

TURN THE PAGE

By Dennis Bush

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ISBN: 1-60003-331-8

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FOR NADINE

SOMETIMES, AN ANGEL COMES INTO YOUR LIFE.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NINA	18, female, wants to bring order to chaotic pages and a chaotic world
AUTUMN	18, female, facing a new chapter in her life
DARCY	17, female, has a twin sister whose life she envies
ISABEL	22, female, struggles with the obstacles in her life
NATE	18, male, has always turned the pages quickly and eagerly . . . until now
ERROL	22, male, a writer and a fighter
LINDA	21, female, stressed, stubborn; Errol's girlfriend
GARY	17, male, wants to change somebody's life; perhaps his own

SETTING

Turn the Page is set in the present. Changes in time and place are indicated by shifts of focus and movement of the actors from one playing area to another on the set.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Turn the Page was first performed in May, 2007. The original cast was Nadine Lombardi, Kelsey Torstveit, Emily White, Alex Knerr, Scott McKown, Jared Sikes, Samantha Ortiz and Macy Cobb

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At rise, we see books scattered around the performance space. Among the novels, diaries and journals, a couple Word Search magazines are visible, as well. One by one, the actors come into the playing space, greeting each other, then settling down with a book.

AUTUMN: When I was a little girl, my dad would read me bedtime stories. It didn't matter what kind of stories. I loved them all. Getting ready for bed meant getting ready to be *transported* to a different world. That's exactly how it felt. Like I was part of a wonderful adventure. Like I was *sharing* the adventure. The characters in the stories were as real to me as my friends at school. And every night I got to find out what happened to them. (*Quick pause*) A few pages at a time . . . I never wanted to fall asleep, I didn't want to have to wait 'til the next night to find out what happened next.

(The next four lines are delivered in rapid succession.)

NINA: What happens next?

ISABEL: What happens next?

LINDA: What happens next?

DARCY: What happens next?

AUTUMN: Sometimes, when he got close to the end of a book, my dad would start reading faster so we could finish it before I fell asleep but I always told him to slow down. I asked him to read the last few pages really slowly . . . I never wanted the story to end.

ERROL: Turn the page.

DARCY: Turn the page.

GARY: Turn the page

AUTUMN: Turning that last page meant saying goodbye to the people in the story.

NATE: Sometimes you have to say goodbye, even though you don't want to.

AUTUMN: I didn't want to turn the page. I didn't want the adventure to stop.

ISABEL: Every good story has a beginning, a middle and an end.

AUTUMN: And my dad would tell me that we had to finish one book . . .

LINDA: Finish one adventure.

AUTUMN: Before we could begin another one . . .

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NINA: Sometimes goodbye comes before hello.

AUTUMN: I understood what he meant . . . In my head, at least. But it always broke my heart to finish a wonderful book. No matter how amazing he promised me the next adventure would be, it was still hard to turn that last page.

ISABEL: When I write my autobiography – and I *will* write my autobiography – it's going to be a real page-turner.

(Transition to ERROL and LINDA's living room.)

ERROL: *(To LINDA)* Did you read it?

LINDA: Not yet

ERROL: *(His feelings hurt, but trying not to appear that way)* But, I gave it to you an hour ago.

LINDA: I was watching something.

ERROL: You were watching something?

LINDA: Yeah, a show on the History Channel.

ERROL: And that was more important than the new chapter . . . the chapter I've been working on for three weeks . . . that I just finished an hour ago?!

LINDA: I guess.

ERROL: *(Definitely wounded)* Oh.

LINDA: I was *going* to read it.

ERROL: Then, read it.

LINDA: I didn't know it was an emergency. I didn't know you wanted me to read it right away.

ERROL: When I gave it to you – *an hour ago* – I said, "Here it is. Here's the new chapter. Read it."

LINDA: Exactly. You didn't say, "Read it, *now!*"

ERROL: That was inferred.

LINDA: Not everybody picks up on subtle inferences.

ERROL: I didn't ask *everybody* to read the chapter.

LINDA: You will eventually.

ERROL: What's that supposed to mean?

LINDA: When the whole book is finished, you want people to read it, right?

ERROL: Yeah, but the whole book isn't finished. Just the first two chapters.

LINDA: I didn't read the first chapter, so how would I know what's going on in this new one?

ERROL: I asked you to read the first chapter. I thought you did.

LINDA: I didn't. Maybe I should wait to read the whole book all at once.

ERROL: So, you're not going to read this chapter?

LINDA: I'll read it all together.

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ERROL: (*Frustrated*) Can you at least read the first couple pages – just to see if you like it?

(*LINDA steals a look at the TV, to factor what's on into her decision-making process.*)

There is nothing on the History Channel that is more important . . . to me . . . than *this*. I need you to read at least the first couple pages of this chapter. And I need you to do it, *now*.

LINDA: OK, I'll read the first couple pages.

ERROL: Thank you.

(*ERROL sits and watches her read, waiting for a response.*)

LINDA: Are you gonna watch me like that, while I'm reading?

ERROL: I wanna see your reactions.

LINDA: It makes me self-conscious.

ERROL: Oh . . . sorry. I won't watch.

(*ERROL turns away, but is still actively listening. LINDA resumes reading. SHE chuckles.*)

What? What was funny?

LINDA: You misspelled "fighter." You spelled it F-I-T-E-R. I mean, you certainly know how to spell fighter. It would be ironic if you didn't know how to spell it. Didn't you use spell check?

ERROL: I guess not. (*Pause*) Is it possible for you to read it for content and not just to check for misspelled words?

LINDA: You don't want mistakes in it, do you? You don't want people to think you don't know how to spell "fighter." (*Continues to read*)

ERROL: (*Grudgingly*) No, I wouldn't want that.

LINDA: (*With an audible sigh*) Hmm.

ERROL: What? What was the sigh about? What was the "hmm?"

LINDA: My neck is sore. I think I slept on it wrong, last night. (*pause; SHE puts the pages down*) OK. Done. (*Begins to rub her neck*)

ERROL: (*The anger alarm is beginning to go off.*) You didn't turn the page.

LINDA: I read the first page.

ERROL: You said you were going to read the first couple pages. You agreed to that. But you only read the *first* page. To read a *couple* pages, you have to turn the page.

LINDA: I'd *really* rather wait and read it all together and not with you jumping down my throat every time I take a breath.

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ERROL: I'd *really* like a little *support*. I'd *really* like you to *turn the page!*

(LINDA takes the script and flips the page, then, hands the pages back to ERROL, without reading any more.)

ISABEL: You won't be able to put it down. Once you start reading my autobiography, you won't be able to put it down. Because I've led a fascinating life. (*Quick pause*) I'm *leading* a fascinating life. Every day, I do something interesting. *Everyone* should try to do that. Think how much more pleasant the world would be if everyone made a point of doing something interesting every day. (*Pause*) I'll make that suggestion in my autobiography. But you heard it here, first.

GARY: I want a baby.

AUTUMN: When I was born, my mother named me Autumn. She said I brought color into her life, like how the leaves turn pretty colors in autumn. Orange and red and gold and all the shades in between. It's like nature throws one big party before winter time sets in. (*A beat*) She died. (*Quick pause*) My mother. (*Quick pause*) Not in childbirth or anything. It was cancer. I was five. I don't remember much about her, except the story about my name. I used to remember more. Now, I'm not sure what I actually remember and what are things my dad's told me. I guess it doesn't matter. (*Quick pause*) She was pretty. I have pictures. Not that you need proof of that or anything. I figure you can take my word for it.

DARCY: I gave her my word that I wouldn't read her diary. (*Quick pause*) I promised. (*Quick pause*) And, then, as soon as she left the room, I read it. Every day. Without guilt. We're identical twins. We shared a uterus. I think that definitely entitles me to read her diary any time I want to. (*Quick pause*) When she's not around . . . When she hasn't hidden it in a new place . . . When I don't have to hunt for it.

(*Transition to NINA, on her lunch break.*)

NINA: (*SHE speaks slowly, deliberately. SHE has a message. Every thought is given weight and value. Nothing is a throwaway idea.*) I'm like a bounty hunter . . . I'm the long arm of the law. I bring order to chaos. Somebody has to. There's a lot of chaos out there. And not just *out there*. There's chaos (*SHE gestures to the room*) in *here* and (*SHE indicates her own head*) in *here* and (*SHE holds up a Word Search book*) in *here*. (*Pause*) Word Search puzzles are a metaphor for life. There are all sorts of ideas . . . and thoughts . . .

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floating around without structure or organization – like words hidden in a chaotic jumble of letters that aren't part of those words.

(Pause; giving an example) It's like when you're in an elevator and you have an idea but you can't really focus on it because of all the ideas the other people have in their heads and the music in the elevator and the dinging of the bell that tells you when the door is going to open. It's chaos. *(Pause)* So, I do Word Searches. I study the list of words – I establish the necessary goals and objectives and, then, I start to *corral* the words like they're calves that need roping. It's no accident that it's a circle – an oval – that goes around the words when you find them. It's like a *lasso*. *(Pause)* I do a Word Search every morning while I eat breakfast. It gets my day started on the right foot. It sets the tone. If I can control the chaos of the Word Search, then, I can control the chaos I encounter out in the world. It also keeps my hands busy. That's a necessary goal and objective. Otherwise, I'd reach right through the TV screen and slap the people on the morning shows. *All* of the morning TV shows. They're all the same. Very perky people talking about the news like it was entertainment. People being gunned down in a parking lot is not entertainment. It is *not* entertainment. It is *not* something to be shoehorned between the results of a wedding-planning contest and a segment on cooking with curry! *(Pause)* I keep a list. A list of people who should be slapped. And the people on the morning shows are at the top of the list. Perkiness is running rampant. Happy talk is like a plague on our world. The list isn't limited to morning shows, though. It includes people on all kinds of shows. Afternoon talk shows, infomercials, soap operas. Sportscasters, too. Almost all of 'em. *(Pause; then, with enthusiasm)* The technology is out there. Slap-O-Vision is a reality. I'm sure of it. It's the next step beyond touch screens. Of course, we have to establish rules and parameters for using it. People can't just reach through their TV screens and slap anyone they want to, all willy-nilly. That would be anarchy. And the only thing worse than chaos is anarchy. *(Pause)* As I see it, people would have to be approved and certified to receive slapping privileges. And no one could use more than five slaps per month – for a total of sixty slaps each year. Unused slaps would carry over from month to month but not from year to year. You couldn't buy any more slaps after you'd used up your allotment and you couldn't give your slaps away to somebody else if you weren't using your own, though I can't imagine a scenario where anyone wouldn't use their own slaps. Unless they were paralyzed from the neck down and lost the ability to slap. But that would fall under extenuating circumstances. In that case, I suppose you could have a designated slapper. I would

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volunteer to be the designated slapper for anyone in my area who is approved and certified. I would view it as a civic duty – a way of doing my part to corral the chaos in my community. *(Pause; reflecting)* People who were getting slapped would have to have some rights, too. There would have to be a maximum number of slaps a person could receive within a 24-hour period or else people would have bruises and hand prints on their faces – though a few faces with hand prints on them would serve as a deterrent to slap-worthy behavior. It would go a long way in reining in the chaos. I'm ready to lend a hand, so to speak. I'm the long arm of the law. *(Pause)* We have to control the chaos before we can move on to the next set of goals and objectives. It's exactly like having to find all the words in a Word Search puzzle before you can turn the page and start on a new one . . . It's just the way it is.

DARCY: What happens next?

ISABEL: What happens next?

ERROL: Turn the page.

AUTUMN: I don't want to turn the page. I love this story. I don't want it to stop.

ISABEL: Every good story has a beginning, a middle and an end.

AUTUMN: I don't want it to end.

NATE: Sometimes you have to say goodbye, even though you don't want to.

NINA: You have to turn the page to start a new chapter.

LINDA: I need a new one . . . A new stress ball.

(Transition to GARY and DARCY sitting on a bench.)

GARY: I was stressed about the job interview, so my mind was already preoccupied with that. Was I dressed too casually? Should I have worn a tie? Did I really want the job? Is any job better than no job even if it's a job you hate? *(Pause)* Would I have to pee in a cup?

DARCY: *(Interrupting)* Why would you have to do that?

GARY: Drug testing. I knew they drug-tested their employees. I read that on their website.

DARCY: You don't do drugs.

GARY: I know, but I'm not used to peeing on command, either.

DARCY: Drink a lot of water beforehand.

GARY: I did. I was gulping down a big bottle of water.

DARCY: So, what was the problem?

GARY: I started to worry about what would happen if they didn't do the drug testing as part of the interview. Then, I'd have all that pee built up and no cup to put it in. So, it was like if I went to the bathroom *before* the interview, I wouldn't be able to go *during* the interview

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and, if I didn't go before and there wasn't the drug testing, then, I'd have all the pee and no place to go.

DARCY: So, what happened?

GARY: I didn't go to the interview.

DARCY: After all that, you didn't even go to the interview?

GARY: I decided that I didn't really want the job . . . and then it happened.

DARCY: What?

GARY: I bumped into her.

DARCY: Who?

GARY: I was sending my friend, Jay, a text message. He's the one who got me the interview, so I wanted to let him know that I wasn't showing up on purpose, not just not showing up.

DARCY: What does texting Jay have to do with you bumping into somebody?

GARY: I bumped into her while I was texting Jay. I was looking at my phone and not watching where I was going. And she was reading a book and texting somebody on her phone at the same time. The texting I can understand but she was walking down the street reading a book – while she was walking. I don't know how she could do it without getting sick to her stomach but she was the one reading, not me.

DARCY: So, you were texting and she was reading and neither of you was watching where you were going and . . .

GARY: (*Cutting her off*) We bumped into each other.

DARCY: And that's it?

GARY: No . . . There wouldn't be much of a story, if we just bumped into each other and that was it.

DARCY: OK, so what happened?

GARY: I dropped my phone and she dropped hers and, when we bent down to pick up our phones we banged our heads into each other. I thought I cracked mine open but I don't think I did because there wasn't any blood. So we were both a little dizzy and I grabbed her phone and she grabbed my phone and apologized for bumping into each other and went on our way.

DARCY: How did you know it was her phone?

GARY: Because it wasn't *my* phone. You wouldn't ask a mama penguin how she recognizes her own baby would you? Besides, when I opened it up to finish texting Jay, I noticed that it had a different screen. The outside looked almost exactly the same as mine but the inside was different. (*Quick pause*) And, then, she called me.

DARCY: She called you on her phone from your phone?

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GARY: Yeah, which is pretty impressive. I don't remember anybody's phone number.

DARCY: Not even your own.

GARY: Nope. So, when she called I wasn't even sure if I should answer it. The caller ID had a number that kinda looked familiar . . .

DARCY: *Your* number.

GARY: Yeah, though I wasn't completely sure. But I decided to answer it anyway. I've been making an effort to live on the edge more, lately. I've been too cautious.

DARCY: So, you answered the phone.

GARY: Right, and she said, "We just bumped into each other a couple minutes ago and we got our phones switched." And I was like, "Yeah, we did." So, we agreed to meet back at the place we bumped into each other.

DARCY: And you switched your phones back.

GARY: More than that. She gave me her phone number – she put it into my phone herself – and she said we should get together for dinner or a movie or something. And I said, "OK . . . Why?"

DARCY: *(Sarcastically)* Oh, that was clever.

GARY: It made her laugh. She said she was a big believer in signs and messages from the universe. She had been looking for a nice guy for a long time but, every time she met somebody, she always found an excuse for why she shouldn't go out with him.

DARCY: What made things different with you?

GARY: My sparking personality! *(HE laughs at himself)* No, really, it was her. She said she had just finished a chapter when we bumped into each other, so she looked at our bumping into each other as a sign that she should turn the page and start a new chapter in her life.

(Transition to ISABEL.)

ISABEL: I thought I'd be further along by now. *(Quick pause)* With my autobiography. It's not as easy as I thought it would be. I've done a lot of deleting. I don't want to share too much personal information. Once it's out there, in print, it's out there. You can't erase something once it's in print. *(Quick pause)* Well, you could, but it would be a lot of work locating every copy of the book and blacking out the parts I didn't want anyone to see. *(Pause)* I used to have a blog. I updated it every day until I read an article about a psychological study that said the more often people update their blogs, the more important they think they are. They're sick with self-importance. I don't want to be like that. I'm *not* like that. So, no more blog. No more posting photos of myself and hoping people

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will say nice things about the way I look. *(Pause)* I rely on the opinions of others too much. My self-esteem is in the toilet – which is exactly what I have a view of, when I look at myself in the bathroom mirror. The toilet is behind me and slightly to the right. I don't look in the mirror too long. If I do, I start to see things in the reflection. It's like my fears come to life. My insecurities swirl around me and I can see them. And my mother's disembodied head floats around dispensing advice. Being judged and criticized by a disembodied head is an unnerving experience. Especially when it's your *mother's* disembodied head. *(Quick pause)* She only seems to appear in the bathroom mirror. I wonder why that is? *(Pause; pondering)* Maybe that's the only place she feels comfortable being disembodied. It's the only place I see my fears and insecurities become swirling ghostlike entities. *(Quick pause)* If I was writing that sentence in my autobiography, I'd go back and delete it all. The delete key is very important to me. If I misspell a word, I can't just go back and fix that word, I have to delete the whole sentence. I have to have a fresh, error-free start. No remnants of errors. No vestiges of mistakes. No swirling ghostlike entities. *(SHE laughs)* I make a lot of mistakes. *(Quick pause)* A lot of missteps . . . false starts. *(A beat)* I thought I'd be farther along by now. *(Quick pause)* With my life. *(Rationalizing)* There are always things in my way. *(Pause)* Obstacles . . . Things that keep me from doing what I need to do. *(Pause)* I've been thinking a lot about the obstacles. *(Wryly)* Thinking about the obstacles has *been* an obstacle. I want to get things done. *(Quick pause)* I do . . . But I just can't. *(A beat)* There's a little section of my bedroom where I have my computer. It's where I do my writing. And all around my desk, there are piles of paper and boxes and books. Getting to and from my computer takes a lot of effort. I have to step over and between things. It's like an obstacle course. *(A moment of understanding washes over her. SHE begins to cry, without noticing it.)* An obstacle course. *(SHE has further understanding)* And I've created the obstacles. *(SHE notices a tear trickling down her cheek)* Isn't that silly? *(A half-hearted laugh)* I'm crying. I'm sitting here crying for no reason. It's embarrassing . . . Sometimes, I wonder if it's better not to understand things. If you don't know what you're doing, you don't have to try to figure out why you're doing it. If you could just go on like nothing is wrong, it would be easier. If you could just pretend that you are who you say you are . . . If you could just do that. *(Pause; reflecting)* But, then, I look in the mirror and I see my fears and insecurities swirling around me like ghosts. Haunting me . . . Taunting me. And my mother's disembodied head saying, "Maybe someday you'll do something

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worthwhile. I'm not expecting it, but it would be a nice surprise."
(*Pondering the question*) Do I find the obstacles or do they find me?
(*A confession*) I'm not writing my autobiography. I wouldn't know what to say. (*Pause; convincing herself*) But I might . . . I might.
(*Quick pause*) And it'll be a real page-turner. You heard it here, first.

(*Transition to LINDA*)

LINDA: I killed another one. (*Pause*) Another stress ball. (*Quick pause*) I've gone through three of them, this week. (*A simple truth*) I have a lot of stress. The balls just kind of crumble in my hand after a couple days. My palms sweat a lot, from the stress. That might be making the balls disintegrate more quickly. (*Quick pause, an idea*) Or they could just be really cheaply made. (*Pause*) A pair of disintegrated balls could easily be attributed to extra use and sweaty palms but three – *three* crumbling balls definitely seems to be the result of shoddy fabrication or cheap materials. (*Pause*) I blame my boyfriend for the stress. You've met him. He's needy. He's high maintenance, emotionally speaking. (*Not wanting to seem harsh*) I love him – even with all the stress. Everything seems to be going along pretty well but, to be honest, sometimes it's like riding in a convertible behind a big dump truck on the highway. You never know when something is going to fly back and hit you in the face. It's always expecting the unexpected. (*Pause*) He's into that ultimate fighting thing. (*SHE laughs*) I know. You would never expect that from him. I mean, you've seen him. Picture him in the ring fighting some guy twice his size. It's ludicrous. His opponents beat the crap out of him. And he gets up and goes back for more. He's a masochist. (*Quick pause*) If it wasn't so scary, it would be funny. (*SHE laughs, again*) I really shouldn't laugh. (*SHE continues to laugh*) I shouldn't. But it *is* funny. Part of me really enjoys watching him get beat up. I don't mean that how it sounds. Well, actually, I guess I do but I don't want you to think I'm some kind of boyfriend beater. I've never hit him and he's never hit me. (*Quick pause*) And he loves it. (*Quick pause*) The fighting. And you'd never expect that. It's just like I said. With him, I'm always expecting the unexpected. (*A beat*) He's very creative. Too creative . . . It causes . . . friction. He's a writer and I don't really like to read. Ironic, huh. (*SHE laughs*) Opposites attract. We met at a bookstore. He was kind of following me around. I figured if I looked like I was immersed in a book, he'd leave me alone. That would have been the *expected* response but we're talking about Errol so it's all about the unexpected. (*Pause*) He sat down right beside me

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and watched me read – or pretend to read – and as soon as I turned the page, he saw that as his opportunity to jump in with some awkward conversation. I didn't have the heart to tell him that I'd rather have been flipping through magazines, looking at the pictures or, better yet, sitting at home watching something on the History Channel or HBO. The only reason I was at the bookstore in the first place, was because my boss had gotten me a gift card and I was trying to find something to spend it on. So, I ended up giving Errol the gift card and he gave me the key to his apartment. *(Clarifying)* Not right away. Not that day. It wasn't like here's this gift card I'm not going to use and here's the key to my apartment. I gave him the gift card that day but he didn't give me the key to his apartment for another week. *(Pause; reflecting)* Maybe it was too soon to move in. But my lease was up and everything seemed to be going really well, as long as we didn't talk about writing or reading or "the creative process." *(Pause)* I love him. I do. We're just so different.

(Transition to DARCY)

DARCY: Identical doesn't always mean exactly the same. It doesn't. Especially not with people. My sister and I are identical twins but we're as different as night and day. Even as little babies we were different. I cried a lot and was afraid of the dark. She slept all through the night. My first word was "food." Hers was "mama." Is it any surprise that my parents liked her better? They did. They still do. If you asked my mother, she'd say that she loves both her girls equally, but that's just what she says, not how she really feels. *(Pause)* I was born first – by almost three minutes. I'm supposed to be the dominant twin. I'm supposed to be the leader and she's supposed to be the follower. Somehow, that information never got genetically encoded in my sister. She's always behaved like she was an only child and I was just some kind of shadow of her. Not a real person at all. Just a shadow. *(Quick pause)* I am not a shadow. I'm not. And just because Marcy doesn't acknowledge my existence doesn't mean I don't exist. *(Quick pause)* And other thing: Ice cream is not a substitute for love. At least, not after the first couple spoonfuls. *(Pause)* I've tried talking to my mom about how I feel – about the way Marcy treats me, not about the ice cream – and she says, "Just because you and your sister are different, doesn't mean you can't still be close. You should be best friends. That's why God makes twins – so they'll always have a best friend." That's not advice. It's a greeting card. *(Pause)* Marcy doesn't spend much time at home. She's always out with friends or, lately,

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with her boyfriend, Wayne. Last Saturday night, she came home at 4:30 in the morning. My parents didn't even yell. Marcy told 'em that Wayne had "car trouble" on the other side of town and they believed her. (*Incredulous*) They believed her! No follow up questions. No, "You should have called. We were worried." Nothing! (*Pause*) Two pints of mint chocolate chip later, I was seeing things very clearly. Ice cream may not be a substitute for love, but it does cool down your head so you can think. (*Pause*) I wanted a life. The question was how to go about getting one, since I hadn't really laid the groundwork. I didn't have a support structure. I only have a couple friends and they're mostly outcasts like me. Nobody I confide in. No real special skills to set me apart. I needed an example . . . a guidebook. And, then, it hit me: Marcy's diary. She still has the old-fashioned little pink book with the lock and key. She tried the online version for a while but she got too tired of adding new pictures, updating the entries and responding to friend requests. She asked me if I wanted to handle that stuff for her but I politely – OK, not entirely politely – refused. So, she stuck with her little pink diary with the picture of the ballerina on the cover. I knew where she kept the key. I told my mom where it was but she never took advantage of the information. I guess she figured there wasn't anything she needed to know that Marcy wouldn't tell her herself . . . I knew better. So, Wednesday night, when Marcy was supposed to be studying with Wayne – studying Anatomy is my guess – I unlocked her diary and started reading. Page after page after page. All kinds of information. When she went on dates that included dinner, she listed what her and her date had to eat – including how many packets of sugar she used in her iced tea. There were quotes of things she said to her friends and then, under each one, was how she really felt. Like, "I told Rachel that I loved her shoes but, really, I thought they were cheap and tacky." There were three pages of details about a weekend trip to Mexico that she told my mom and dad was when she was staying at her friend Mindy's house while Mindy's parents were out of town. (*Pause*) Every time I turned a page, I felt sadder. My sister doesn't have the kind of life I wanted. I don't think she has the kind of life that *anybody* should want. What good is having friends if you lie to them? And all the stuff she's doing behind my parents' back is going to come back on her. Even if they never find out about the weekend in Mexico or what she does with Wayne, she'll know. And, sooner or later, it will weigh her down. She'll feel like she's eaten gallons and gallons of ice cream and didn't get any love or clear thoughts in the process. So, I took a bright red pen and, right after the most recent entry in her diary, I wrote, "Get a life. Love your family. Love your friends. Love

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yourself. Turn the page and start fresh.” *(Pause)* I knew she wouldn’t say anything to me about it. She wouldn’t want to put me in a position where I might spill all her secrets. And maybe, she’ll think about what I wrote. Maybe it was the way I could be my sister’s best friend.

(Transition to NATE and NINA)

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