ED
An abridged version of an original one act play

By Sage H.

CHARACTERS:

*Note: This is a play about eating disorders, but it should be noted: that doesn’t mean that everyone needs to be “skinny.” That being said, Ellie needs to be small and Bailey should be fairly thin as well.

BAILEY: 16 years old, anorexic
ERIN: around 18, disheveled, thin hair, medium build, anorexic/binge disorder
SPENCER: 15 years old, perfectionist, bulimic, medium build
JOCELYN: 18 years old, anorexic
MARC: 17 years old; quiet, neat, eating disorder not otherwise specified (EDNOS)
ELLIE: 12 years old to early teens, underweight but no eating disorder, innocent and sweet, almost annoyingly so; has multiple phobias/OCD
HANNAH: mid-teens, bulimic and still in denial
OLIVIA: late twenties, average body type, counselor at the hospital.
SCENE 1

(Lights up on SPENCER, writing in a journal at her desk. She’s wearing a collared black and white top and has dark red lips. Perhaps there is a bookshelf behind her)

SPENCER: (while writing) Everyone needs to have a mental breakdown at least once. Or at least that’s what my grandma said. Well, she’s not really my grandma, but she married into my family and that’s what she said on the phone. I think she just said it to make me feel like I was okay, which is fine, because I guess I want to feel okay, I just don’t know how true it is. She’s driving me to treatment today. Apparently the Doctor--Emily, I think? -- said there’s no reason for me to do overnight-- they call it “inpatient”. I can’t help but feel bad that they took one look at me and decided, “She’s not sick enough. She’s not skinny enough”. Anyway, I feel bad that I didn’t make any friends yesterday, so I’m gonna try, today, to make friends. So we’ll see.

(Lights down.)

SCENE 2

(Open on Bailey, Erin, Jocelyn, Marc, and Olivia. They are sitting on couches and chairs in a semi-circle, with Olivia in the middle, reading from a stack of papers on a clipboard. Each girl might have a bag with them, varying sizes and styles, no bigger than a small backpack.)

OLIVIA: (looks at Bailey, who is wearing athletic basic clothing) Are you ready to share today Bailey?

BAILEY: (annoyed) Does it look like I want to share?

OLIVIA: Well, at least tell me how you’re feeling today.

BAILEY: I’m okay.

OLIVIA: On your sheet you said you’re feeling lonely.
BAILEY: Well I’m okay.

OLIVIA: How are you feeling about Jordin? (No response) Okay, well maybe you can share more during group. (Lightly smiles to Bailey sympathetically and moves on to the next page in her clipboard.) Erin? Do you have anything you want to share today?

ERIN: (is wearing colored or patterned jeans and a simple shirt) Oh hells yeah I do. Okay, so you know how you said I could go to the formal on Saturday and you sent the little permission thingy so I could go?

(Olivia nods)

Well so I went to the formal and everything and I was wearing this cute blue dress and I was hanging out with Sammy and Theo, and then my mom texted me like ‘you have to come home now.’ And that was really unfair because I had to eat like 50 extra exchanges to make up for the dancing and I didn’t even get to dance. Plus I had some punch and I didn’t even count my calories.

OLIVIA: I’m really proud of you.

ERIN: Yeah, but aren’t you gonna talk to my mom about that? I mean, I was allowed to go; she can’t just change her mind like that.

OLIVIA: I’m really sorry, but she can. I know it sucks, but at least you’re making progress in your recovery.

ERIN: Right.

OLIVIA: (looks at page) And this will be thirty days of no self-harming, so that’s really good too. (Gives a few claps for Erin, to which Erin rolls her eyes. She then flips to the next page)

Marc? Any chance you feel like sharing today?

MARC: (Looks up at the sound of his name, almost scared, very quietly responds) No thank you.
OLIVIA: Alright then, Jocelyn, tell me what’s up.

JOCELYN: I don’t know, I’m kind of having a bad day. I ate all my exchanges yesterday, but I was really upset about it, so I skipped breakfast. Ana keeps telling me I can’t keep listening to you. To any of you. She says my legs are too big, and I have to stop stuffing my face.

BAILEY: Ana says that to all of us, hun.

(The girls nod)

SPENCER: I’m sorry, I didn’t catch, um, who’s Ana, exactly? (Some girls laugh, Bailey rolls her eyes, Marc looks up)

OLIVIA: Ana is sort of a personification of anorexia, so if you feel like restricting, you can say that Ana is telling you to do that.

ERIN: (to Spencer) You don’t really have an Ana, you have a Mia. Bulimia. Get it?

SPENCER: Oh, I see. (She’s upset that the girls assume she doesn’t have problems with not eating.)

OLIVIA: It’s just a euphemism to make it easier to share. You can also say Ed, which is less specific.

JOCELYN: It stands for eating disorder. It’s real subtle.

BAILEY: I like to think of Ed as an abusive husband.

ERIN: Or a really shitty best friend.

SPENCER: Aren’t you kind of giving your disorder a lot of power, giving it a name?

OLIVIA: If you’re here right now, your disorder already does have quite a bit of power.

SPENCER: I still don’t like the idea of personifying an illness. I’d rather believe it doesn’t have that much … influence.

JOCELYN: You’d rather lie to yourself.
OLIVIA: Think of it more like a relationship instead of an illness. If you cut Ed off, he’s just going to get angry and follow you around. You have to learn to let him go and you can’t be enticed when he tries to get you back.

SPENCER: Well… (Is about to make a point, but realizes Olivia is right)

ELLIE: (enters, then) Sorry I’m late!

OLIVIA: It’s okay. Grab a check-in sheet and take a seat. (Ellie grabs a sheet off a table or shelf) So, Spencer, I know yesterday you were feeling a bit shy… Are you ready to tell the group a little bit about yourself?

SPENCER: I guess. (Clears throat) I mean I already kind of told you guys yesterday. I was diagnosed with depression when I was in seventh grade and I’ve been… bulimic since around that time too, so about a year, maybe a little more.

ERIN: We don’t wanna hear that story. I’ve heard that story a million times. We wanna know who you are.

BAILEY: Like, what’s your favorite book? I don’t read, but I always think it’s a good question to ask.

ERIN: And like what do you like to do in your free time?

ELLIE: Favorite color?!

ERIN: Not your favorite food though.

ELLIE: Ooh! I’m so hungry! (Everyone else ignores this or looks annoyed)

SPENCER: I um, I guess there’s not a whole lot to that story. I have probably the most basic favorite book ever.

(ERIN, BAILEY, and JOCELYN all guess, their answers overlapping)

ERIN (guessing) The Fault in Our Stars.
BAILEY: Perks of Being a Wallflower.

JOCELYN: Something by Malcolm Gladwell?

ELLIE: *(answer is heard slightly after the rest, separately)* The Very Hungry Caterpillar.

*(The girls might give ELLIE a glare or a dirty look)* What?

SPENCER: It’s the Fault in Our Stars.

ERIN: Oh my God.

SPENCER: I know, I know. I wish I was more creative too.

*(Spencer laughs. She’s making friends)*

OLIVIA: *(trying to regain control of the conversation)* And, Spencer, can you tell the group a little bit about what else we talked about?

SPENCER: Right. Um, perfectionism is a problem for me. I don’t really have anxiety, but that’s because I dissociate, like as a defense mechanism.

JOCELYN: Join the club sister girl.

OLIVIA: Did you do any of your behaviors? You didn’t answer on your sheet.

SPENCER: I, um, I binged yesterday. It wasn’t an option on the sheet, so I didn’t put anything.

ERIN: I told you bingeing should be on the behavior sheet, Olivia.

BAILEY: You didn’t throw up? Your second day and you’re already keeping food down? Bravo.

SPENCER: No, I just took a few Nyquil and went to bed.

OLIVIA: How many is a few?

SPENCER: Two or three. *(Olivia writes this down and stands up.)*

OLIVIA: okay, if no one has anything else to add, it’s time to take vitals.

*(Clearly, no one is excited about this, except Ellie, who volunteers to go first. As she exits, she is proud to say she thinks she gained weight. This annoys the others. Lights down)*
SCENE 3

(Lights up on all the characters, except Dr. Emily, eating lunch around a table from trays.

Spencer is on her way to the table and takes a seat across from Marc on the end.)

OLIVIA: Erin, where’s your fruit?

ERIN: I have tomatoes. (Gestures at a bowl of sliced tomatoes)

OLIVIA: Tomatoes count as a vegetable.

ERIN: If I put salt on it, can it count?

OLIVIA: Sure.

SPENCER: Salt doesn’t have any calories.

OLIVIA: We don’t talk about calories at meals.

SPENCER: Sorry.

(Spencer looks at the calories on a package of something, a bag of chips perhaps. She estimates the calories of everything on her plate. She writes down this number on her hand.)

OLIVIA: Oh and Spencer, hun. You aren’t allowed to have pens out at meals or snacks.

(Spencer nods and notices that Bailey is looking at her hand.)

BAILEY: Counting calories? 530? My guess was 540. It’s okay. We all secretly do it. Except the little one; she just kind of eats.

ERIN: I saw the label on the chicken once. This is definitely two servings. Ugh.

JOCELYN: I can’t eat all of this.

OLIVIA: Just do your best. At least drink your milk.

JOVELYN: You gave me 2 percent.

OLIVIA: You can have skim, but then you need another fat.
JOCELYN: I’ll just drink it.

ELLIE: This rice tastes funny. Can I have an extra dessert instead?

OLIVIA: you can have a supplement.

ELLIE: I’ll eat the rice.

*(Girls eat, some shovel food into napkins or anxiously play with food)*

SPENCER: *(to Erin)* So who is Jordin? And why doesn’t Bailey ever want to talk about her?

ERIN: Her sister. She died about a month back. Sensitive topic. She was a little younger than Bail.

SPENCER: Was she sick or something?

ERIN: Yeah, she was…

OLIVIA: Who’s all done?

*(All of the girls raise their hand except Ellie, who says she’s a slow eater. Light out.)*

**SCENE 4**

*(Lights up, the girls are lounging in the group room)*

SPENCER: *(pulls band aid off her inner elbow)* Do they take your blood every day?

JOCELYN: nope, once a week. You’ll get used to it.

ERIN: Hey guys, I overheard Olivia talking to my parents yesterday, and they want me to be discharged soon. I get a trial day back at school tomorrow!

OLIVIA: Okay girls. Let’s get to business. If anyone wants to volunteer to share first, now’s the time. *(No one responds. Beat.)* Okay… Erin. Why don’t you start?

ERIN: Look, I already told you. I’m just kinda pissed about the dance. *(Bailey shakes her head, annoyed.)* What?

BAILEY: It’s just such a petty thing to care about.

ERIN: Well sorry we don’t all have a dead sister. *(shock from the girls, pause.)*
Look, just because my problems aren’t as tragic as yours doesn’t mean they don’t matter.

Besides, you’re not even willing to talk to us about it. And that’s exactly why we’re all here. To talk about these things.

BAILEY: You wouldn’t get it.

ERIN: Maybe I would, if you’d bother to explain it.

BAILEY: Look, you wouldn’t get it because you didn’t find your little sister unconscious on the bathroom floor, only to find out that she had been suffering, and you didn’t know. The whole time. I had no idea. And now she’s gone, and I couldn’t save her. And I’m going down the same path. And I could save myself, but I don’t even want to.

OLIVIA: Thank you for sharing. (Bailey glares at her.)

SPENCER: Thank you for sharing? That’s really what she gets for that? (Bailey rolls her eyes.)

JOCELYN: If it helps, you did everything you could. It isn’t your fault.

BAILEY: No I didn’t. For years she was doing this and I never knew. I was too busy obsessing over myself and my body that I didn’t realize my sister was throwing up all her food. I could’ve done something if I had known sooner.

OLIVIA: It’s no one’s fault.

BAILEY: It’s everyone’s fault.

OLIVIA: We’re here for you, if you want to share.

BAILEY: No, thanks. That’s enough sharing for one day.

ELLIE: Ooh! I want to go!

OLIVIA: Go ahead, Ellie.

ELLIE: I just wanted to say that I am proud of myself for eating my rice even though it didn’t taste good.
OLIVIA: I’m proud of you too.

SPENCER: Why is she here?

OLIVIA: She’s underweight, and she--

SPENCER: She doesn’t have any disorder. She’s eleven. She’s just skinny.

OLIVIA: We don’t say words like that in here. They could be trigger words.

SPENCER: (sarcastically) oh yeah, no one else can tell she’s thin. It’s my fault for saying it.

OLIVIA: Let’s move on. It’s Thursday, which means it’s dream day. Does anyone want to explain this to the new people?

SPENCER: There’s just one of us.

ERIN: I will explain to Spencer what that means. We basically go around and talk about what we want to be when we grow up, and how our eating disorder would get in the way of that.

OLIVIA: We use the term “Goal”.

ERIN: Right. So state your goal, and then how you’re getting in your own way of reaching that.

OLIVIA: Marc, let’s start with you today.

MARC: Okay, well. I want to go to Oxford. I don’t see how a vegetarian diet would hinder my ability to do so.

OLIVIA: Maybe a normal vegetarian diet, but a diet as intense as the ones you’re always doing can be hard to maintain in a college setting.

MARC: Okay. My eating habits would be hard to maintain in a college setting.

OLIVIA: (to Spencer more than anything) If you want, you can be even more specific.

ELLIE: (raises her hand) I want to be a dancer!

ERIN: I thought you wanted to be a teacher.

ELLIE: I changed my mind! Dancers are so cool.
BAILEY: Dancers starve themselves.

SPENCER: She’s right. Dancing breeds anorexia.

OLIVIA: Okay, okay. Ellie, thank you for sharing. I think you’ll be a lovely dancer. Jocelyn-

JOCELYN: (as if it’s scripted) My goal is to be a scientist, more specifically an astronomer, and my disorder would get in the way because the constant obsession with everything I’m eating and drinking would make it difficult to focus any attention on my work because it requires lots of detail oriented observation that my obsessive compulsions and my fatigue from being starving would really be in the way.

OLIVIA: See. The details can really help! Spencer? Are you ready to go?

SPENCER: It sounds really dumb, because I want to be a writer.

OLIVIA: And how could your disorder get in the way of that? (Spencer shrugs.)

BAILEY: You might die. That might get in the way.

ERIN: Bailey!

SPENCER: (light laugh) She’s right. Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental disorder.

MARC: The death rate is lower than five percent.

SPENCER: Only because patients usually die from organ failure or suicide, which is reported rather than the disorder itself.

OLIVIA: Enough.

SCENE 5

(BAILEY, SPENCER, and ERIN are waiting to get picked up by parents.)
ERIN: I’ll tell you, Ellie’s mom always finds a way to be on time.

SPENCER: I literally could just drive myself home if my mom would let me use the car. But of course, my brother gets it.

BAILEY: You have a brother?

SPENCER: Yup.

BAILEY: Older?

SPENCER: Yup, older. Older, smarter, responsible-er ... *(ERIN laughs)*

Thirty-four on his ACT, accepted into engineering school as early as his junior year! He’s just the pride and joy of the Hanston family.

ERIN: You’re not supposed to tell me your last name.

SPENCER: Oops. *(She feels genuinely bad)* *(Beat)*

ERIN: Don’t worry about it. Erin Cobb. That’s rough though. That’s where you get that perfectionism shit from. Me? My sister’s literally a drug addict. It’s really easy to impress your parents when their other daughter steals money to buy crack. I swear, I don’t know how she hasn’t keeled over yet-- *(Bailey gives her a look and she stops herself)* Shit, I mean-- I’m sorry Bail.

BAILEY: It’s okay.

ERIN: No, it’s not. And I’m sorry about earlier.

BAILEY: I know. It’s not a big deal.

ERIN: Come on, you walked in on your little sister…

SPENCER: Wait. You walked in on her? Like, she was just lying there?

BAILEY: Yeah, um, in the bathroom. She, uh, was purging, and well, it gets… dangerous.

SPENCER: Oh my God.
BAILEY: Yeah but, bad things happen, you know?

SPENCER: You don’t like to talk about it.

BAILEY: If we would’ve found her just an hour sooner, she would’ve been okay.

(Pause)

SPENCER: That’s my ride. But Bail, you should really think about maybe having a journal or something. I know it helps me, and Lord knows my problems are nothing compared to yours.

(Spencer leaves)

ERIN: She’s right; you really do know a thing or two about pain.

BAILEY: Is it really fair, though? To say I’ve experienced more suffering than anyone else?

(Lights)

SCENE 6

(Lights up on Spencer in her room, writing in her journal)

SPENCER: I told my volleyball team about my disorder today. They were wondering why I was missing so much practice. Amber said I wasn’t thin enough to be anorexic. I didn’t even bother trying to explain myself. ‘Skinny people don’t have big boobs,’ she says. And I do. (Beat) Skinny people. What do ‘skinny people’ have? What do they have that I feel like I need so bad?

(Lights)

SCENE 7

(Open on the group room. Olivia is painting Ellie’s nails, Bailey isn’t there.)
OLIVIA: So every time you look at your nails, you’ll see orange and green.

ELLIE: (won’t look at her nails) And that’s supposed to help me?

OLIVIA: Yes. It’s called an exposure. Now look.

ELLIE: I can’t! I hate it I hate it I hate it!

OLIVIA: (Bailey enters the room) Bailey’s back, go do your vitals. (ELLIE exits)

If you’re done with your check in sheets you can hand them in.

OLIVIA: Marc, let’s start with you. I think you have something to tell the group!

MARC: (pause, then with concealed excitement) The doctor cleared me for discharge tomorrow.

(He smiles bigger than any of the others have seen, even chuckles a little.)

OLIVIA: How exciting! We’ll have a little celebration at dinner tonight for you. (Small pause)

Spencer, looks like you’re next. What’s up?

(SPENCER yawns and replies with a shrug)

OLIVIA: You look tired, are you okay?

SPENCER: I was just up late reading is all.

OLIVIA: Well, tonight’s your first parent meeting, are you excited?

SPENCER: I guess a little.

OLIVIA: I think they’re going to be happy with how well you’re already doing. (No reply)

Bailey, you seem cheery this morning.

BAILEY: I’ve just been feeling better every day. Like, I looked in the mirror this morning and I thought, ‘Wow, I look good.’ It’s refreshing. I think I’m finally headed the right direction.

OLIVIA: See, that’s the spirit! And Erin, you had your trial day, how was that?

ERIN: Yup, it was pretty good.
OLIVIA: We will have a private meeting with Dr. Emily later to discuss the details too. Alright! Ellie, how are you doing?

ELLIE: (uncomfortable and anxious, looking at her nails.) Can I please take off the nail polish?

OLIVIA: No, it’s there to help you.

ELLIE: I can’t stand it!!

OLIVIA: Right, but it’s irrational that seeing orange and green together make you this anxious. That’s what exposures are for. To make it less uncomfortable.

ELLIE: Whatever. I hate it and it’s dumb.

OLIVIA: I promise it won’t hurt. (ELLIE isn’t too sure she trusts this.) Jocelyn, how are you?

You wrote that you’re feeling “weird”?

JOCELYN: Yeah, I just am kind of dissociating lately. Like I feel like I’m outside of myself looking down.

OLIVIA: I can get you a session with Dr. Emily later.

JOCELYN: Okay.

OLIVIA: No problem! Let’s head to our morning snack then! (Everyone leaves as lights out)

SCENE 8

(Lights up on the girls entering, chatting. Olivia signals to wait one moment and is talking to someone who is either offstage or an extra/crew person)

ERIN: So Bailey, I didn’t get a chance to ask you yet. How does it feel to look in the mirror and think (mockingly) “wow, I look good?”

BAILEY: (laughter) Okay, (She gets closer, only ERIN and SPENCER hear) so get this. I heard Olivia tell my dad that if I could gain ten pounds, I am out this joint. So I looked up some tricks: if I drink sixteen ounces of water and stuff my underwear with spare change before we get
weighed, I only have to gain like five pounds, which I can easily lose once I leave. This positive attitude is just a mask.

ERIN: Well it’s working on Olivia.

OLIVIA: Okay! I have some exciting news for you guys! I just talked to Dr. Emily and she said Erin is ready for discharge!

ERIN: What?

OLIVIA: Yup, as soon as we get the paperwork you are good to go! My guess it tomorrow will be your last day. *(The girls respond excitedly, for the most part.)*

SPENCER: It’s like everyone is leaving. *(Side glance at Bailey.)*

BAILEY: Hey, I’ve been here almost 9 weeks and Erin even longer. I don’t need some newbie being suspicious of my--

SPENCER: Okay, okay.

ERIN: Damn straight. You watch, this place becomes prison real fast.

*(The girls resume “eating”, and lights)*

**SCENE 9**

*(Lights up on Spencer writing in her journal)*

SPENCER: I’m so tired all the time, but I can never sleep. There’s something so uncomfortable about where I am. Not physically, just in general. I told the doctor I was having trouble sleeping and she gave me a prescription for some sleep medication. My mom is picking it up today. She didn’t even question it. I told her, “the doctor wrote me a prescription” and she said “Really, another one? When will it be ready?” I haven’t been taking the antidepressants she gave me last time I went. I guess they make me happier, but there’s some kind of satisfaction that I just lose.
(Pause) I really want to get better. To get rid of Ed, or Mia, or whatever. I hate how strong they are.

SCENE 10

(Lights up on everyone sitting on the floor, writing on papers. SPENCER is tired and distracted. She is next to MARC, who is the only one in a chair, and he’s coloring on a canvas.)

SPENCER: (to Marc,) Can I read it?

MARC: It’s not done yet.

SPENCER: What is it, if I may ask?

MARC: Everyone makes one, when they get discharged. You put your handprint, and you can write a little note.

SPENCER: You’re a really good artist… What does it say? (MARC tilts the canvas so she can read it) “Recovery is a work of art; the process is tedious, but the result is worth every second.”

OLIVIA: Alright, if you’ve finished your portions exercise, it’s time for dinner. Spencer, I want you to stay back and talk about your parent meeting tonight. Everyone else, there will be a nutritionist with you at dinner; I’m with Spencer, okay?

(The girls hand in their papers and exit.)

ERIN: (sarcastically as she leaves) These portion control worksheets are so helpful. I didn’t know one meat serving was the size of your fist! (Bailey laughs)

SCENE 11

(Opens on dinner table, no Olivia or Spencer. Food hasn’t been served yet. )

ELLIE: What’s for dinner today?

BAILEY: I think the nutritionist is still working on that.
ERIN: Maybe they forgot to make us food. (laughter.)

JOCELYN: So Marc, what are you gonna do when you leave?

MARC: Well, I have a lot of homework to catch up on.

ERIN: Oh yeah, Mr. Oxford. I forget you all get like good grades and shit. (At first she laughs, but she stops as she realizes she’ll never see him again. ERIN hugs MARC, who is uncomfortable at first, but then smiles.) I’m gonna miss you, Marc.

SCENE 12

(Lights up on Spencer writing in her journal)

SPENCER: I had my parent meeting today. They do parent meetings at meal time, can you believe it? I had to eat my stupid dinner in front of my mom. My mom, who brought her own gluten-free oriental salad with tofu and fat free balsamic vinaigrette. And I had to sit there and stuff my face with rice. White rice. Empty carbs. And beef. I’m sure it wasn’t lean because I could taste the grease. It was pointless and I hated it. The whole time, I could just hear Ed. It’s like he has a voice now. And it was like I couldn’t talk back and I ignored him and Ana and Mia and I ate and I pretended that it didn’t bother me and I just kept spooning food into my mouth and hating every second while my mom glared at my plate in disgust that I was eating white rice. Fucking white rice. (Beat) Olivia said it went really well. (Beat) Why does everyone seem to think I’m better than I am? Why does everyone think I’m okay? (Spencer takes a prescription bottle off her desk and looks at it, then puts it down. Lights.)
SCENE 13

(Lights up on morning group session. The new girl, Hannah, is sitting in a corner instead.)

OLIVIA: Alright, so we have everyone. Good morning ladies! Today is a big day. Spencer has been here a full week; Erin, it is officially your last day; and, we have a new member with us. Hannah, would you like to tell us a little bit about yourself? (no response. Beat.)

OLIVIA: I promise, you’ll feel comfortable soon enough. Does anyone want to volunteer to go today, or should I go down the pile? (Holds up a small stack of sheets)

ERIN: I’ll go. I’m stoked! I’m out this bitch in like eight hours!

OLIVIA: Okay, language. (ERIN shrugs in response) Anything else you’d like to add?

ERIN: That’s it!

OLIVIA: Okay, Jocelyn, let’s have you go next?

JOCELYN: I haven’t been feeling much at all lately. Just numb. Which has helped. I’ve eaten all my food at snacks and I haven’t skipped any meals.

OLIVIA: So maybe that’s working in a weird way. Why don’t you go take your vitals? (Jocelyn leaves) Ellie, you’re up.

ELLIE: I forgot to eat breakfast this morning. Which means I am hungry today. Also can I please take off this nail polish! I can barely sleep I can’t handle it! Plus it’s chipping. Please please ple-

OLIVIA: Wait go back. You skipped breakfast? Are you restricting?

ELLIE: No, not on purpose, I was just in a hurry-

OLIVIA: Okay, well we'll see about the nail polish, but I’m worried about you not eating.

ERIN: For God’s sake, the kid does not have a restricting problem! She just has some random phobias and she’s thin as hell so her rich-ass mom took her here.

OLIVIA: I can still request to reverse your discharge, you know that? (ERIN shrugs)
BAILEY: *(interrupting, partly to help out Erin)* Okay, my turn! So, I’m super happy because I felt so great last night I even ate my dessert. A milkshake. A malt actually. *(This is a lie)*

OLIVIA: That’s fantastic Bailey. Keep it up. Spencer! So, you’ve been here a week, any advice for Hannah for those first few days, I know they’re tough.

SPENCER: *(tired and not wanting it)* Not really. Just, if you really want to get better, you have to really want it. And even then, you might try really hard and still not make it.

OLIVIA: Wise words of Spencer, am I right? Okay Hannah, are you sure you can’t just tell us a tiny piece of your story?

HANNAH: Whatever. Okay so I’m fifteen. My mom thinks I need to be treated for bulimia but I seriously don’t need to be here. My sister literally caught me throwing up ___ time and she’s convinced I need “treatment.” I tried to tell the doctor that I totally have it under control and it was just a few times, but… If it wasn’t for my snitch of a sister…

BAILEY: S_ just watching out for you.

HANNAH: I don’t need to be watched. I’ll be just fine.

BAILEY: You don’t know that. *(Beat. JOCELYN returns at this point to a tension filled room.)*

OLIVIA: Okay girls, let’s just take a deep breath and head to snack.

ELLIE: Oh thank God.

SCENE 14

*(Open on Spencer in her room. She casually takes a pill from her prescription bottle. This is the dose she was prescribed. She then takes a sip from a cup off her desk. She should seem tipsy. She sits down to write, picks up her pen, but then has nothing to say. She grabs the pill bottle, emotionless, and pours it out on her desk. She takes one or a few at a time, methodically and*
calmly, washing it down with the alcohol. She picks up and looks at the bottle, puts it down, and a moment of silence. Lights.)

SCENE 15

(Lights up on the group room, Spencer isn’t there.)

OLIVIA: It’s Thursday! That means it’s dream day again! Should we start right away with it or wait until everyone’s here?

ELLIE: Wait for Spencer! Plus, we usually don’t do it first thing anyway.

OLIVIA: Okay, if that’s okay with everyone, we’ll do a check-in first, and then we have an activity that involves eating at other people’s houses and how to handle it. Cool? (No response)

Cool! So let’s see. Does anyone want to start?

BAILEY: I will. So I can tell that I’ve been gaining a little bit of weight. But you know what? It doesn’t bother me. I know it’s what my body needs to be healthy.

OLIVIA: You really are coming a long way, Bailey. I should talk to Dr. Emily about getting you a trial day back at school. Would you consider that?

BAILEY: I mean I suppose I’d be willing to try it. (Trying to hide her excitement)

OLIVIA: How about you Jocelyn? Is your day off to a good start?

JOCELYN: I’m alright today.

OLIVIA: Did you do any behaviors?

JOCELYN: Nope. Uneventful.

OLIVIA: Okay, I guess that’s not so bad.

ELLIE: Okay, where’s Spencer? She’s, like, thirty minutes late.

OLIVIA: I don’t know, Ellie, but I’m going to call her and find out. In the meantime, you guys can start the activity. It’s a quick reading, then some questions. (She hands papers out)
(Olivia faces upstage and has a hushed phone conversation while the girls start working.)

HANNAH: Do you guys seriously have to do this stuff?

BAILEY: It’s dumb, but you gotta do it if you ever want to leave.

HANNAH: It’s literally a worksheet.

JOCELYN: It’s cognitive therapy. It gives a scenario, then you think of the best way to handle it, so if you ever find yourself in that scenario, you know, you just--

OLIVIA: (interrupting) Okay girls, um, (deep breath) so Spencer, is not going to be here.

ELLIE: Why?

OLIVIA: She … she was found unconscious in her bed this morning. She… she somehow got ahold of some sleep medication. They also found alcohol in her system. They didn’t realize until the morning when she didn’t wake up.

(SPENCER walks on the stage, in her own spotlight, while other actors freeze)

SPENCER: Cause of death: overdose. (Lights off, SPENCER exits, scene goes back to girls in the group room)

BAILEY: That is bull shit! You know what Jordin died from? “Dehydration.” Damn it. (BAILEY begins to cry and almost panic. She reaches into her pants pocket and pulls out a fist full of change and exposes it to everyone.) I can’t lie anymore.

OLIVIA: Bailey, if you could just calm--

BAILEY: Calm down? I’m sorry, but I can’t. And you can blame “Ed” for that, or whatever you need to tell yourself to make this easier for you. But sometimes, it’s just not easy. There’s no euphemism to soften the blow. There’s no type of therapy that can make all the pain go away. What happens just happens. And I’m telling you, I can’t keep lying.

(Lights)
SCENE 16

(Lights open in the group room, Ellie isn’t there yet. They are eating snack.)

OLIVIA: I talked to Spencer’s parents. The funeral is going to be on Thursday, and I can arrange a field trip to go as a group.

(Some girls nod their heads; some seem numb and don’t react)

BAILEY: I think she’d definitely want that.

(Ellie enters)

ELLIE: Hi guys! I just wanted to say bye to you guys. I’m officially transferring programs. They’re putting me in OCD treatment. Dr. Emily said I was in the wrong place the whole time. She says I have irrational fears they call… I don’t remember… something with an ‘f’.

JOCELYN: Phobias? Like when you can’t look at the orange and green together.

ELLIE: Yeah! Phobias! I’m starting with a new therapy tomorrow. Only twice a week. So I guess I probably won’t really see you guys again.

BAILEY: Oh wow.

JOCELYN: We’ll miss you.

ELLIE: (skips off, then from offstage:) Mom, can we get ice cream next? I want cookie dough!

JOCELYN: (sarcastically) Oh wow. She was in the wrong place huh? I could've told you that.

BAILEY: That’s because you’re like, a scientist though. The rest of us were all totally in the dark. (Laughter)

JOCELYN: I really might miss her though.

OLIVIA: Spencer left this notebook here, too. Does anyone want it? I’m not sure what—

BAILEY: Journal. It’s her journal. Can I see it? (Olivia nods and gives it to her. BAILEY opens and begins reading in her head, then tilts it to JOCELYN, who begins to read aloud.)
JOCELYN: “Marc. I hope this message finds you. Quiet can be powerful. Quiet can be impactful, deafening even. You know that. You may have spoken the fewest words, but you have made the biggest difference.”

SCENE 17

(Lights up on ERIN, HANNAH, BAILEY, and JOCELYN at lunch. All wearing black; it’s right after the funeral. There’s a somewhat uncomfortable silence.)

BAILEY: It’s ironic. Spencer had this… this motivation to actually recover. I could see it. But Ed was too strong for her. And here we are…

JOCELYN: (picks up glass of water for a toast. The girls join.) To Spencer. Maybe she didn’t save herself, but damn it, she saved us. (The girls toast, then a pause.)

BAILEY: Hey, it’s Thursday. You know what that means.

ERIN: It’s “Dream Day.” (Imitating Olivia)

BAILEY: (jokingly) I want to be the president, and that just won’t do if I’m not eating. All those fancy dinners. And it’ll be a waste of a very able-bodied wait staff!

JOCELYN: We mustn't be wasteful.

HANNAH: What? (Confused, slightly laughing)

ERIN: My dear, you have much to learn.

BAILEY: It’s dream day. We talk about what we want to be--

JOCELYN: (imitating) Ahem, we use the term “goal”.

ERIN: (changing the light tone to seriousness.) I think my dream is to just be happy. I don’t think I’ll ever feel that. Not with “Ed” around.
BAILEY: (A waiter can walk by, or she can just be referencing to offstage) Waiter, could you please bring me some cake? Chocolate please, a la mode. And don’t be stingy with it! Don’t tell my soon-to-be ex-husband though. Edward does get quite bitter when I order dessert.

(The girls all smile, some laughter.)

ERIN: (sees Marc coming on the stage, holding a canvas slightly hidden from the girls) Hey guys, is that… Marc?

MARC: Hi.

ERIN: How did you know about--?

MARC: Olivia called me. She said I was welcome to come if I want to. (Beat.) I wanted to.

JOCELYN: It’s so good to see you.

MARC: I snuck in and stole this before I came. (Pulls out the canvas and sets it on the table.)

BAILEY: Oh my gosh. She’ll never get to put her hand--

(Marc presents some small paint bottles and a brush. Girls know instantly what his idea is and they evidently love it. Erin hugs him)

ERIN: Oh! And Spencer left you something. (Hands him the note from her pocket)

(Lights out, then back up on Marc, alone on a chair holding the canvas, facing the audience. On the canvas, there is Marc’s and Erin’s handprint-- perhaps with a date on it that is crossed out to show she’s going back, as well as a mismatched handprint that says “Spencer”.

MARC: Spencer. I hope you left him behind. Ed, I mean. I hope you at least got away from that part of you that destroyed you. And I hope, wherever you are, that it’s quiet.

(Marc sets down the canvas. Lights do down except for a spot on the chair with the canvas. A few moments, then all lights out.)

END OF SHOW