean skin and nice jeans. How come I didn't get any of that? It's not fair.

BREANNA

Nobody ever said life was fair.

PENNY

Yes, they did. They said it constantly, the fucking liars.

BREANNA

Who?

PENNY

Them. Our parents, our teachers, politicians, preachers... that we were each special or whatever? It's such bullshit. Only some people matter, only some people are special, and that's just the way it is. The truth is that everybody ends up exactly where they started no matter what. Do not pass go. Do not collect two hundred dollars.

BREANNA

I don't know. I think--

PENNY

I think that's why I started casting spells. I thought I could, I don't know, level the playing field a little. Too bad it doesn't work. I'm a fraud.

BREANNA

We both wanted it to be true. The power, I mean. If we're not powerful witches then we're only two stupid fucking kids, right?

PENNY

That's us.

BREANNA

I don't know. When Trisha stopped talking to me I thought it was, like, the end. I had nobody and I'd lie in the dark listening to Fiona Apple non-stop. I would lie in the dark and wish I wasn't so lonely. And then, finally, there was you. So, I don't know, I think we make our own luck. Maybe wishing hard enough is a sort of spell.

PENNY

Do you think Jeff was in love with me.

BREANNA

It's nice to think so. But I love you and your mom does too and there's gonna be a lot of people who love you. Including your kid, I mean, that's huge, right?

PENNY

A baby. God! How am I gonna raise a baby?

BREANNA

With help. Lots and lots of help. Me, your mom, Trisha even.

PENNY

I don't want Trisha near my kid. She seems like she might be a baby shaker. Shit. I feel like I'm twenty-five years old. God!

BREANNA

I'm tired too. Are you hungry? We should go to Taco Bell. Come on, I'll buy you a chulupa.

PENNY

No, I wanna try the spell again.

BREANNA

Yeah? Okay then.

Lauren enters, with Trisha behind her. They both have flashlights.

LAUREN

Hey.

BREANNA

Leave us alone.

TRISHA

Look, we didn't come here to fight.

BREANNA

Great. You can go now.

LAUREN

What are you guys doing?

PENNY

Nothing.

LAUREN

You're doing a spell, aren't you? You're going to try to contact him.

PENNY

yeah.

TRISHA

That's awesome. I want to help.

BREANNA

No.

LAUREN

Trisha, don't. It's a sin.

TRISHA

I can't be perfect all the time, Lauren. Don't you get sick of always trying to be perfect? You loved Jeff, right? Well, now you might be able to tell him.

BREANNA

No, no, no.

TRISHA

Oh, come on, Breanna.

PENNY

(To Breanna.)

It could help to have four.

BREANNA

Fine.

(To Lauren and Trisha.)

But you have to be serious and do what we say.

TRISHA

Fine.

PENNY

Okay. Get in the circle.

(Trisha joins Penny and Breanna in the circle. They look to Lauren.)

Are you in or not?

Okay. I'm in.

LAUREN

Lauren enters the circle and the ritual begins.

Penny holds a dagger in front of her heart, then lifts it above her head.

PENNY

I call upon the Watchtowers of the North. I call upon the goddess and the horned god.

She passes the dagger to Breanna, who repeats the motions.

BREANNA

I call upon the Watchtowers of the South. I call upon the goddess and the horned god.
(Breanna passes the dagger to Trisha. She leads her in what to say.)

The East...

TRISHA

I call upon the Watchtowers of the East.

BREANNA

The goddess and the horned god...

TRISHA

I call upon the goddess and the horned god.

Trisha passes the dagger to Lauren, who repeats the motion.

LAUREN

I call upon the watchtowers of the West. I call upon the goddess and the horned god.

Penny lays out the purple cloth.

PENNY

Protect us from harm.

BREANNA

Protect us from harm.

PENNY

Protect us from harm.

ALL
Protect us from harm.

Penny lights a black candle.

PENNY
Visit us, spirits. Bless us with your patronage. With this candle we invoke thee...

ALL
With this candle we invoke thee.

The metal bowl of garlic is placed out.

PENNY
Receive your offering.

ALL
Receive your offering.

The wine is in the goblet and each girl in turn pricks her finger with a needle and squeezes the blood into it.

PENNY
Everyone join hands.
(The girls link hands.)
We call forth the spirit of Jeff Chalk. You have left this mortal coil and may enter our circle. Let us be your mouth. Speak through we women, Jeff Chalk! So mote it be!

BREANNA
So mote it be!

ALL
So mote it be! So mote it be! SO MOTE IT BE!

Suddenly the light is blinding white and everything is deadly quiet.

The four girls are frozen until Penny timidly steps out of the circle and approaches the audience.

PENNY
Sorry I've been ignoring you. It's just that I'm not one of the narrators so I'm supposed to act like you're not here. Anyway, I wanted to tell you my version of what happened next, because I know that they'll leave it out. We're doing the spell when there is a blinding light. All is white and

(MORE)

PENNY (cont'd)

time stands still. It's day. It was night a moment ago and now it's day and the whole class is here at the creek.

(The sounds of water and laughing as the frozen girls begin to move.)

Every one is being so nice to each other. Mark Temple just did a belly flop off the dock. Ashley has on the world's littlest bikini. Miss Murkowski is eating a tuna sandwich. She drops it on the ground but eats it anyway, not knowing she was seen. Ten second rule. It's weird, but my mom is here. She waves. I feel a perfect contentment. Is that a word? Contentment? And then-- then there's Jeff Chalk.

(Somehow Trisha has transformed into Jeff Chalk. She moves slowly toward Penny.)

He comes up out of the water, his hair is matted to the sides of his face. He's an image from Men's Fitness and he's coming right toward me. I could die right now, I think, and I'll be happy. He comes over to where I'm sitting in the grass.

(Trisha crosses to Penny and kneels before her.)

He kneels down in front of me and puts his hand on my cheek. Nice and gentle.

(Trisha does.)

Then, the best part. He kisses me softly. An innocent kiss.

(Trisha kisses Penny.)

And he leans into me and he whispers--

LAUREN

I.

BREANNA

Am.

PENNY

Totally

LAUREN

Not.

ALL

Gone.

The girls begin to go back to the spots wherein they were frozen.

PENNY

I saw this happen as clear as day. I'm not delusional or crazy. Jeff came to me and he spoke to me, comforted me when I needed it, and it was magic. You think I'd lie to you?

The lights return to normal and the girls unfreeze, finishing their spell.

ALL

So mote it be! So mote it be! SO MOTE IT BE!

It is quiet for a moment as the girls try to assess whether anything happened.

LAUREN

What happened?

PENNY

I don't know.

BREANNA

Does anybody notice anything different?

TRISHA

No.

LAUREN

It didn't work.

BREANNA

Maybe it did.

LAUREN

It didn't fucking work.

TRISHA

Lauren...

LAUREN

Shut up, Trisha.

TRISHA

You shut up!

PENNY

Both of you shut up. Jeff was just here. You didn't--

BREANNA

What are you talking about?

PENNY

Didn't you feel it? It was like time froze and Jeff spoke. Jeff spoke to me.

TRISHA

I know, right? It was so weird.

BREANNA

I guess I felt a little weird.

PENNY

I mean, he came right up to me and he said that even though he passed on he's not totally gone, you know, and that he loves me and he's watching over me and the baby.

TRISHA

Wow.

LAUREN

Just shut up.

PENNY

Just because you can't--

LAUREN

Stop pretending!

BREANNA

This isn't a game, Lauren--

LAUREN

--I know it's not a game! Okay? Jeff Chalk is dead.

TRISHA

He's in heaven now.

LAUREN

You don't believe that. Not really. The truth is that when Jeff was killed he just blinked out. Like an old light bulb. Somebody did that to him. You know? Took his life? It makes me think the idea of predestination is pretty fucking idiotic. I mean, who is predestined for torture and sexual abuse and murder?

BREANNA

Don't be ignorant.

LAUREN

I mean, we have to stop pretending here. My faith, it was... I can't reconcile my intelligence with what's not based in the, I don't know, the obvious. The facts. What you see is what you get. Plain and simple. There is only this. No order, no magic, no reason, no mystery, no logic, no god.

(She focuses her attention to Penny.)

I loved him. Did you know that? As much as you. I really hate you for doing those things with Jeff. I mean, I really do. It makes me sick to think about--

--Leave me alone.

PENNY

You're worth absolutely nothing at all.

LAUREN

Come on...

BREANNA

Nothing. Jeff Chalk, he was special, you know? When Murkowski announced he'd died I thought, good. Now he belongs to everybody. But you know what? I see that he doesn't belong to anybody. Jeff Chalk is dead, plain and simple.

LAUREN

I hate you.

PENNY

Gone.

LAUREN

Shut up.

PENNY

Finished.

LAUREN

Penny lunges and her with the dagger. Chaos. yelling.

Penny has Lauren pinned.

Oh my god!

TRISHA

Penny!

BREANNA

Go ahead. Do it.

LAUREN

Penny drags the knife against Lauren's cheek, cutting it.

Lauren screams.

Penny releases her.

You think you're worth so much? There. You're worth a little less now.

PENNY

TRISHA
You're insane! Are you all right, Lauren?

LAUREN
You'll regret that.

PENNY
I don't regret.

Trisha huddles around Lauren.

TRISHA
Let's get you to a doctor.

Trisha begins to pull Lauren into the shadows. Lauren looks back to tell Penny something.

LAUREN
Seriously. There is, like, no meaning.

Trisha and Lauren are gone.

BREANNA
You shouldn't have done that.

PENNY
Fuck.

BREANNA
What should we do?

PENNY
Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

BREANNA
Well...

PENNY
What if she's right? What if this is it?

BREANNA
She's not right.

PENNY
Well, what if she is?

BREANNA
Would it be so bad? I mean, is your life that bad? So many people love you. Your mom. Me. The baby. Isn't that enough?

Penny looks at Breanna.

PENNY

No. It isn't enough.

BREANNA

We'll make it enough. I know we can. I mean, we can make a real family.

PENNY

If Lauren is right, if nothing ever happens for a reason, then I can do whatever I want. I mean, it's kind of a gift, really.

BREANNA

What does that mean?

PENNY

Let's make a family.

BREANNA

Really?

PENNY

Let's do it.

Breanna is exuberant. She holds Penny.

BREANNA

I can't believe we're having a baby.

PENNY

Yeah. We're having a baby. Just stay with me, Breanna. Okay? Don't ever let me go.

BREANNA

No. Not ever.

They exit arm in arm as--

LIGHTS SHIFT TO:

Lauren and Trisha are in their positions from the top of Act One. Lauren writes "epilogue" on the chalkboard.

They speak to the audience.

LAUREN

Hi.

TRISHA

Hello. How are you holding up? You okay?

LAUREN

In case you were wondering, the answer is ye. I will always have a scar on my cheek.

TRISHA

It looks okay.

LAUREN

Thanks. That's weird...

TRISHA

What?

LAUREN

I can see the future so clearly from here.

TRISHA

Really? So what happens?

LAUREN

(As if just skimming a passage in an article.)

Stanford. Marry my college sweetheart. Move to Philadelphia where I work as an attorney. Have daughter. Daughter dies at age nine. Leukemia. Husband leaves. I make partner. Trisha?

TRISHA

State school, then back to Clear Creek. Work in real estate. Marry Mark Temple, how about that? Four children, all girls. I stop working. My family is big but I'm overwhelmingly lonely sometimes. Have affair after affair. Work things out with Mark. Oh... and more kids disappear in Clear Creek. All boys.

LAUREN

Yikes. Those are just the short versions. I guess neither of us know what happens to Penny or Breanna. Do you, Trisha?

TRISHA

I saw Penny from time to time, but after high school... nothing.

LAUREN

Guess they really didn't matter.

TRISHA

Let's just ask them. Hey, Breanna...

(Breanna appears.)

What happens to you? Are you happy in the future?

BREANNA

Uh... Smith College. Lots of beer. Lots of girls. Backpack though Europe after graduation. Settle in Portland, Oregon. Work with at-risk youth, ironically. My partner and I have a baby. Raise her. It's a nice quiet life. And I'm happy.

TRISHA

Congratulations.

BREANNA

Thank you.

Breanna disappears.

LAUREN

You go now, Penny.

Penny appears.

PENNY

What?

LAUREN

What happens to you?

PENNY

I don't want to say.

LAUREN

Oh, come on.

PENNY

No. It doesn't matter. It's not relevant and whatever your assumptions are, they're probably true. Things don't always work out the way we hope they will. I don't live in Clear Creek, but I think about it sometimes. I think about all of you and I wonder what you're doing. Mostly though I think about Jeff.

TRISHA

Hmm.

PENNY

Can I go?

TRISHA

It's a free country, isn't it?

Penny disappears.

Lauren and Trisha begin cleaning up.

LAUREN
Well, there yo have it, folks.

TRISHA
That's all she wrote.

LAUREN
Life only moves forward.

TRISHA
You know, I see many more Taco Bells in Clear Creek's future. Pizza Huts too. It's very convenient.

LAUREN
That's how we all get fat.

TRISHA
Our place by the creek gets turned into a parking lot!

LAUREN
Go figure. Clear Creek is like every small town. All along the highways they look exactly the same, forming a dotted line across the grotesque belly of America.

TRISHA
That's beautiful.

LAUREN
It shows the blade where to cut. Where to release the blood and fat. It's the same all over. In the end, nothing about us matters. It's all forgotten. Anyway, enjoy the complimentary Orangeade on your way out.

TRISHA
I made it.

LAUREN
Okay. Bye.

TRISHA
Kisses, bitches.

They begin to erase the chalk boards as lights go down.

END OF PLAY.