

Chasing Cinderella

By Dana Hall

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SYNOPSIS

As children, we are captivated by the whimsy of fairy tales. But not all of us see ourselves represented in those stories. Chasing Cinderella is a coming-of-age story that proves real life can be better than any fairy tale when you're true to yourself.

PRODUCTION

Minimal set. The story is told through flashbacks and journal entries. Creative freedom is given to artistic team in depicting how to showcase the story.

PLAYWRIGHT NOTE

The use of a slash symbol (/) in the dialogue indicates where the next line of dialogue should begin. The intent is to create overlapping dialogue. If there are lines following this in () this is what the actor would've said had there been no interruption. They may try to say the line as they are cut off.

CHARACTERS

AVA NOW:	Adult, Female, Lesbian
YOUNGER AVA:	Child, Female (ages a few years)
TEEN AVA:	Teen, Female, Lesbian
TEEN SARA:	Teen, Female, Lesbian
SARAH NOW:	Adult, Female, Lesbian, Girlfriend to AVA NOW. (Same age as AVA NOW)
MOM:	Adult, Female

Diversity in casting is encouraged and production has creative liberty to present play based on medium chosen, budget, and vision. Duplication of roles is accepted.

CW: Eating Disorder, Body Image, LGBTQ related material/coming out

At Rise: AVA NOW is at home writing in her journal. The story is told through AVA NOW's journal entries.

AVA NOW

When I was little, I believed in fairy tales/

YOUNGER AVA enters. She is dressed in princess pajamas. AVA NOW watches YOUNGER AVA play with toys. YOUNGER AVA begins acting out a scene with her dolls.

AVA NOW

I wanted to be just like my princess dolls. Syrup-sweet, pink cheeks, sparkles- I'd twirl them around and around, in their fancy flowing gowns. I looked so hard at them I could see myself.

YOUNGER AVA

We must get ready! The prince will be here soon to take us to the ball. His carriage will be covered in red roses, purple tulips and it'll be pulled by white horses.

AVA NOW

I waited for/

YOUNGER AVA

(Takes out a prince doll)

My Prince Charming. He's handsome and he'll reach out his hand to kiss mine and say, "You are so beautiful, let me take you far away!"

AVA NOW

He'd whisk me off to his castle, with steeples so high they could hold hands with the clouds. His castle - far, far away where/

AVA NOW

I'd live happily ever after.

YOUNGER AVA

I'd live happily ever after.

AVA NOW

Somewhere where my parents didn't fight.

YOUNGER AVA

Where my brother wouldn't take my toys.

AVA NOW

A special land of talking animals and songs.

YOUNGER AVA

A place the movies promised to good little girls like me.

AVA NOW

It was waiting just for me--

YOUNGER AVA

(singing as she plays)

If you keep on believing, the dream that you wish will come true.

AVA NOW

The best moments lingered in the melodies of make-believe.

Imagination.

No classification.

No strife.

All I had to do was dream.

I'd close my eyes and awake in a butterfly-filled world, where daisies blossomed just for me. Crickets would chirp-chirp their applause and I'd rest safe, protected, and secure.

The beautiful princess would always be ok.

Every birthday princess-themed, with lavish pink décor and sprinkle cupcakes.

The more glitter, shimmer, and shine the closer I would be to the place wishes come true.

YOUNGER AVA plays in her room.

MOM

(She calls to YOUNGER AVA)

Time for bed my little Ava Princess.

YOUNGER AVA

Ok Mommy.

MOM enters.

MOM

Get into bed. There's plenty of time to play tomorrow.

YOUNGER AVA

Fine. But- can you tell me a story?

MOM

Sure honey, what should it be about?

YOUNGER AVA

Princess Ava.

MOM

Of course, I should've known.

MOM settles in next to YOUNGER AVA.

MOM

Well, once upon a time in a land far, far away there was a beautiful princess named Ava.

YOUNGER AVA

(to her doll)

That's me!

MOM

She was kind and always did her chores.

YOUNGER AVA

Did she have a unicorn?

MOM

Uhh... why yes, yes she did have a shiny unicorn. Princess Ava and her unicorn would jump from cloud to cloud and slide down the rainbows/

YOUNGER AVA

Did she have long hair with bows? And eat cotton candy?

MOM

How did you know!?! But she only ate the cotton candy after dinner and she always brushed her teeth before bed.

YOUNGER AVA

(yawning)

Mom-

MOM

Yes-

YOUNGER AVA

Will you come visit me and my unicorn in our castle?

MOM

Sure honey.

YOUNGER AVA

Will daddy?

MOM

I'm sure he will.

YOUNGER AVA

What about Henry?

MOM

Of course, maybe we should try and close our eyes now. It's getting late.

YOUNGER AVA

Ok. *(long pause)* Hey Mom-

MOM

(slightly annoyed)

Yes-my sleepy princess/

YOUNGER AVA

Can I ban boys from the castle?

MOM

You can't ban your brother if that's what you're asking.

YOUNGER AVA

It's *my* castle.

MOM

Listen, princesses are nice- they're fair and just to all- even little brothers.

YOUNGER AVA

Fine- but I'm painting it pink- even his room.

MOM

Fair enough. Now snuggle in my love.

YOUNGER AVA

Sing to me mommy.

MOM

Ok. Close your eyes.

(sings softly)

A dream is a wish your heart makes

When you're fast asleep

In dreams you will lose your heartaches

Whatever you wish for, you keep...

LIGHTS DOWN on MOM and YOUNGER
AVA.

AVA NOW

Those days are distant memories now but there was something magical about that time in one's life. So pure and untouched.

I wish I could go back - to have those memories wash over me one more time. *(beat)*

But the summer of my childhood ended cold and curt when my parents divorced.

Love is not supposed to stop.

I was confused- I felt lied to.

Does happily ever after really exist-- or was it meant for others and not my family?

I felt foolish and naïve.

A few summer later. MOM is folding clothes in
YOUNGER AVA's room. YOUNGER AVA
enters she sees mom.

YOUNGER AVA

Don't fold those dresses.

YOUNGER AVA takes the dresses and throws
them into a garbage bag she is holding. She then
takes a tiara off the table and tosses it in the bag
too.

MOM

What are you doing?

YOUNGER AVA

This stuff is for babies. I'm a big kid now-

MOM

But these are your favorite things in the world- honey. Honey? Talk to me. What happened?

YOUNGER AVA

It's stupid. They're stupid baby things.

MOM

Hey, it's not stupid to like things.

YOUNGER AVA

It doesn't matter. Nothing matters.

YOUNGER AVA continues to throw away her dolls and toys. MOM watches a moment more.

MOM

Is this about me and your father?

YOUNGER AVA

No.

YOUNGER AVA starts to get emotional.

MOM

Ava- you can talk to me. Hey, look at me. Oh honey. You miss how things were don't you?

YOUNGER AVA

It's all weird now.

MOM

I know it's a big change for all of us. We're still a family, Ava. Daddy and I love you very much.

YOUNGER AVA

Daddy doesn't even pick me up from school anymore.

MOM

I know sweetie. But he'll see you and Henry this weekend.

YOUNGER AVA

What if I want him to play catch, or I need help with my homework- or I just want to tell him a joke? Why can't I have my dad when I want him- not on some stupid weekend?

MOM

(trying to assure)

This new schedule is an adjustment/

YOUNGER AVA

(anger rising)

I don't want to adjust. I just want my Dad. Maybe if you were nicer to him he wouldn't have left us.

MOM

Ava, that's not fair. Sometimes grownups just grow apart and they get divorced/

YOUNGER AVA

It's your fault he's not here.

MOM

It's no one's fault sweetie/

YOUNGER AVA

(accusatory)

It's *your* fault.

MOM

Ava please- listen-

YOUNGER AVA

I don't want to hear it. I don't care about 'growing apart' that's not supposed to happen!

MOM

I know this is hard Ava/

YOUNGER AVA

Couldn't you make him come back? So we can be together.

MOM

I know that this doesn't make a lot of sense now why we all just can't be together, but trust me this is for the best- for all of us. Your daddy deserves to be happy and so do I.

YOUNGER AVA

Why should *you* be happy- I'm not happy. Henry's not happy.

MOM

I know- it's a lot of change. Happy takes time. It'll be ok- in time.

MOM thinks YOUNGER AVA is coming to her to embrace her but she is wrong. YOUNGER AVA takes the princess doll MOM was holding, looks at it as if she is saying goodbye, and tosses it in the trash.

YOUNGER AVA

I hate you and it's not ok. It'll never be ok!

MOM

Honey, just calm down/ (come and sit with me and ---)

YOUNGER AVA

Can you just get out of my room ?!

MOM

(lost for words)

Fine.

MOM gets up to leave. YOUNGER AVA covers herself up with a blanket. Lights down on MOM and YOUNGER AVA.

AVA NOW

How easily pretty things crumble. I remember sobbing into my pillow that night. Painted rainbows once hung in the sky but the colors all ran together now. It didn't make sense. I blamed my mom for my dad moving out.

After all, my mom didn't look like a princess. She spoke her mind, she even raised her voice.

She did it wrong.

I would do it right- from here on out.

Light up on YOUNGER AVA. She goes to the trash and removes the princess doll. She fixes her hair and dress then her own hair.

YOUNGER AVA

(making a wish)

I never want to feel alone again. I want my happily ever after. I just have to be better... perfect like you-

Lights down as YOUNGER AVA kisses the princess and holds it tight.

AVA NOW

When I was a child time would tiptoe.

Then it started to stroll and before I knew it I waltzed right out of childhood.

By the time I checked the clock it was time to wake up for my first day of high school. That's when life really changed.

I was in a new school, with new kids- it was like turning a kaleidoscope, each scene was somehow different.

But I had plan. I remembered my promise to myself. I'd be perfect- simple right?

I'd get the right grades, know the right people, and make sure to do all the things that would make me fit- *right* in. But I learned fairly quickly doing everything "right" didn't mean things would be easy.

Enter TEEN SELF on phone. Frantically trying to get ready for her first date.

TEEN AVA

(on phone)

Megan you won't believe this-- Tommy text me after study hall and asked me to the movies! (*pause*) I know! He's so popular he could take anyone. But he chose me!

(*realizing the time*) OMG- His mom will be here any minute-

SFX: Car horn

AVA NOW

(sarcastic)

So much for that horse drawn carriage.

TEEN AVA

(on phone)

I'm literally freaking out- what should I wear?!

TEEN AVA has laid out a few options on her bed.

SFX: Door Bell

TEEN AVA

(Call OS)

MOM! Mom, that's them! Tell 'em I'm coming. I'll be right down! (*On phone*) I think I'll wear the blue sweater- it's his favorite color. (*pause*) Awww you're so sweet Meg- I'll text you later. Bye!

TEEN AVA puts on the blue sweater and some lipstick. She smiles and exits.

AVA NOW

Tommy held my hand that night. I felt so special. I tried hard not to shake. I felt valid, seen, but most of all worthy because this boy liked me. For a week I was on top of the world. He walked me to my locker after every class and even kissed my check. But then something changed...

MOM enters. She calls up to TEEN AVA's bedroom.

MOM

You can't stay up there forever honey.

SFX: Loud music plays.

You can't drown out your feelings.

SFX: Music gets louder.

Ok. Well, when you're ready to talk about it- I'm here.

MOM EXITS. Lights up on TEEN AVA wearing a band T-shirt, eating snacks, wrappers all around. She crosses the stage and exits on her last line.

TEEN AVA

(on phone)

He's such a jerk! He asked Carla Johnson to Spring Formal!! *(Pause)* No, I'm not kidding. *(upset)* She's skinny and tall, gorgeous- and look at me. I'm awkward and tell stupid jokes- I just don't fit. *(Pause)* Meg, what's wrong with me? *(Pause)* Whatever- you're just trying to make me feel better. She's the freaking captain of the dance squad.

TEEN AVA exits.

AVA NOW

That night I trashed Carla in my journal. For no reason, other than I wasn't her. *(reading from journal)* I wrote - 'Carl is Cinderella and I'm an ugly step sister.' I remember thinking if I could change myself then Tommy would like me. If he liked me then I'd feel good again. My freshman self, attached my value to how boys like Tommy saw me.

YOUNGER AVA enters. She plays with a princess and a ken doll.

YOUNGER AVA

Good girls wear dresses, and have long hair, they're gentle and pretty and never raise their voice. If they act just right- a prince will never leave their princess.

AVA NOW

I just had to be a *better* version of me- and then Tommy would like me.

YOUNGER AVA

Out of all the princesses my prince would find me one day. Lucky me! I'll be the best wife and keep the castle so pretty. Oh, I'll sing to my pet mice and have tea parties all day long.

YOUNGER AVA skips away.

AVA NOW

But living in a world where you get *chosen*- creates a lot of pressure.

TEEN AVA enters.

TEEN AVA
(reading a label)

New evidenced- based #1 fat burner guaranteed to make you drop pounds fast.
(Turns bottle) Be the most beautiful version of you- unlock the you, you know, you can be! Amazing new clinical sensation makes it simple to lose weight.
Fast fat loss-
Slimmer waistline-
Healthier BMI -
Just one daily pill.

TEEN AVA pops one pill in her mouth. Then she takes several more.

AVA NOW

I wasn't going to lose out to Carla. No matter what- I was going to be perfect.

TEEN AVA has a make up brush in hand. She is looking at her cell phone for reference, perhaps watching a YouTube video on how to contour her face.

TEEN AVA

Ok, so I just shade here and here on the sides of my nose. OMG is it working? It looks so thin. A little highlighter on the tip. Some shimmer up the middle. Perfect. Now to fix these hideous eyebrows. *(She begins to color them in and elongate the ends)*

Lights down on TEEN AVA posing in the mirror.

AVA NOW

I don't even know who that version of me was, or who those eyebrows belonged to. I guess I was still chasing Cinderella-- this idealized version of what I thought I was supposed to be.

Light up on MOM and TEEN AVA. TEEN AVA begins wiping the makeup off her face when her MOM starts knocking.

MOM

Knock, knock.

TEEN AVA
 What?

MOM
 Can I come in Ava?

TEEN AVA
 Uhh... just give me a minute.

MOM waits a few seconds then knocks again.

MOM
 How about now?

TEEN AVA
 I guess- it's your house or whatever.

AVA NOW
 Parents always do that- they pretend to knock and no matter what you say you know they're coming in anyway.

MOM
 It's Friday night.

TEEN AVA
 So.

MOM
 So, Henry and I are going to the movies.

TEEN AVA
 Ok. Bye.

MOM
 We thought you might want to come...

TEEN AVA
 Eww- the movies with my mom and brother- no thanks.

MOM
 It's a scary one- Zombie Crossroads- the one where they try to/

TEEN AVA

Eat people and take over the world?

MOM

More or less-- yeah. I guess so. It may be predictable but the app says 88% of viewers give it 4 stars so... what do ya' say?

TEEN AVA

I'm good.

MOM

Come on! You never used to pass up a horror flick!

TEEN AVA doesn't look up from her phone.

MOM

You're just going to stay in all night?

TEEN AVA

Probably. What does it matter?

MOM

It's not healthy. At least call Megan and see if she can keep you company.

TEEN AVA

Fine. I'll text her .

MOM

Ava- I said call her/

TEEN AVA

I'm texting her right now-- ugh stop trying to control my life no one calls people any more she'll think I'm dying or something.

MOM

Ok. I just worry about you honey.

TEEN AVA

Whatever. I said I would. *(pause)* Don't worry-

AVA NOW

I wanted to go with them but I couldn't be caught at the movies with my family.
It was a Friday night. I had an image to maintain.
If my mom thought I was even the tiniest bit interested she would relentlessly try to get me to go. So I had to blow her off.

MOM

You sure? Cause we're leaving in 5min.

TEEN AVA
(despondent)

Yup totally. Buh-bye.

MOM

Ok then- tell Megan I said hi. I'll bring you home some pop corn. Ok?

TEEN AVA

Great. Can you shut my door now?

MOM

Ok. I'll- uhhh see you later than.

Lights down on MOM and TEEN AVA.

AVA NOW

Megan came over and we tried on these face masks that made our eyes burn. She was on facetime with her boyfriend most of the night and went home early.
I wish I would've went with my Mom and Henry.
I thought about texting my mom- but I didn't.
When I heard them come in I pretended to be asleep. (*Smiling*) She opened the door and put the pop corn on my dresser.

Enter YOUNGER AVA playing dress up with makeup looking in a princess mirror.

YOUNGER AVA

You have to be the most beautiful princess so the prince will like you. You have to make all the other princesses jealous. Then you'll dance and dance and hold hands and soon you'll live happily ever after.

Lights down on YOUNGER AVA.

TEEN AVA

(on phone)

No. No means absolutely no one Meg. No one wants to go to the stupid Spring Fling with me. *(pause)* Ask someone? Are you freaking kidding me right now? And look totally desperate. No thanks, I'd rather stay home. *(pause)* Thanks but no thanks I'm not going to be a third wheel. Have fun without me.

MOM

(call OS)

Ava let's get moving. You're gonna be late!

TEEN AVA

Ugh my mom's yelling. I gotta go. See you in study hall.

TEEN AVA hangs up and enters the kitchen where her mother is putting together sack lunches.

MOM

Hey - don't forget your lunch. You keep forgetting them in the car.

TEEN AVA

Cuz- I don't want em'.

MOM

What? It's lunch.

TEEN AVA looks at the lunch bag MOM has put down.

TEEN AVA

Super awkward.

MOM

How can lunch be awkward? It's food. Hurry up and put it in your bookbag, Henry is waiting in the car.

TEEN AVA

I don't have one.

MOM

One what?

TEEN AVA

A bag- I don't have a lame bookbag. I carry my books, and I don't need this stupid lunch.

MOM

(sing-songy)

Well- I put Oreos in there. They're double stuffed/

TEEN AVA

(under her breath)

You can stuff it.

AVA NOW

When the words left my mouth I was met with a mixture of shock and horror mixed with morbid curiosity. I'd never said something like that- so direct.

MOM

(turning slowly)

What did you just say to me?

AVA NOW

I rolled my eyes. I had nothing- we both know what I said and I dare not repeat it.

MOM

I see. Well, excuse me Miss Attitude, this is my house and you will not speak to me that way.

AVA NOW

It felt like there was no turning back.

TEEN AVA

Fine then- I'll talk that way outside.

MOM

That's not what I meant and you know it. What's gotten into you Ava?

TEEN AVA

Nothing! Leave me alone.

MOM

Fine, with that attitude I'm not driving you to school.

TEEN AVA

Great I'll walk.

TEEN AVA grabs her books that have a bunch of loose papers sticking in them. She storms out. A paper falls out. MOM grabs the lunches. She takes a moment to gather herself and leaves.

AVA NOW

As I was saying - I wanted to stop but I couldn't- mad felt good. It felt powerful. I wasn't talking to my mom really - I was talking to the feeling of rejection. I cringe now when I think about it but I remember standing outside until she came out and started the car. I got in. No words were spoken on the long ride to school.

MOM comes in after driving the kids to school. She has the car keys in hand. She picks up a piece of paper from the floor and reads it.

MOM

Spring Fling- A Night Under the Stars. Join us Saturday, April 24th.

That's next weekend. Why hasn't she even brought it up? (*realizing*) Of course- Tommy never asked her- damn. My poor baby has a broken heart. What a relief I thought she was just turning into a jerk. We'll fix this.

MOM exits with a sense of purpose.

YOUNGER AVA

This tiara means I'm the fairest of them all. Isn't it gorgeous? The diamonds sparkle. Now I'm ready for the ball.

YOUNGER AVA exits. MOM enters with the same tiara. She puts it on the counter with a note. She is very proud of herself and hums as she exits. Once MOM has exited TEEN AVA enters from school.

TEEN AVA

(on phone)

Ugh. I can't believe she made me use this ridiculous backpack. I took the late bus to avoid anyone seeing me. Henry's at tutoring so at least I have the house to myself for awhile. So, did you get your dress yet? *(pause)* Awww- Meg that sounds super cute. Send me pics.

TEEN AVA puts her backpack on the table and sees MOM's note.

Wait! What! What is this? No- no not your dress. My mom. She wrote me a note. *(reading)* 'Dear Princess Ava- get ready for the ball. Don't forget your tiara when we go dress shopping tonight. Love, Your Fairy Godmother.' DAMN! She knows about the dance! How did she find out! *(pause)* No, I blocked her on everything and she doesn't know about my secret account. Ugh she is trying to ruin my life I swear, it's like her one mission. I gotta go. Bye.

MOM enters excitedly. TEEN AVA is staring at the tiara, she is speechless.

MOM

So? I see you found it.

I put it away for you. Ya' know it used to be mine, I know it's only costume jewelry but your grandma paid a small fortune for it. I wore it on my wedding day- with my veil attached. You used to steal it right off my dresser when you were little. It's beautiful, isn't it?

TEEN AVA

Then *you* wear it!

MOM

(proud)

Don't be silly, I'm not the one going to Spring Fling.

TEEN AVA

(mocking)

Neither am I.

MOM

Is this because of the Tommy thing? Honey, come on. There are plenty of other potential dates out there.

TEEN AVA

It's not about Tommy. I just don't want to go.

MOM

But you love getting dressed up/

TEEN AVA

I did when I was a little kid- in case you haven't noticed I'm not 7!

MOM

(too excited to listen)

I know- I know, but we can get one of those big full dresses-- ohhh--- maybe in gold like Belle! (*Gasp*) You could be the Belle of the ball- oh that's good!

TEEN AVA

Wow. Ok- well, I appreciate the thought and all but/

MOM

(excited/fast talking)

So is that a maybe? Come on! I know what you're going to say- it's too close to the dance to get a good dress. Don't worry I check the website, Style & Couture still has a lot of options. They only let one dress per school get purchased so you don't have to worry about any embarrassing repeats so- so what do you say/

TEEN AVA

I'm not going.

MOM

Ahh- you're just nervous. Don't worry I called over to check and they're open pretty late tonight/

TEEN AVA

Did you go through my room or something when I was at school?

MOM

No. Why?

TEEN AVA

Then, how'd you find out about the dumb dance?

MOM

No, I swear scout-mom honor, I did not go near your room- though it is technically my house so it would be *my* room- but no.

MOM takes a flyer from her back pocket.

MOM

This must've fallen out of one of your books. You really should use your backpack honey.

TEEN AVA

Well, you can just throw it away because like I said- I'm. Not. Going.

MOM

We can make you look like a complete princess. Put on the tiara. Come on- just try it out. You'll remember how it feels/

MOM reaches out to put the tiara on TEEN AVA. This triggers something in TEEN AVA.

TEEN AVA

I don't want this! I'm not a princess and I'm not a little kid anymore!

TEEN AVA grabs the invite and tears it up. As the invite hits the floor the lights go down. She storms out.

AVA NOW

Those words were truer than that moment.

The truth was- I never felt like a princess.

I did love the attention dressing up brought with it.

How my parents would stop fighting and my dad would twirl me.

How my mom would tend to my dresses and tell me I was beautiful.

But *it* was just a vehicle, not my destination.

A part of me always knew that and maybe out of fear or the immaturity of youth I fought against who I really was.

Don't get me wrong- sure I wanted songs, adventures, the protection of knowing no matter what - good would triumph over evil...and magic- who doesn't want to believe in that?

So a part of me will always be grateful to those fairy tales...

But I have to be honest, because what's the point if we can't be honest with ourselves?

In that moment, looking at that tiara I was done. I was done waiting to be chosen- I wanted to choose. I wanted to live- I was trying so hard to be what I thought I should that I tucked away who I really was.

Lights up on TEEN AVA writing in a journal.

TEEN AVA
(Writing in journal)

Today the new girl asked me to borrow my notes for algebra. She's a math geek too...

AVA NOW

Thankfully things started to change for me my junior year of high school. That's when I met Sarah.

TEEN AVA
(writing in journal)

She's from somewhere on the East Coast and says Mr. Koatz is a *chowderhead*. Who says that?! We laughed so hard. She's so funny. We're supposed to meet up later and finish studying for finals.

AVA NOW

I started to feel like myself. I didn't feel like I had to chase someone. I felt this feeling within me growing. The me I was inside was coming out. I had no reference for these feelings but I started questioning- What if there was no *Prince Charming* after all?

MOM
(OS)

Ava- I'm heading to the sandwich place you in or what?

TEEN AVA

Yeah- give me a sec.

TEEN AVA hides journal away as MOM knocks on the door.

MOM

Did you say you were coming?

TEEN AVA

Yeah. You didn't have to come up here.

MOM

I had to check- make sure my old ears didn't hear it wrong.

TEEN AVA

Suuuree. You're not snooping on me at all right?

MOM

(coy)

What ever do you mean? *(laughs)*

TEEN AVA

Riiight. Hey, Can I drive?

MOM

I want a sandwich not a dance with death. Get your shoes on.

TEEN AVA

Oh come on. You barely ever let me drive anywhere!

MOM

Fine. But 10 and 2 lady!

TEEN AVA

10 and 2 what?

MOM

Like on the clock.

MOM demonstrates hand positions for driving.

MOM

You know, 10 and 2.

TEEN AVA

Yah, you can keep saying it but it doesn't make any more sense to me.

MOM

It's in the Rules of the Road.

TEEN AVA

Ok. What am I supposed to like memorize *every* little thing in there?

MOM

Yes! Actually, yes you are. Does anyone know how to read a clock anymore?

TEEN AVA

What can I say- my generation has evolved.

MOM

Yah- well I'm definitely starting to feel extinct so that checks out.

TEEN AVA grabs the keys out of MOM's hands and throws them.

TEEN AVA

YEET!

MOM

What did I tell you about yeeting my things!?

TEEN AVA

It's funny? And also no one says it like that -- (*notices*) Hey, why are you grinning at me? It's super sus/

MOM

I'm not grinning. I'm just glad to have my Ava back is all.

TEEN AVA

Maybe if you let me drive more, I'd be even nicer. (*sarcastic*) My dearest Mommy have I told you how splendid you are looking today?

MOM

Yup, there's my girl. Hey, if you get the keys you can drive *there* but I'm driving home. Deal?

TEEN AVA

Deal.

TEEN AVA retrieves the keys and MOM tries to steal them as they playfully exit.

AVA NOW

At lunch part of me wanted to tell Mom about Sarah.

I wasn't sure how she'd respond. I've had friends that came out and sometimes it didn't go well. We were just getting back to good and I didn't want to potentially ruin it.

Besides, there's something about saying things out loud that makes them more real or complicated. I wanted to carry these feelings for Sarah with me as long as I could.

Untarnished. Uninterrupted. Just mine.

Lights up TEEN SARAH and TEEN AVA at school. They walk past each other as they hurry to class. They pass notes and scurry to class to read them.

TEEN AVA

(reading Sarah's note)

Hey Ava-

So did you actually study for the chemistry midterm or what? I saw how fast you turned in the packet and I was like Damn Girl! Lol Well, I thought I'd write since I'm sitting here in Advanced Composition and Rhetoric, my only honors class and I'm still completely bored! No offense. I'd write you anyways- you know what I mean.

I tried to text you but Mr. White was watching me like a hawk.

Today he lectured about the historical use of propaganda in the media- and how it changed peoples' opinions about wars and influenced politics. And this was before social media!

Hey that reminds me- when are we going to be Facebook official? Do people still say that? Lol I think they do - right? Anyways, I gotta go. We have to turn in our thesis today for our term papers and I'm thinking about writing how Tik Tok convinced everyone 'mom jeans' were cool. Talk about power and control! So anyways, hope to see you later. I miss your goofy face. W.B.S (write back soon.) - Sarah (smiley face, heart)

TEEN SARAH

(reading AVA's note)

OMG Sarah- I thought you dropped that class?! That sounds tremendously boring. Oh and I did not study for chemistry- I guessed! I tried to look off of Todd's paper but he covered it with his hair! That's what I get for sitting next to a drummer. BTW I also totally love how you slipped the Facebook thing into your note in a very deliberate and blatant way- you know I want to but I haven't told my mom about us yet. I know, I know 6 months is a long time- I just need a little more time. Anyways, come over after school we have several binge worthy shows to catch up on. Also, if you take the first letter of every word in this note it spells , I miss you Sarah.

You totally just went back and looked. Jokes on you it doesn't but... I still do. By the way meet me by the lockers after class I need to talk to you...TTFN - Ava (hearts)

TEEN SARAH enters waiting. TEEN AVA enters and starts pulling TEEN SARAH down the hall into an empty classroom. They giggle.

TEEN SARAH

So are you going to tell me why you dragged me in here?

TEEN AVA

I didn't *drag* you. I lovingly pulled you...

TEEN SARAH

Out with it- What's going on?

TEEN AVA

I thought we could talk for a minute.

TEEN SARAH

Aww- that's sweet but we can do that on the way to the dugout. Everyone's meeting up there afterschool. Come on, let's go Chowerhead. They'll leave without us/

TEEN AVA

Hey - uhh before we go can I tell you something?

TEEN SARAH

Sure, what?

TEEN AVA

Well, I actually wrote you something.

TEEN AVA takes a piece of paper out of her pocket.

TEEN SARAH

A note? You could've just text me...

TEEN SARAH sees TEEN AVA is very serious.

TEEN SARAH

Hey- what's up? Are you ok?

TEEN AVA

Shh.. just let me read it ok? *(pause)* Uhh- Dear Sarah- *(stops reading)* Sorry I know this is lame.

TEEN SARAH

A little bit but go on... *(laughs)* Are you nervous? You're shaking/

TEEN AVA

Wow- you can tell? I just- well- let me read the letter ok/

TEEN SARAH

Sure go ahead.

TEEN AVA

Ok. *(deep breath then begins reading)* Dear Sarah, since the day I met you, I knew you were special. You're all the things that matter and you make me smile. But mostly I love who we are when we're together. I feel like I can just be ME with you I- I brought you in here to ask you, away from our annoying friends, if you would go to senior prom with me.

TEEN SARAH

Are you being serious right now?

TEEN AVA

Yeah- I am.

TEEN SARAH

Yes! Of course, yes. I would love to go to prom with you.

TEEN AVA

(thrilled)

Great. Uh. Let's go tell the rest and grab some lunch.

TEEN SARAH

I can't believe you- always full of surprises. Thank you for being so sweet.

They embrace and walk off hand in hand.

AVA NOW

Prom was amazing. It was nothing like I had ever thought it would be.
 Sarah wore a ball gown and I wore a pantsuit.
 My mother took a million pictures of us.
 She thought we were best friends, and we were, but Sarah was so much more to me and I
 couldn't keep it in any longer.
 Maybe it was still the whirlwind of the night or sleep deprivation but the next morning I
 did something I didn't plan to do.

TEEN AVA is eating a bowl of cereal. MOM
 enters.

MOM

So how was the big night!? I waited up but then crashed as soon as I heard you made it
 upstairs. Sarah looked amazing; the whole group of friends looked so grown up. I felt like
 I hardly recognized you all! So cute/

TEEN AVA

Mom/

MOM

Sorry I shouldn't say 'cute' you'll be off to college next year /

TEEN AVA

Mom/

MOM

I can't believe that was my little girl going off to her senior prom/

TEEN AVA

Stop talking/

MOM

(pinching Ava's cheeks)

Awww... you're right you're not my baby wabby anymore huh dumpling/

TEEN AVA

Are you done?

MOM surrenders and sits down with her
 coffee.

TEEN AVA

I kinda wanted to tell you something.

MOM

Sure honey.

TEEN AVA

Ok. Uhh.. how should I put this... uhhh you know how Henry and Cathy have been dating for awhile now?

MOM

Ya- so? (*realizing*) Oh no! Are they breaking up? You can tell me I won't say a word.

TEEN AVA

No, no not that. It's just Sarah and I have been together longer than they have/

MOM

What?

TEEN AVA

She's my girlfriend.

MOM

(takes sip of coffee)

Uh huh/

TEEN AVA

(blurts out)

And I love her- Oh wow that's weird to say out loud to your mom- but I do.

MOM

We all do Ava. She brings out the best in you.

TEEN AVA

Wait. You're not shocked? You're not even surprised? Did you hear me I said I love , LOVE, her not like, 'OMG I love those shoes where did you get them' but like the big L-word.

MOM

I heard you honey. (*leans in*) You look at her the way I used to look at your daddy. I know the look- that sparkle. Honey listen, I will never tell you who to love and I will never stop loving you.

TEEN AVA

Why didn't you say anything?

MOM

What was I going to say? I didn't want to intrude- but I've known....(*corrects*) suspected for awhile now. It's just not my story to tell so I went along with what I thought you wanted me to think...

TEEN AVA

I thought you'd be disappointed.

MOM

(disbelief)

Disappointed? Why? Why on earth would I be disappointed?

TEEN AVA

You always called me your little *princess*. This isn't what you probably thought things would be like, right?

MOM

Hey- I don't want you to play a part because you think that's what I want or someone else out there wants. You understand? Besides, sometimes real life is better than the fairy tales-

TEEN AVA smiles. She eats her cereal and
MOM drinks her coffee.

MOM

Hey, you gonna tell me some details from last night or what? I'm dying to hear how things went!

Lights down on MOM and TEEN AVA.
AVA NOW is sitting on a couch. She is writing in her journal. SARAH NOW enters. She is exhausted. She sits down on the couch and turns on the TV. It is modern day.

SARAH NOW

You know she's going to wake up as soon as we turn the movie on right?

AVA NOW

Of course- always does. I think she's teething.

SARAH NOW

Already! Ugh there goes sleep.

AVA NOW

It's Tuesday date night already? Wow. I almost forgot.

SARAH NOW

I put it on the calendar silly. What would you do without me?

SARAH NOW watches AVA NOW she is writing and appears not to be completely listening.

SARAH NOW

Hey- what've you been working on? I see you scribbling all the time in that journal of yours.

AVA NOW

Well- I've been trying to write things down more lately. (*Stares at journal*) Stories. Moments. Important things I don't want to forget.

SARAH NOW

Oh, like a log of sorts?

AVA NOW

Sorta (*confesses after a long pause*)...Actually- It's more like a letter to our daughter.

SARAH NOW

Really? What kind of letter?

AVA NOW

Well- I want her to know us- know the love she came from.

SARAH NOW

That's sweet. You know it's ok if you don't right everything down? We're right here hon. I hope she feels how much we love her every day.

AVA NOW

I know. But I do it because- I don't ever want her to feel like she's alone. I want her to know that love exists in all forms and she never has to be something she's not to fit someone else's ideals. Lord, knows that would've saved me a whole lotta time!

SARAH NOW

Me too- That's beautiful.

AVA NOW

I learned it from you, Sarah.

SARAH NOW

(smiling/playful)

I sound so wise.

AVA NOW

You are- and to answer your question, Chowderhead, no. I can't imagine my life without you in it. Because it didn't begin until I met you.

SARAH NOW

So you were listening? (*laughs*) You always say the sweetest things. How did I get so lucky?

AVA NOW

Well, my mom always said- Real life is better than fairy tales.

SARAH NOW

That's sweet. Fairy tales always seemed so far fetched to me anyway. How did Cinderella look into the Prince's eyes all night long and he not remember what she looked like the next day?! I mean come on right?! He has to try that ridiculous glass slipper on every women's foot in town.

AVA NOW

Maybe she wasn't what he *thought* he wanted.

SARAH NOW

I guess not-

AVA NOW

Sometimes we *think* we know what we want,
but we don't actually know what we *need* until we find it.

SARAH NOW

How dare you make me hate that story a little less. (*smiles*)
What do you say we put the journal away for a bit - we're on borrowed time.

SARAH NOW puts baby monitor on the table.
She puts her head on AVA NOW's shoulder.

AVA NOW

Sure. I just have one more thing to write...

AVA NOW reads as she writes the last line.

AVA NOW

Sometimes in life you have to be willing to make your own - Happily Ever After.

AVA NOW closes the journal and puts it next to
the baby monitor. She cuddles in close with
SARAH NOW. Lights down.

END OF PLAY