

SAMPLE SCRIPT

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BUT HE LOVES ME

This CBS Schoolbreak Special about an abusive teen-age relationship, won the Writer's Guild of America Award for Best Children's Special. Kelli Williams, who played the lead role of Cassie, went on to become a star of ABC'S *The Practice*.

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BUT HE LOVES ME

A CBS Schoolbreak Special

written by

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BUT HE LOVES MEOPENING TEASE

FADE IN:

PANNING OVER a page in Cassie McBride's scrapbook, we see typical High School mementoes of a recent vintage: snapshots of CASSIE with friends, a big button lettered "GO TIGERS," newspaper clippings, pictures of Cassie dressed for the Prom.

CASSIE (V.O.)

I'd never had a serious boyfriend before. I was beginning to think I was a geek. Not really, but I know my Mom and Dad wished I was more popular. I did, too. But you either are or you're not. I wasn't.

As Cassie's unmanicured finger travels across the page from picture to picture, she pauses on a great grinning candid snapshot of CHARLIE, 18.

EXTREME TIGHT CU - CASSIE

Against a non-distinguishable background, CASSIE, dramatically lit, talks TO CAMERA. She's more somber and mature than in the snapshots; in fact, she is now a year older. (As the story unfolds, Cassie's lighting gradually becomes softer and more natural.)

CASSIE

Then I met Charlie.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Various TEENS head up the sidewalk to a brightly-lit suburban house - including CASSIE, 16, and her friend BROOKE. Cassie is attractive, but not a knockout by any means. Brooke is more mature and self-assured than Cassie, who fidgets with her hair, pulls down her skirt and generally looks nervous.

ON FRONT DOOR

Cassie and Brooke approach the open door. Cassie stops.

CASSIE

You didn't tell me it was such a big party!

BROOKE

Relax - you're with me!

Brooke pauses to "inspect" Cassie, fluffing out Cassie's hair with her hands a little.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

You're perfect.

Cassie's unconvinced, but she and Brooke are about to enter the door when they are stopped by the host, BEN.

BEN

Whoa! Uno momento! Before you get in. . .
chug it.

He extends a can of beer toward them. Cassie just looks at it.

BROOKE

It's no big deal, Cassie.

Brooke takes a sip for the can. Ben lets Brooke in, but puts his arm up again to prevent Cassie from entering.

BEN

You're next.

Ben dangles the beer can and Cassie backs away a few steps, desperately uncertain. Just then, CHARLIE approaches and tries to slip in under Ben's arm.

BEN (CONT'D)

Yo, Taylor! Here's your ticket!

Charlie takes the beer and starts to chug it, but stops mid-swig when he catches sight of Cassie.

HIS POV - CASSIE

She looks unsure and forlorn off in the shadows.

ON CHARLIE

He takes a step toward her.

CHARLIE

You going in?

CASSIE

Beer kind of makes me -- sick.

Charlie comes closer. He wears a charming grin.

CHARLIE

I see you around school. What's your name?

CASSIE

Cassie. McBride.

Cassie smiles, a little bit shy.

CHARLIE
Do you know who I am?

CASSIE
Sure. You're Charlie Taylor.

CHARLIE
Want to dance?

Cassie looks around nervously.

CASSIE
Here?

Charlie gestures toward the front door.

CHARLIE
There. Come on.

Charlie guides Cassie to the door. Ben still dangles the beer.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
(to Ben)
She's with me.

Ben shrugs his shoulders, then lets them pass, a bit surprised.

ON CASSIE

She's not sure what just happened - but she loves it!

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP CASSIE - IN LIMBO

Speaking directly TO CAMERA.

CASSIE
(dreamily)
My friends and I used to talk about what the perfect guy would be like. How it would feel to be in love. How it would last forever. Then came Charlie. He was the perfect guy. Cute, sexy, popular, always joking around. Except after awhile, nothing was very funny. Who'd have thought I'd wish I'd never met him. . . never even heard his name?

CASSIE (CONT'D)
(emotional)
Who'd have thought it could become such a nightmare?

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE

You know how in the old movies, love seems so great? The guy and the girl kiss and the music comes in. Well, with Charlie, it wasn't quite like the movies.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REC ROOM - NIGHT

It's a big, informal

party; kids dancing to the stereo. Cassie dances with Charlie as Brooke watches from the sidelines. Brooke looks as if she's about to burst.

CASSIE (V.O.)

I didn't know what to say, I felt like my feet wouldn't move right, I was on edge. I kept thinking I'd wake up and it was all a dream. But Charlie didn't seem to notice.

(pause)

That seems like a long time ago.

The music ENDS. Cassie says something to Charlie, then they part and Cassie joins Brooke. They are both extremely excited.

BROOKE

I can't believe it! Charlie Taylor? What happened out there?

CASSIE

I don't know - but he's such a babe!

They try to restrain their excitement, but can barely contain it.

BROOKE

I wondered who'd catch him after he broke up with Julia.

CASSIE

We just danced together a couple of times.

Charlie appears BEHIND Cassie.

CHARLIE

Cassie? Come on.

Cassie and Brooke exchange a look and Cassie and Charlie join the other dancers.

ON DANCE FLOOR

Cassie is a self-conscious dancer. Somebody hands Charlie a beer, which he drinks while he dances. They don't speak at first. MUSIC is very LOUD.

CHARLIE
Let's get out of here!

CASSIE
What?

CHARLIE
(raises his voice)
I SAID - LET'S GO!

CASSIE
(loudly)
Where?

CHARLIE
(loudly)
SOMEPLACE QUIET!

He shouts "QUIET" so loudly, they both LAUGH (as do OTHERS dancing near them) and walk away from the dance floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PIZZA PLACE - NIGHT

Cassie and Charlie sit across from the table, laughing. They have sodas and pizza in front of them.

CHARLIE
You know, I see you coming out of
Brewster's class every day.

Cassie rolls her eyes.

CASSIE
She's so gross!

CHARLIE
Tell me about it.

Charlie stands up and strikes a pose in imitation of an older, female teacher.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Mr. Taylor, if you don't understand basic geometry, you'll never understand anything!

Cassie joins him in mocking the teacher's trademark words.

CASSIE AND CHARLIE

(in unison)

Mark my words!

They laugh. Charlie sits down again.

CHARLIE

Yeah, but Brewster's a piece of cake compared with Sandstrum. You have him?

Cassie shakes her head. Charlie launches into a funny imitation of Mr. Sandstrum.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

People, people. Now I want you to open your books to page twelve thousand and fifty two, people! Diagram the sentences, outline the chapters and underline every other word. And have fun, people!

Cassie laughs appreciatively. Charlie gazes at her admiringly.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You're not like any other girl I've known. That's for sure.

Unsure, Cassie looks down. Charlie grins at her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You're sweet.

Cassie grins, embarrassed. Charlie reaches for his soda - takes a sip, makes a face.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Geez, I didn't order diet!
(yells to counter)
Hey, Bozo!

Charlie dumps the soda on the floor. Cassie GASPS, reacting at this unexpected display of temper. Charlie turns back to her and grins. He notices her shock and tries to lighten the mood.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Come on, it was a joke.

Cassie smiles, a bit uncertainly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CASSIE'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

As Cassie and Charlie stand before the door, Cassie fishes in her handbag for her key.

CASSIE

It was really a great evening. That sounds so dumb. It really was.

CHARLIE

Yeah. And tonight is just the beginning.
(mocking Brewster again)
Mark my words!

He leans over and kisses her, gently and sweetly.

CASSIE

It was really great -
(laughs)
I keep saying that word.

CHARLIE

Try something new. Uh- stupendous.

CASSIE

Okay. Outrageous!

Charlie moves in on Cassie, pressing close.

CHARLIE

Maybe Sunday we could go to a movie.
(he kisses her)
And then the next day. . .
(kisses her again)
And the next day. . . .
(another kiss)

They kiss passionately; Cassie is responsive. When they finally break, Cassie seems surprised and very happy.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I want to be with you all the time, Cassie McBride. Because I think I'm falling in love with you.

They kiss again - even more passionately.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXTREME TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

Against a non-distinguishable background, Charlie, also "in limbo," speaks TO CAMERA. He looks older than before; but is still full of boyish charm. (As the story unfolds, Charlie's lighting gradually becomes starker and more dramatic.)

CHARLIE

Cassie's a cute girl. And she's smart.

(playful grin)

Sure she's smart, she picked me, right? No, just kidding. We picked each other.

She seemed so sweet and innocent - I hate those girls who try to impress you all the time. Anyway, she was my kind of girl. I wanted to make her happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL ART CLASS -A WEEK LATER

Cassie is putting the finishing touches on a charcoal drawing. She approaches it thoughtfully, deeply immersed in what she's doing. When the BELL RINGS, it startles her.

MR. MONTGOMERY

Okay, you can take your drawings with you but bring them back. I'll grade them tomorrow!

Kids GROAN at the word "grade." Cassie collects her books and drawing. Other kids EXIT past her. Brooke appears at Cassie's side. She looks as if she's bursting with news.

BROOKE

Guess who's waiting!

Cassie looks up at the door. Charlie waves through the glass.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

CAMERA FOLLOWS with Charlie and Cassie as they walk down the hall. She proudly holds up her sketch. Charlie makes a face.

CHARLIE

What's it supposed to be?

Cassie is hurt.

CASSIE

Can't you tell?

He grins as they stop in front of the DOORWAY of her next class. The hallway is crowded with kids passing by.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Here's your stop.

CASSIE
Okay. I'll see you.

Cassie turns toward class but Charlie catches her arm.

CHARLIE
Wait a sec.

He tries to pull her close; she resists.

CASSIE
Not here, Charlie.

CHARLIE
I can't help it. You turn me on.

He pulls her toward him more forcefully.

CASSIE
Don't. You're going to be late.

Charlie suddenly pushes her away, hurt.

CHARLIE
Well, okay! I mean, if you don't care.

CASSIE
Oh, Charlie . . . I care.

CHARLIE
So?

Cassie leans toward him to give him a peck on the cheek. He pulls her forcefully for a more passionate embrace.

CLOSE ON CASSIE

This is one kiss she's not enjoying.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE -

CASSIE

For the first time in my life, I felt beautiful. I turned Charlie Taylor on. And that felt good. I had somebody. I was popular. My friends and my parents treated me differently. I was on top of the world!

Those were the best days of my life. Everybody liked Charlie. And I was Charlie's girl.

INT. BLEACHERS - GYM CLASS - DAY

Cassie, Brooke, KERRY GREENE and another girl, STACEY, sit in the bleachers, watching as other girls in their gym class practice a basketball drill. All wear GYM CLOTHES. They banter light-heartedly as they watch.

STACEY

Hey, Cassie, how does Charlie manage to get to your class before the bell even stops ringing?

Cassie shrugs her shoulders playfully.

CASSIE

He runs track.

They all LAUGH.

KERRY

Are you going to bring him to my party?
It's going to be hot.

Brooke glances up at Cassie.

BROOKE

Just like Charlie. He's always hot.

They all LAUGH; Cassie is slightly embarrassed.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Cassie never had it so good. Anybody will tell you. I bought her presents and told her I loved her all the time. Most guys don't do that. But I treat a woman right. And I expect to be treated right. Hey, I'm a nice guy! That's why I don't understand what happened . . .

(trails off; Charlie
doesn't WANT to
understand)

And you know, I'd still take her back. Even now.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

A large BANNER with balloons proclaims "PEP CLUB CARWASH." Some GIRLS stand on the sidewalk, waving customers in. OTHER GIRLS soap up cars while still OTHERS hose them off. Kids all wear shorts, sweatshirts, cut-offs, etc., and seem to be having a great time as they work.

Cassie and Kerry soap down an open CONVERTIBLE belonging to a cute guy, JEFF. He stands nearby - giving them instructions. The girls giggle.

JEFF

Hey, the outside of the car - not the inside!

CASSIE

Put the top up.

KERRY

He can't afford a top - yet.

As they continue to work, Charlie drives up in his car.

ON CHARLIE

He remains inside the car, watching Cassie without her noticing. He is not smiling.

CHARLIE'S POV

He sees Cassie suddenly turn toward Jeff and toss a bucket of water at him. Jeff, laughing, lunges at her.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Charlie, obviously angry, exits his car. As he walks toward Cassie, he puts a smile on his face.

CHARLIE
(charming)
Yo, Cassie! You never washed my car like that.

Cassie sees him and smiles.

CASSIE
(playful)
All it takes is three bucks.

She holds out her hand. Charlie nods toward his car.

CHARLIE
Come on. Get in for a sec, okay?

ON CASSIE AND CHARLIE

CASSIE
I'm working.

CHARLIE
I just want to talk, okay?
(humorous "aside")
I just want to give you a break from this lowlife.

ON KERRY AND JEFF

They laugh at what seems like a joke.

ON CHARLIE AND CASSIE

He grabs her wrist. She looks down at his hand.

CHARLIE
Like now.

Cassie decides not to make a scene.

CASSIE
Okay.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR

Charlie continues holding her wrist. She's on the passenger side; he's in the driver's seat.

CASSIE
Okay. So? What?

He turns toward her, now furious.

CHARLIE
What the hell do you think you're doing?
Dressed like that. Teasing Jeff Kerner.
You've turned into a real slut, haven't
you?

CASSIE
What are you talking about?

CHARLIE
If you're giving it away, I'll take some
too, okay?

He unexpectedly grabs her, holds her by her ponytail and gives her a very rough kiss. Cassie struggles, but he's holding her ponytail; she can't get out of it. Finally Cassie breaks away. She rubs her head, angrily.

CASSIE
That hurt!

CHARLIE
Sure, blame me. So what's with you and
Kerner? You don't give a damn about me, do
you?

CASSIE
You're crazy! I have never looked at
anybody but you. What's the matter with
you, Charlie?

CHARLIE
I love you, that's what's the matter.

Again, he grabs her hair and kisses her. She struggles less, though she's not enjoying this kiss either. She breaks free and Cassie rubs the back of her head.

CASSIE
I've got to go.

She jumps out of the car. CAMERA FOLLOWS as she walks back toward Jeff's car. Cassie's disheveled now as she rubs her head. A couple of kids WHISTLE and CLAP. Charlie watches intensely from his car.

KERRY

(friendly teasing)

Hey, Cassie. Your lipstick's smeared!

(calling after her)

Your hair's messed up!

Cassie's extremely upset, but says nothing as she walks back.

JEFF

Well, I'm impressed!

Cassie slaps the rag on the car. She doesn't say a word. She looks back at Charlie's car. She rubs the back of her head.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Women. Can't live with 'em, can't live
without 'em, right?

(grins, then an
afterthought)

That's what my dad says anyway.

Cassie acts all Miss Innocent, but she's
like all women. You know, she'd try to make
me jealous and stuff. She knew just how to
get to me.

(pause, then fondly)

But still, I was miserable when I wasn't
with her. She'd make me mad, but I'd always
come back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FOYER - CASSIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Arriving home from the Pep Club Carwash, Cassie opens the front door
and enters in same clothes, looking tired. She stops to adjust her
ponytail in the mirror when she hears CHARLIE'S LAUGHTER coming from
the kitchen. She reacts - almost cringing at the sound of Charlie's
laugh.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Charlie is seated at the kitchen table with Cassie's mother, BARBARA,
her father, AL and her younger brother KYLE (8). They are laughing and
looking at some snapshots.

CHARLIE

This one's great!

Cassie enters.

KYLE

Look, Cassie, Charlie's here!

CASSIE

How come?

BARBARA
 (kidding)
 Well, hello to you, too!

CASSIE
 Sorry. Hi.

She attempts a half-hearted smile for her parents, then gives Charlie a questioning look.

BARBARA
 Charlie got here just in time to help me put the groceries away.

KYLE
 And tell us about his state championship!

CHARLIE
 (modest)
District championship.

KYLE
 (proudly)
 He's going to run with me some time.

Cassie's still unsmiling.

CASSIE
 Great.

AL
 Come over here, honey. We're showing Charlie how cute you used to be.

Ignoring her father, Cassie opens the refrigerator and takes out a pitcher of orange juice. Charlie stands up, hands her a glass out of the cupboard - obviously "at home" in her kitchen.

CHARLIE
 We're still going to study at the library tonight, aren't we, Cassie?

CASSIE
 Oh, I can't. I'm just too tired.

BARBARA
 Can't blame you, after the day you put in.

AL
 You're 16 years old. How can you be tired? Go with Charlie.

CASSIE
 Oh, Daddy.

AL
 (cute)
 You heard your father.

Al and Charlie exchange looks. Al pats Charlie on the back.

AL (CONT'D)
 (to Charlie)
 But don't keep her out too late.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHARLIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Charlie leans over to kiss Cassie. She abruptly pulls away and rubs the back of her head.

CHARLIE
 Would you cut that out?

CASSIE
 Charlie, you really hurt me.

CHARLIE
 (angry, defensive)
 Look, the world is crashing down on me; I just snapped. I'm sorry, okay?

CASSIE
 What are you talking about?

CHARLIE
 Well, I'm practically flunking History and English.

CASSIE
 Oh, no!

CHARLIE
 I just can't write a paper. I don't know, I'm pretty smart and I've got good ideas, but things don't come out right on paper.

CASSIE
 I'm really sorry, Charlie. You should have told me.

Charlie leans forward.

CHARLIE
 If I flunk, my dad will really give it to me. I'll probably have to move out. You don't know what I go through at home.

Cassie takes his hand.

CASSIE

Let me help you Charlie. I could work with you.

CHARLIE

It's no use. The paper's due in two days. I wasn't even going to tell you . . .

CASSIE

Look, why don't I write it for you. Just this once. I can churn those things out in a hurry. I want to help.

Charlie nods his head.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

You are smart and you do have good ideas. But next time you're worried about something tell me about it instead of getting mad, okay?

CHARLIE

(very emotional)

Cassie, you're the first person who's ever really cared about me. And I love you. I really love you. I just want to be with you.

CASSIE

Me too.

They kiss passionately. Charlie pulls back this time, to Cassie's surprise.

CASSIE

What's the matter?

CHARLIE

I don't know, maybe the reason I get so mad is, you know, I need to know you really love me.

CASSIE

Well, I do!

CHARLIE

Yeah, but for a man, that's not always enough.

Cassie pulls away; she knows what he wants.

CASSIE

Maybe I'm just not ready.

CHARLIE

If you really loved me, you would be.

(pause a beat)

Look, I've been patient. What are you waiting for? Someone you love more than me?

Cassie does not respond.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Cassie?

She turns toward him.

CASSIE

Oh, Charlie. I couldn't love anyone more than you.

They kiss passionately, feverishly, with a new intensity. . .

DISSOLVE THROUGH BLACK TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE

I hadn't actually planned on it, but I knew it would happen someday. And I thought maybe Charlie would know how much I loved him if I just did it. I mean, I wanted to anyway.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Cassie stands before her open locker -a huge bunch of balloons reading "I Love You" attached to the locker. There is bustling activity around her as students hurry to their first class. Kerry and Brooke approach, holding books. They see the balloons and rush toward Cassie. [Cassie wears a sweater and short skirt; stylish but not sexy]

KERRY

(teasing)

Gee, things must be heating up!

Cassie swats at Kerry with her books.

CASSIE

(kiddingly)

Shut up!

ON KERRY AND BROOKE

They continue walking on PAST Cassie's locker and past JULIA, who is approaching Cassie's locker.

ANOTHER ANGLE KERRY AND BROOKE

BROOKE

I wonder what she wants?

Kerry turns to look at Julia, then turns back to Brooke.

KERRY

Who?

BROOKE

Julia. You know, Charlie's ex-girlfriend.

ON CASSIE

She closes her locker door and turns, surprised to find herself facing Julia. She looks a little older than Cassie, and there's an air of mystery around her. Cassie looks puzzled.

JULIA

(tentatively)

Look, I just want to warn you. I know
Charlie. Be careful.

Julia looks over her shoulder and sees Charlie approaching. She walks on, past Cassie. Cassie appears quite puzzled. Suddenly, Charlie is right next to her.

CASSIE

Charlie! Thanks for the balloons!

Charlie grabs Cassie's arm and pulls her roughly towards a doorway, away from the stream of kids in the hall.

CASSIE

Ow! you're hurting me!

CHARLIE

Listen. I don't want you talking to that
lying slut. Ever. Get it?

CASSIE

She was talking to me. I didn't say a word.

CHARLIE

Make sure you don't.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE

Everything with Charlie was either way up or way down. It was like a rollercoaster ride - kind of upsetting, but really exciting. I liked that for awhile.

And, I don't know, things were going so fast, I didn't have time to stop and think about what was happening. I don't know how I could be so -blind . . . but I was.

CUT TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CHARLIE

You don't know anything about me except what other people have told you. Let me tell you something. I don't want to brag or anything, but I'm kind of like a star at school. Girls are always chasing after me. But I was true to Cassie. I stuck with her, none of the other guys would have. I was loyal. Not like her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I'm not so sure about her.

CUT TO:

INT. ART CLASS - DAY

Cassie is painting a moody portrait of Charlie. She takes great care with each stroke. Brooke is at the next easel. Other kids are painting; Mr. Montgomery, the art teacher, is walking around, observing his students' art.

MR. MONTGOMERY

Nice work, Cassie.

CASSIE

Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT. ART CLASS - POV THROUGH WINDOW IN DOOR

Charlie watches, not wanting to attract attention.

CHARLIE'S POV

From this angle, he can see that the portrait is his own face. He can also see Mr. Montgomery leaning over Cassie's shoulder, pointing at the drawing. Mr. Montgomery and Cassie both smile.

ON CHARLIE

He is displeased - even angry - at what he sees. As CAMERA PULLS BACK we see Charlie clenching and unclenching his fist as Cassie and the teacher continue to talk about the portrait - talking about, pointing to HIS FACE.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Charlie is furious at Cassie, lambasting her outside the doorway as other kids exit.

CHARLIE

So, are you making fun of me, or what?

CASSIE

Please, don't start . . .

CHARLIE

What am I supposed to think - the way you tease him?

CASSIE

(shocked)

Mr. Montgomery? You're crazy!

CHARLIE

Listen to me, Bitch! You said you love me. And if you're even thinking about doing something with somebody else you'd, well, you'd better not even think about it. Do you hear?

CASSIE

Charlie, but I don't know what you're talking about.

She begins to cry.

CHARLIE

Listen, we're not going to Kerry's party together. I mean, it would be a joke.

CASSIE

(through her sobs)

But I haven't done anything!

Charlie stops, thinks, looking O.C. Then he sighs.

CHARLIE

Well, you'd better start being a whole lot nicer to me.

Cassie wipes her eyes, but the tears still come.

CASSIE

I'll try.

Charlie takes her in his arms and kisses her.

DISSOLVE TO:

ESTABLISHING SHOT - EXT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Part of the house is dark but there's a light on in Cassie's room. A telephone RINGS.

CASSIE (O.C.)

(laughing)

Charlie, if you don't stop calling, I'll never get this paper done.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Cassie's in her room, talking on phone. She's wearing a robe and sitting before the typewriter.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Of course I love you; you know I do.

She hears her Father walking in the hallway.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 I think my Dad's home. Listen, I'll see you
 tomorrow.
 (listens a beat)
 Me too. Bye.

She hangs up the phone and rises, going to the hall.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY- FOLLOWING

Cassie's Father is in a business suit, loosening his tie and looking
 at some mail. He looks tired; it's very late.

CASSIE
 Dad?

He turns and sees her.

AL
 You're up late.

CASSIE
 Homework. Dad, you know Kerry Greene is
 having that big party at the Lake in two
 weeks?

AL
 (only half listening)
 Is she?

CASSIE
 And I could really use a new dress, you
 know?

Al finally hears her. He puts down the mail.

AL
 Are you going with Charlie?

CASSIE
 (grinning)
 Who else?

Al reaches in his wallet, and takes out some money.

AL
 This ought to cover it.

He hands her the money.

CASSIE

Thanks, Daddy. How was your dinner?

AL

Well, I think we made the deal.
 (pats his stomach)
 But I got indigestion.

CASSIE

Poor Daddy.Thanks. Night.

She kisses him, then slips back into her room.

CUT TO:

INT. CASSIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cassie puts the money in her wallet, then sits at her desk, in front of the typewriter. She begins typing.

CASSIE'S POV - ON PAGE

It reads "BY CHARLIE TAYLOR."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ART CLASS - DAY

Cassie puts the finishing touches on her moody portrait of Charlie. Mr. Montgomery approaches, looks over her shoulder.

MR. MONTGOMERY

It's really shaping up, Cassie. I'd like to display it in the Art Fair.

Cassie turns, surprised.

CASSIE

It's not quite finished. I want to get it just right.

MR. MONTGOMERY

It'll be great.

He grins and Cassie returns the smile. But after her last row with Charlie, she holds something back. The school BELL RINGS. Cassie picks up a rag to clean her brush.

CASSIE

Could I use the room a little bit after school?

MR. MONTGOMERY

Help yourself. Just lock the door behind you.

CASSIE

Thanks.

Cassie LOOKS UP, sees Charlie at the door. She self-consciously gathers her books and purse and heads toward the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HALLWAY

Cassie rushes out to greet Charlie.

CHARLIE

What was that all about?

CASSIE

Nothing. I just need to finish my painting after school today.

CHARLIE

Who says?

CASSIE

Well, I just want to.

CHARLIE

I'm running preliminaries this afternoon. Come watch me, okay?

CASSIE

But I have to finish my painting by Friday for the Art Fair. Mr. Montgomery wants to show it. My painting of you! Isn't that great!

CHARLIE

Like some freak show? No way. It's just for dorks anyway. Besides, that's Kerry's party - remember?

CASSIE

So? We go to the Art Fair before the party.

CHARLIE

We don't go. And neither does my picture. And I expect to see you in the bleachers later.

They stop in front of her classroom. It's settled as far as Charlie is concerned.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Ciao, baby.

He kisses her, then heads down the hall, looking cocky. Cassie looks after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Just when things were going well, Cassie started in on me - trying to control me. Like my Mom or something. And you've got to stand up for yourself. I mean, you've got your pride, right? Isn't that important?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ART CLASSROOM - LATER THAT DAY

It's very quiet as Cassie paints alone, concentrating on Charlie's portrait.

CHARLIE (O.C.)

You got a short memory.

Cassie looks up, SHOCKED. Charlie stands in the doorway. He wears his track clothes.

CASSIE

(catching her breath)

You scared me!

He shuts the door behind him, then walks menacingly toward Cassie.

CHARLIE

You said you'd be there.

CASSIE

I said I'd work on my painting. You just didn't listen.

CHARLIE

It helps me to have you there. But you obviously care about your art teacher more than me!

CASSIE

(exasperated)

I am so sick of hearing that.

CHARLIE

Forget it. I don't know why I put up with this.

He takes a few steps toward her - a threatening presence.

CASSIE
(angry)
Put up with what?

CHARLIE
You! Wearing short skirts, coming on to
every guy - never caring about what I want!

CASSIE
(standing up to him)
What about what I want? I just wanted to
finish the picture.

CHARLIE
You just shut up!!

ON CHARLIE

He raises his hand - threateningly.

ON CASSIE

There's real fear in her eyes as she feels his rage.

CASSIE
Charlie---

Out of words, Charlie slaps her hard across the face.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE

My mom always says there has to be give and take, and it works better if the woman does more of the giving. Like her with my Dad. But no matter what I did with Charlie, it was never enough.

(fighting tears)

But my Dad never hit my Mom or anything. But Charlie wasn't like my Dad. He was more - out of control. I thought something was wrong with me. I thought it must be my fault.

Anyway, Charlie would blow up and then he'd beg me to forgive him and send flowers and I'd think, "Well, he's so sorry this time it won't happen again."

If you love somebody, you love them in spite of their problems. Nobody's perfect. So I just kept thinking it would get better, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. GIRLS' LOCKER ROOM - NEXT DAY

Cassie's classmates (including Brooke, Kerry, Stacey and other girls) are dressing for gym. They are already in their gym clothes, just lacing up sneakers, etc., when Cassie enters, wearing SUNGLASSES, a long skirt and shapeless sweater.

KERRY

Whoa! Call the fashion police.

Brooke walks up, looks Cassie over.

BROOKE

What's with the shades?

She playfully pulls off the glasses, revealing a BLACK EYE.

BROOKE (CONT'D)

(gasps)

What happened?

CASSIE
 (uncomfortable)
 We almost hit this dog. Charlie slammed on
 the brakes. I hit the dashboard.

STACEY
 What a guy.

BROOKE
 We could cover that up with some make-up.

CASSIE
 I tried. It just looks worse.

KERRY
 Forget the eye. What rummage sale have you
 been to?

CASSIE
 What difference does it make?

Cassie opens her locker, takes out her gym clothes. Stacey, Kerry,
 Brooke look at one another, shrug their shoulders.

STACEY
 See you outside!

Stacey, Kerry, Brooke EXIT. Cassie slips off her shoes, un-buttons her
 skirt. Julia watches, then approaches, wary.

JULIA
 Cassie?

Cassie turns and sees Julia; reacts with surprise.

JULIA (CONT'D)
 (concerned)
 I have to talk to you.

CASSIE
 What about?

JULIA
 You know, Charlie.

In background, Brooke rushes in; she observes from a distance.

CASSIE
 (defiantly)
 What about Charlie?

JULIA
 I know what he's doing to you. The same
 thing happened to me. Please be careful.

ON BROOKE

She decides to step forward.

BROOKE
(interrupting)
Hurry up, Cassie!

ON CASSIE AND JULIA

Julia turns and walks away. Brooke rushes up to Cassie, who stares after Julia.

BROOKE
What's her problem?

Cassie resumes changing her clothes, very quickly now.

CASSIE
I have no idea.

BROOKE
She'd just love to break you and Charlie up.

CASSIE
What happened between them anyway?

BROOKE
He dumped her. Everybody knows that.

Cassie doesn't answer but she is obviously disturbed by Julia and her message.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL -LATER SAME DAY

Charlie sits in his car and honks as Cassie walks across the school lawn. She still wears sunglasses, plain clothes. Charlie waves and motions to her.

ON CASSIE

She hesitates for a moment, then walks toward the car.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Charlie opens the door (from the inside) and Cassie slides in next to him.

CASSIE
What do you want?

CHARLIE

You.

Flashing his most charming smile, Charlie reaches down and picks up a cute little Teddy Bear holding an "I Love You" sign.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We both want you.

Cassie looks at the bear, but doesn't smile or answer.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I thought we could go to the mall. You could help me pick out a shirt for Kerry's party. I want us to look good together.

CASSIE

Together?

Charlie reaches over toward her but she pulls away.

CHARLIE

Oh, Cass, come on. You know I didn't mean all that. You just pushed me, you know?

He holds up the Teddy Bear.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You know we love you.

He puts the Teddy Bear to her cheek as if the bear's kissing her. She turns away slightly.

CASSIE

Charlie. . .

He jumps in, afraid she's going to cut him off.

CHARLIE

Give me another chance. Please? I love you. Without you -- I'll -- I don't know what I'll do. I can't go on. I need you so much!

He's highly emotional.

CASSIE

(softening)

Oh, Charlie, please.

CHARLIE

I need you so much! I love you so much!

He throws his arms around her. She doesn't pull away. She gently pats his back.

CASSIE
 (softly)
 Don't. It's okay. It's okay! We'll go to
 the party together.

Charlie straightens up, wipes his eyes on his sleeve.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
 But I really can't go out tonight. I have
 to stay with Kyle. Mom and Dad are going
 out.

Charlie's mood quickly changes from sadness to resentment.

CHARLIE
 Kyle! Hey, nobody babysat me when I was his
 age.

He punches the dashboard. Cassie recoils.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Okay, who's more important to you - him or
 me?

CASSIE
 I have to babysit. That's all.

In a silent rage, Charlie starts the car.

CHARLIE
 Spoiled brat.
 (abruptly accusing)
 Hey, you didn't tell did you?

CASSIE
 No, I didn't tell. Everybody thinks you
 just saved the life of a dog. Look, I've
 got to get home.

Charlie starts the car - but he looks at Cassie suspiciously. She
 doesn't look at him at all.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CASSIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kyle plays a video game in front of the TV. Cassie lounges on the
 couch, reading a magazine. NINTENDO-TYPE SFX.

KYLE
 I just zapped the evil sorcerer!

CASSIE
 (not looking up)
 That's nice.

KYLE

All riiiiight! 10,000 points!

Cassie sits up, listening. A SHADOW moves by the window.

CASSIE

Kyle, turn that down okay?

KYLE

I can't stop now!

CASSIE

I thought I heard something.

Kyle pauses the action. It is quiet.

KYLE

I don't hear anything.

Cassie rises and looks out the window.

CASSIE

It was probably a cat.

KYLE

Can I turn this back on?

CASSIE

Just a sec.

She pulls back the curtain to look out and GASPS IN FEAR.

CASSIE'S POV

A man moves through the shadows. Suddenly, he hits the range of the porchlight. It's Charlie.

CASSIE

Oh, it's Charlie!

KYLE

Yay!

INT. FOYER

Cassie goes to the front door and opens it. Charlie grins. He holds a beer in his hand.

CHARLIE

Boo.

CASSIE
 (angry)
 What are you doing - spying on me?

CHARLIE
 Spying? I'm protecting you.

He walks in, uninvited.

CASSIE
 You scared me half to death. And get rid of
 that beer. Kyle's here you know.

CHARLIE
 (calls to living room)
 Hey, dude!

KYLE (O.C.)
 Come watch me, Charlie! I'm on the fourth
 level!

CHARLIE
 In a minute.

Charlie puts his arms around Cassie and kisses her. She pulls back.
 Charlie takes a swig of beer.

CASSIE
 Why didn't you just knock?

Kyle rushes in.

KYLE
 Charlie! You gotta play this game.

CASSIE
 Bed in half an hour, Kyle.

CHARLIE
 (to Kyle)
 I'll play you once. Okay?

Kyle drags Charlie toward the living room. Cassie is obviously
 disturbed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Charlie sits on the couch, beer in hand, watching T.V. Cassie enters.

CASSIE
 He's asleep. . . I think.

Cassie sits on the couch next to Charlie. He puts his arm around Cassie and pulls her toward him.

CHARLIE

Good. Alone at last.

He begins kissing. Cassie is at least submissive until Charlie begins unbuttoning her blouse. She pulls back.

CASSIE

Not now, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Yes, now, Cassie.

He keeps trying to unbutton. Cassie moves farther away from him on the couch.

CASSIE

Kyle might wake up. I'm not even sure he's asleep.

CHARLIE

He won't.

CASSIE

My parents might come home. Charlie, stop. Please.

Charlie crushes his empty beer can with his hand. He's furious.

CHARLIE

That's just GREAT! As usual, everyone else comes first.

Cassie looks nervously toward the doorway.

CASSIE

Hold it down, okay?

CHARLIE

I'll do what I damn well please! You never think of me.

CASSIE

That's not true! I think of you all the time. But I don't know how to make you happy!

CHARLIE

You know how, you just won't do it because of precious little Kyle!

CASSIE

Don't blame Kyle. And don't talk so loud! I hate when you're drinking.

CHARLIE

You shut up!

She stands up.

CASSIE

Why don't you just go?

CHARLIE

I'll go when I'm good and ready, you bitch!

Charlie rises - furious now.

CASSIE

(slightly intimidated, she
tries to tone it down.)

Okay, okay. Let's just drop it, okay?

Charlie takes a step toward her.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

No, Charlie, please don't!

Charlie hits her - but she fends off the blows. He hits her arms and shoulders but she ducks and tries to protect her face.

CASSIE

No! No!

CHARLIE

You never learn, do you?

Charlie storms out.

ANGLE ON HALLWAY

As he angrily strides toward the front door, Kyle PEEKS THROUGH the entrance to the hallway (or from the stairs.)

ON KYLE

Cassie is SOBBING in the background; Kyle looks absolutely terrified. DOOR SLAMS O.C. Kyle hurries to the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Cassie lies sobbing on the couch. Kyle rushes to her.

KYLE
(softly)
Cassie! Are you okay?

Cassie turns toward him. She's a mess - sobbing -but when she sees Kyle, she tries to compose herself.

CASSIE
I'm okay. Really, I'm okay.

Kyle looks so scared, Cassie reaches out and holds him.

CASSIE
(wiping her tears)
Charlie really loves me, but he gets so mad.

Cassie separates from Kyle and changes the tone to a more formal discussion.

CASSIE (CONT'D)
Don't tell anybody about this okay? If we do, we won't get to see Charlie again, ever. You'd never be a tattletale, would you?

KYLE
No.

CASSIE
Promise not to tell, then?

KYLE
(tentative)
Okay.

ON CASSIE

She realizes the full impact of Kyle's fear, mirroring the fear she hasn't wanted to face herself.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Cassie just doesn't know how to treat a guy. I mean, she'd just get ... out of hand, trying to make me do what she wanted. She thought she could just make a fool out of me. Well, I don't let people make a fool out of me!

(he tones it down)

She put me through a lot. Geez. I'm the one who's been abused. I'm the one who suffered. I'm still suffering!

He tries to get himself under control, but he's raging inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE

I wanted to get off that rollercoaster. But it kept going faster and faster.

I just thought if I loved him enough, everything would be all right. But when I saw that look, that fear, in my little brother's eyes - it was like looking in a mirror. I realized how I scared I was, too.

When Charlie would hit me, it was so violent - so out of nowhere - it was ... terrifying. And I never knew what would happen next.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Cassie and other students hang paintings on large partitions for the student ART FAIR. Cassie carefully arranges the portrait of Charlie on the partition. She steps back to stare at it, then turns and sees Charlie watching her from the doorway. He beckons to her. She thumbtacks a "BY CASSIE MCBRIDE" sign under the painting and hurries to join him.

CASSIE (V.O.)

I can't explain Charlie's power over me because I don't understand it.

As she joins him, he kisses her, then glances - almost accusingly - back at the scene in the library. He puts his arm around Cassie's shoulder and guides her away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CASSIE'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Cassie is wearing a party dress, standing in front of the mirror, observing herself, very serious. Her Mother enters.

CASSIE (V.O. CONT'D)

I was in way over my head. But I really believed I could handle it myself. Right up to ... the end.

BARBARA

Surprise, surprise! I saw this today and thought it would be perfect for tonight.

She holds a pretty necklace against Cassie's neck.

ANGLE ON MIRROR

Cassie and Barbara are reflected, observing the necklace.

CASSIE

It's beautiful.

BARBARA

Daddy and I really hate to miss the Art Fair, but we can't get out of the Brady's dinner.

ON CASSIE AND BARBARA

Cassie turns and speaks with clarity and seriousness.

CASSIE

Mom, I need to borrow your car tonight because-

(hesitates)

I'm breaking up with Charlie.

BARBARA

(truly shocked)

Oh, Cassie, why? He'll be heartbroken! Why he's like part of the family!

CASSIE

He's got such a terrible temper, Mom. You don't know.

BARBARA

Well, why don't you just talk to him about it, honey? I mean, maybe you can help.

CASSIE

I can't help! I've tried and tried and - I can't!

Barbara is shocked at Cassie's obvious emotion.

BARBARA

Well, you do what you think is best. But think it over- okay? Where ever are you going to find another boy like Charlie?

She gives Cassie a little hug and exits. Cassie turns and looks at herself in the mirror again. She gently puts the necklace down and walks over to the phone. She closes her eyes to center herself, then dials the phone.

CASSIE

Hi, Charlie. Just listen, okay? I'll meet you at the party, okay? I'll tell you later. I'll just meet you there. Stop yelling! If you want to see me, meet me there. Charlie, please. . .

He is still yelling, so Cassie quietly hangs up the phone. After a beat, she opens a small directory (school-type) and dials a number. Another beat, then. . .

CASSIE (CONT'D)

Julia? It's Cassie. Are you going to the Art Fair tonight?

(listens a beat)

No, Charlie's not going to be there.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CHARLIE

Nobody ever tries to understand the guy's side. We're always wrong - is that it? The damn judge is a guy - how'd he get on her side? He believed everything she said. I don't get it. I really don't.

(to Camera)

And whose side are you on?

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE

I was almost sick just thinking about coming face to face to Charlie. He told me I could never break up with him or he'd make me sorry. I was already sorry. I wished I'd never met him. I wished I'd never been born.

Deep in my gut, even though I said I was breaking up with Charlie, I knew it wasn't over yet.

(fighting tears)

And I was scared! Really scared.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - THAT NIGHT

A few parents, students and faculty wander into the library, including Cassie - alone. She enters and heads for the display of paintings. She looks and she reacts with a GASP.

CASSIE'S POV

The portrait of Charlie is in the same place as before. But it's been horribly defaced with spray paint.

ON CASSIE

She rushes toward the painting and removes it. She stands, staring at it.

CASSIE

(very low)

Oh my God . . .

A few other kids gather around her, but hold back. No one seems to know what to say.

JULIA (O.C.)
You know who did it.

Cassie looks up and sees Julia approaching her.

JULIA (CONT'D)
It's just like Charlie.

CASSIE
(almost crying)
You think Charlie did it?

TIGHT ON JULIA AND CASSIE

JULIA
He did the same kind of stuff to me. He put me down - and he put down anything I liked. Then he started hitting me. That went on for awhile because I didn't know how to stop it. Finally, I got out of it but it was hard. Real hard.

Cassie thinks about it, putting the pieces together in her mind. She looks at the defaced picture.

CASSIE
He didn't want me to put it in the Fair. He didn't want me to come here.
(a pause, then angrier)
I'd already made up my mind to break up with him. But this is--I don't know what this is.

JULIA
Cassie, be careful.

Cassie is almost shaking with rage.

JULIA'S POV - CASSIE

CASSIE
Well, I've got to do something!

She rushes out. Julia calls after her.

JULIA
Cassie!

But Cassie disappears out the doors of the library.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LAKE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Kerry's parents have rented the entire restaurant for the party. The parking lot is full; parked cars line both sides of the street. Cassie's car pulls up; she parks down the street.

CLOSER ON CAR

Cassie exits the car and hurries toward the restaurant.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT DOOR -RESTAURANT

ROCK MUSIC blares from the restaurant as other kids enter; Cassie enters alone.

CUT TO:

INT. PARTY - NEAR DOOR

Charlie talks with other kids, including Jeff and Stacey but is watching the front door. Cassie enters; Charlie reacts, stiffening slightly, then puts on his charming grin.

CHARLIE
(to others)
Better late than never.

Cassie approaches, obviously seriously angry. She ignores everyone but Charlie.

CASSIE
I want to talk.

STACEY
Hi, Cassie. Cassie? Remember me?

CASSIE
(concentration broken
slightly)
Hi, Stacey. Sorry.

Charlie pulls her toward the dance floor; acts as if he doesn't even notice that she's angry.

CHARLIE
Come on, I've been waiting all night to
dance with you.

He starts dancing. Cassie glares at him.

CASSIE
What you did to that painting was sick.

Charlie grins.

CHARLIE

I told you I didn't like that picture. Come on. Dance.

CASSIE

I don't want to dance. I want to talk.

CHARLIE

Sure. We'll go outside.

Cassie looks around, unsure.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Come on - out here.

He starts across the room toward a patio.

CUT TO:

EXT. PATIO - NIGHT

This is a small side patio with hedges around it. The music and noise still blasts from the party inside. As Cassie and Charlie walk out onto the patio, Cassie glances self-consciously at another couple outside, laughing, kissing. She tries to keep her voice down.

CASSIE

This is it, Charlie. We're finished!

CHARLIE

(trying to charm her)

Aw, Cass, you know we'll never be finished. Come on, we both get mad but it doesn't have to be forever.

CASSIE

I mean it, Charlie.

CHARLIE

Let's not talk. Let's just dance.

He puts his arms around her. She pulls away, abruptly.

CASSIE

No!

In background, the couple look toward Charlie and Cassie, whisper, then EXIT back into the restaurant.

CLOSE ON CASSIE

CASSIE (CONT'D)

(firmly)

We're finished, Charlie. I can't take any more of your craziness. Don't call me any more.

She turns and walks away from him, toward the restaurant. Suddenly, Charlie grabs her by the hair and jerks her back toward him.

CASSIE

Owww!

The noise level from the party is loud enough that her protests would not be particularly noticeable from inside.

ON CASSIE AND CHARLIE

Charlie pulls her around to face him. He holds both her arms so she can't move.

CHARLIE

You know you love me. Say it.

CASSIE

Ow, you're hurting me.

CHARLIE

(intense)

Say you love me.

CASSIE

(angry, almost hysterical)

What is it with you Charlie? You're always hurting me. Now it's too late.

Charlie increases the pressure on her arms. She tries to pull free.

CHARLIE

SAY IT!

CASSIE

Don't you get it? I don't love you any more!!

Charlie releases her arms and slaps her hard across the face.

CHARLIE

Don't ever - EVER- talk to me like that -
Bitch!

He hits her again. Then again. Cassie struggles to get out of range, backing toward the hedges - the only direction she can go since Charlie is blocking her way back into the party.

CASSIE
(screams and protests)
Stop it! Help me!

But her screams are barely heard about the noise of the party and no one is in sight. However, there's a momentary break in the barrage of blows and Cassie breaks away and runs along the hedges.

ON CASSIE, RUNNING

She's panting, running for her life. Charlie is close behind her. Suddenly, her ankle turns and she STUMBLES and looks behind her, terrified. She opens her mouth and SCREAMS. Charlie grabs her.

CUT TO:

EXTREMELY WIDE ON RESTAURANT

Cassie's scream is lost in the noise from the party and Charlie and Cassie can't be seen by anyone approaching the restaurant.

CUT TO:

EXT. - BUSHES NEAR LAKE - NIGHT

Charlie has one of her arms pinned against Cassie's back; his other arm in a chokehold around her neck as he drags her farther from the restaurant, towards the bushes.

ON CASSIE

She looks up at him, terrified.

CASSIE
(crying, pleading, choking)
Don't. Don't, please, don't.

ON CHARLIE

He looks down at her - in complete rage.

CHARLIE
You know you love me! You do!!

He beats her, hitting her everywhere - face, neck, stomach. She tries to protect herself with her arms, tries to kick him, but he overpowers her. She struggles with all her might, but the struggling lessens as the beating escalates. Then she can't fight back any more. She's unconscious.

Charlie suddenly stops, seeing that Cassie's not fighting back. He shakes her.

CHARLIE
(whispering)
Cassie! Cassie!

She doesn't move. Charlie looks around him - obviously scared - then runs off. Cassie lies there, motionless.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ANOTHER ANGLE -BUSHES NEAR LAKE - A LITTLE LATER

Distant NOISE from the party can still be heard, but it's basically peaceful near the lake. FOOTSTEPS are heard; people are walking through the grass. There are MUFFLED VOICES. Then a COUPLE walking a DOG comes into view. The DOG strains at his leash.

ANGLE ON DOGWALKING COUPLE

The dog continues to pull forward.

MAN
Whoa! What is it, Pax?

WOMAN
He's on the trail of something.

MAN
Over here.

The dog leads them to the spot where Charlie left Cassie. They see a little heap on the ground. The couple approaches and looks down. The heap on the ground is Cassie.

WOMAN
(horrified)
Oh, my God!

DISSOLVE THROUGH BLACK TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CASSIE

CASSIE
I was in bad shape. Real bad. A lot of what happened that night, I don't remember. I don't even remember the pain. I just remember the look in Charlie's eyes. It was - almost not human.

(very emotional)

CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK AND WIDENS

We see that Cassie is in a pleasant, cozy office - and she's talking to a THERAPIST, whom we see from the BACK ONLY.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

I thought he was going to kill me.

(dramatic pause)

He almost did.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - TEN DAYS LATER

The McBride car drives up to the front curb. Cassie's father gets out of one side. He walks to the passenger side of the car, opens the door for Cassie.

CASSIE (O.C.)

Going back to school was the hardest thing I ever had to do. I blamed myself for what happened. I blamed myself for ever saying hello to Charlie Taylor. And I was still scared.

ON CASSIE

As she exits the car. She is still badly bruised and beaten. Her father helps her out.

WIDEN

Father looks down at Cassie.

AL

Want me to walk you to the door?

Cassie looks at the walk to the front door.

CASSIE

No. It's okay.

He kisses her (more solicitous than before). Al goes back toward the driver's side.

WIDE ON WALK

Cassie waves to her father as the car pulls away from the curb. Then she hesitantly walks toward the school.

ANOTHER ANGLE - CASSIE

Suddenly, Charlie appears directly in front of her.

CHARLIE
Cassie!

CASSIE
(shaken)
I can't talk to you.

CHARLIE
You can listen. Look, you know I love you.
And you know this is not all my fault.

Cassie tries to keep walking, but he blocks her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Cassie, you know I'll never give you up.

CASSIE
I-I can't talk to you. Just go away.

She stands and looks at him, speechless, helpless.

BROOKE (O.C.)
Get lost, Charlie.

Charlie and Cassie both react with surprise as Brooke appears at Cassie's side. She totally ignores Charlie.

BROOKE (CONT'D)
Let's go, Cassie.

As Brooke helps Cassie up the sidewalk. Charlie watches and Cassie glances back at him.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE

CASSIE
Afterwards, Charlie wouldn't let me alone.
He kept calling, showing up everywhere I
was. My parents got the restraining order,
but that didn't faze him. Finally, we moved
to another school district. But he still
kept finding me. That's when we - well, my
Dad -took him to court. But good old
Charlie got off with just probation.

My parents, my friends have been great. They care about me. I don't know why it took all of this for me to realize they were always on my side.

I still wake up in the morning and think that maybe it didn't happen. Charlie will be waiting for me after class and nothing bad will happen.

I don't know why I still think about Charlie so much.

(looks down at book)

But I loved him. I thought that was all that mattered. That's why I'm in therapy.

Cassie looks down at the memory book, then closes it abruptly.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

I guess until I stop thinking about him, I've still got a way to go.

Cassie rises and heads for the door.

CASSIE (CONT'D)

See you next week.

She EXITS the room.

ON DOOR

As Cassie closes it.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIGHT CLOSE UP - CHARLIE

CAMERA WIDENS and we see that Charlie is in an office that is starker and darker than Cassie's Therapist's office. It looks "institutional." He faces a MALE PROBATION OFFICER. As with the Therapist, we don't see him full face.

CHARLIE

Hey, I'm not perfect. I made a mistake. But I'm not this - this monster like everybody's making me out to be.

(odd smile)

Like I said, I'm a nice guy. I love her. I've tried to explain it - tried to make up. How many times can a guy apologize? But Cassie won't listen any more. She just won't - listen.

(arrogant, challenging)
So. That's it. That's my story. It's not so unusual. So, do I really have to report here every week like the court says? I mean, I'll come here if I have to. But it's all just a big mistake.

Charlie rises. Now we get the sense that he's in a Probation Office. Charlie goes to the door to exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Charlie exits and heads for his car. A GIRL is waiting for him. She's different than Cassie and yet the same in her eagerness to please Charlie. He hurries to her side, gives her a kiss. She smiles, happy to be popular, to be Charlie's new girlfriend.

CREDITS ROLL.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR