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High School for Scandal: A Modern Screenplay Adaptation of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*

by
Bryant Salmon

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
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Approved by

Advisor: Dr. Colby Kullman

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Reader: Dr. John Samonds

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ABSTRACT

For my thesis, I adapted Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 18th century play, *The School for Scandal,* into a modern-day screenplay with an American high school setting. I not only modified the characters and setting of Sheridan's play, but also changed the format from that of a play, meant for the stage, into an on-screen, feature-length film. Through extensive research on the art of screenwriting, adaptation, and film editing, I created a modern script that shares similar themes, attitudes, and messages with Sheridan's original play. The works together show parallels and similarities between the British aristocracy of Sheridan's time and the social hierarchies of the typical American high school today.

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Introduction

The feeling of excitement took over my body as soon as I finished reading the play. It was a feeling of inspiration, that feeling that you get when you know exactly what you are going to write about, and that you will enjoy doing it. This was not the moment I knew I wanted to write a screenplay for my Senior Thesis, but merely the spark that lit the fuse. I was a junior in college, and my English 396 professor (who would later become my advisor for the project) assigned our class to read Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 1777 comedy, *The School for Scandal.* Of the twelve plays we were assigned to read that semester, we had to write a paper on four of our choice. For the other plays, I struggled to scrounge up a topic on which to write three to four pages without boring my professor to death. Upon finishing *The School for Scandal*, however, I immediately came up with a topic. As I read Sheridan's play, I couldn't help but make connections between his characters and modern-day high school stereotypes. The short paper I wrote about these connections is what eventually led me to write my screenplay, *High School for Scandal.*

One of the most obvious character parallels I saw was that between Sheridan's scandalmongers and the typical group of popular girls in high school today. The first group of girls that came to mind was the "Plastics" from the 2004 film *Mean Girls*. These girls are basically 21st century remakes of the scandalmongers. In Sheridan's play, the Scandalmongers live for gossip and rumors, and Lady Sneerwell is their leader who manipulates others to get her way. In *Mean Girls*, the "Plastics" rule their high school in

the same way—by spreading rumors and manipulating others. Regina George, the leader of the "Plastics" was the main inspiration for the character of Sally Sneerwell in *High School for Scandal.*

Sheridan's Charles Surface also plays a role commonly seen in high school films today. In *The School for Scandal*, Charles is somewhat misunderstood. He isn't respected in his community because of his spendthrift lifestyle and his drinking habit. By the end of the play, however, Charles finds redemption and is revealed as the nobler of the Surface brothers. Patrick Verona, from the film *10 Things I Hate About You*, plays a similar role. He is the prototypical high school rebel. He, like Charles, drinks a lot, and resents those who are in the "popular crowd." Although somewhat of an outcast, Verona also shows strong character and is redeemed in the end. Thus, Charles Surface resembles Patrick Verona in that they both show strong character despite being on the fringes of their respective societies.

The third character from *The School for Scandal* that fits the mold of a high school stereotype is Joseph Surface. In the play, Joseph is held in high esteem by everyone in the community, only to be revealed as a hypocrite and egomaniac in the end. This persona is commonly portrayed in modern high school films by the "popular jock." The character of Mike Dexter from the 90's teen romantic comedy *Can't Hardly Wait* fulfills this role perfectly. Mike is captain of the football team, popular, and dates the prettiest girl in school. His lack of values, however, is apparent by the end of the film as he undergoes the ever-so-commong tragic downfall from popular jock to unpopular jerk.

Not only are there similarities between characters of *The School for Scandal* and modern teen movies, but the themes and messages of the play are also paralleled in many

modern films. As mentioned previously, the film *Mean Girls* revolves around the reign of a group of popular, gossiping people and their fall from power. It clearly shares themes and motifs with Sheridan's play. The film *Easy A* plays on the importance of reputation and what people say about each other. The importance of reputation is underscored throughout *The School for Scandal*, specifically in the lives of Charles and Joseph Surface. *Cruel Intentions*, a film about a group of wealthy Catholic School students in New York City also highlights the dangers of rumors, deceit, and manipulation. Again, *10 Things I Hate About You* plays on the idea of reputation vs. reality. And just like Sheridan's play, true character is revealed in the end. The plot of *10 Things I Hate About You* is also similar to *The School for Scandal* in that the characters are motivated by love, or the longing to be involved with another character romantically. For example, this romantic desire is what drives Lady Sneerwell to act, because she wants to be with Charles.

It is the similarities and parallels with modern teen films that drove me to turn *The School for Scandal* into *High School for Scandal* . I had always wanted the opportunity to write creatively on a project of this magnitude, and here it was sitting at my doorstep. I immediately knew it was something I could work passionately on for over a year, because I could relate to the themes of the play. I went to high school, and I know how teenagers talk. I grew up in a community that was, for lack of a better term, a bubble. Everyone knew everyone, and it was impossible to do something without everyone finding out. At my high school, gossip, among students as well as parents, was an everyday occurrence. While gossip and rumors were abundant, a façade of cordiality was always maintained among the gossipers and their subject matter. This faux-friendly

community is exactly the type portrayed in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*. Because of the similarities in the societies in Sheridan's play and my own life, I was able to draw from my own experiences when writing the screenplay. While the plot of my screenplay is based on Sheridan's play, I modernized those events with details from my own experiences. By updating Sheridan's plot with modern technology and lifestyle, I was able to create a new work of art, in a new medium, while still retaining the original message. The fact that I could relate the motifs and themes of a play about an 18th century British aristocracy to my own high school community is a testament to the central theme of Sheridan's play and my screenplay—that people everywhere like to gossip. The works together provide insight into human nature, showing that while culture and custom may change drastically over years, some fundamental human desires remain unchanged by time, specifically the desire to talk about others.

Few understand the role of gossip better than Patricia Meyer Spacks. Spacks explores the role of gossip in various forms of literature in her 1985 investigatory work, appropriately entitled *Gossip*. In the work, she focuses an entire chapter on Restoration and eighteenth-century comedy, including several pages on *The School for Scandal*. At the beginning of the chapter, she states, "one finds in Restoration and eighteenth-century comedy a striking preoccupation with dark fantasies about what people say of one another" (Spacks 121). This quote is directly applicable to *The School for Scandal*, as the entire play revolves around "what people say of one another". Spacks also discussed new mediums of gossip that begin to arise in the late eighteenth century. People during this time could now entertain themselves "not only in the oral transmission of malicious gossip, but the rise of magazine and newspapers...containing printed equivalents for the

most libelous tea-table conversation" (Spacks 137). The introduction of printed gossip in the late eighteenth century provided yet another connection between Sheridan's society and that of today. While we still have printed publications of the same sort today in the form of tabloid magazines, those are largely concerned with the private lives of celebrities and figures that are not commonly encountered on a personal level. There is a way, however, that many people today talk about their peers—the Internet. Spacks' discussion of the magazines and newspapers in the eighteenth century inspired me to utilize the Internet as one of the primary forms of gossip in my screenplay, *High School for Scandal*.

Anyone can create a blog these days with a few clicks of the mouse. Everyone has a Facebook, a Twitter, or both. While these are effective ways of communicating with people over the Internet, their primary objective is not to spread rumors. In my experience on the Internet, the best place to find half-truths and rumors is on a message board. Whether it is about sports, music, or politics, message boards are the birthplace of Internet rumors. On a message board, a person can post whatever he or she wants to say under any username they create, and have absolutely no accountability for it. In *High School for Scandal*, the characters spread their rumors via a message board called CampusTalkHigh.com. The inspiration for CampusTalkHigh.com came from a website I encountered during the freshman year of college. Obviously, during my freshman year of college I met a lot of new people. Occasionally, when I met someone new, I would ask a friend if he or she knew the new person, and my friend would respond with some ridiculous rumor about the person I had just met. More often than not, the rumor originated on a website called JuicyCampus.com. JuicyCampus.com is a website that

exists on hundreds of college campuses across the nation, created simply to start college gossip. As I prepared to write my screenplay, I could think of no better way to create high school gossip than a similar website.

When writing a screenplay that revolves around lies and deceit, it possible to go one of two directions with it. In one direction, the script could embody a dark, dramatic, sinister tone, with extreme consequences for the characters' actions (See: *Cruel Intentions*, Roger Kumble, 1999). Another option is to create a more light-hearted, satiric effect focusing on comedy, which is the direction Sheridan's play takes in *The School for Scandal*. In discussing Sheridan's play, Spacks writes:

> ...Much of the entertainment this comedy provides for readers or audience derives from its interludes of verbal extravagance: the fiction-making of the scandalmongers, the self-indulgence of Charles, skeptical of and eager to puncture other people's proprieties. (Spacks 144).

I kept this quote in mind while trying to add comedic effect to my scenes. Much of the comedy in *High School for Scandal* springs from the same places as the comedy in *The School for Scandal*. The scandalmongers from Sheridan's play live on as the popular crowd in my screenplay. Humor lies in the indulgence of Charles Surface and his friends as they play poker and drink beer in his playroom, ironically gossiping about the gossipers themselves. Spacks explains that the gossip in Sheridan's play "...embodies energy, imagination, the exploratory, the realm of possibility" (Spacks 144). While the gossip may have malicious intent, it provides the majority of the entertainment. It entertains the audience as much as it entertains the characters. Without the gossip and rumors, none of the comedic scenes would exist, and there would be no story. My goal

for *High School for Scandal* was to create a work that embodies the satirical, humorous attitude of Sheridan's original play, and to reach a new audience through the use of a different medium and modern technology.

After formulating my ideas and goals on what I wanted to write, I began a semester of research on the art of the screenplay. I happened to be in an Intro to Film course at the time, so I had already begun to learn the basics of filmmaking. The following semester I took a course entitled "Shakespeare on Film," which introduced me to numerous methods in the art of adaptation—particularly the transformation of a work from the stage to the screen, as seen in Baz Luhrman's 1996 adaptation of Shakespeare's classic love story, *Romeo + Juliet*. Both of these courses were helpful in that they changed the way I watched movies. I have always been an avid movie-goer, but I had never been a movie critic. I used to watch a movie and be able to say, "That was good" or "That was bad," judging them strictly on entertainment value. It wasn't until I studied films in class that I developed the ability to dissect and analyze each decision made by the director. In these courses I learned about different camera shots and angles, and what kinds of effects each one can have on the meaning of the film and on the audience. More importantly, I studied firsthand how directors and screenwriters transform antiquated plays into modern films. To transform a play, which relies heavily on dialogue rather than action, is quite a makeover. In a play, the audience sees everything from one point of view. There is no zoom, no pan, no editing at all. In his book *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, Syd Field, a renowned screenwriting teacher in Hollywood, says that "because the action of a play is expressed through the spoken word, you've got to open it up visually" for a movie (Field 270). As opposed to a playwright, a

filmmaker has a multitude of tools at his disposal to manipulate the vantage point from which the audience sees or hears the action. The scenes from a play, which are generally longer and more straightforward, must be cut up into hundreds of dynamic camera shots for the film in order to keep the audience interested.

My knowledge gained from film classes was not enough to fully equip me to write a screenplay, however. While I gained invaluable knowledge from them, they taught me how to be a director, not a screenwriter. It was not until I began reading multiple books on screenwriting that I learned the division between the two roles. When I began writing *High School for Scandal*, I included every single camera shot in every scene, because I knew exactly how I wanted it to look. I listed every zoom, close up, and smash cut. I was trying to be the director and the screenwriter at the same time. In *The Screenwriter's Bible*, David Trotter warns against putting too much camera direction into a screenplay. He advises using camera direction "rarely and only when you have a good story reason or character reason to do so" (Trotter 253). Every other screenwriting book I read gives similar advice. It is the screenwriter's job to tell the story scene by scene. It is the director's job to decide how to portray those scenes visually. While you will find the occasional camera direction in *High School for Scandal*, I left them in the script only if I thought the shot was of the utmost importance to the story.

Another key subject that all of the screenwriting books stressed regards adaptation. According to Syd Field, "When you adapt a novel or any source material into a screenplay, you must consider your work an *original* screenplay *based* on other material" (Field 258). In other words, a screenplay doesn't work as a carbon-copy of the original material. It can have similar themes, messages, and even characters, but it must

be created as if it were its own story. David Trotter expressed a similar message in *The Screenwriter's Bible*:

> 1. Read the novel or play for understanding of the essential story, the relationships, the goal, the need, the primary conflict, and the subtext.
>
> 2. Identify the five to ten best scenes. These are the basis for your script.
>
> 3. Write an original screenplay. (Trotter 32)

I wrote *High School for Scandal* using Trotter's three steps as a guideline, and I feel that I was successful in creating an original script that is based on Sheridan's *The School for Scandal.*

Aside from reading screenwriting books, I found the best way to understand how films are put together was simply to watch them. The minute I embarked on the journey to write my own screenplay, I lost the ability to watch movies simply for entertainment. I began to dissect every scene in every movie I watched. I asked myself questions about why certain scenes were placed in certain places, why characters did certain things, and how all of it helped move the story forward. Analysis of movies became second nature to me, no matter what movie I happened to be watching. Movies of similar subject matter or style to mine, however, proved to be more helpful than any other type. I watched Mark Waters and Tina Fey's *Mean Girls* (2004) multiple times, because it deals with many of the same themes as *High School for Scandal.* I also found Will Gluck and Bert V. Royal's *Easy A* (2010) helpful due to its reliance on the high school rumor mill. Both of these films and more were influential to me in the screenwriting process.

My biggest regret throughout the process is not taking a screenwriting course. At the beginning of my senior year, just as I began writing, I learned that the university would be offering "Intro to Screenwriting." Not only would they be offering a course in screenwriting, but Chris Offut, a professional screenwriter, would teach it. I immediately added the course to "My Favorites." When my registration window opened, however, the class was already at capacity, even the waitlist. I talked with the English department about getting in, but it was simply a fire code issue, and no one dropped the course. My independent study of the art of screenwriting taught me everything I know about it, but I think some personal instruction from a professional could have benefited me even more.

Overall, the process was much more difficult than I could imagine. In writing creatively, it is so easy to second guess yourself and make countless revisions, all the while never feeling completely satisfied. As difficult as it was, writing a screenplay was an amazing experience that I would not trade for anything. I learned so much about all aspects of filmmaking, and became an educated movie-goer in the process. Ahead is the final draft of my script for *High School for Scandal.* Enjoy.

HIGH SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

by

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BLACK SCREEN. SUPERIMPOSED:

"The best of life is conversation, and the greatest success is confidence, or perfect understanding between sincere people" – R. W. Emerson

FADE OUT.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT.

SALLY SNEERWELL, a teenage girl, is intently focused on her computer monitor in her bedroom.

On the screen is a website entitled "CampusTalkHigh".

SNEERWELL and SNAKE chat privately on the website.

SOUND: typing on a keyboard.

SNEERWELL
U posted the updates?

SNAKE
All of em. And the username is untraceable.

SNEERWELL
Even the thread about Liza Brittle and Brian Boastall?

SNAKE
Everything you asked. People are gonna be buzzing tomorrow at school.

SNEERWELL
Good ;). Its almost too easy. People will believe anything they read on the internet.

All words fade away but the last sentence.

Dissolve to title screen.

SUPERIMPOSED: "HIGH SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL"

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

A sunny campus bustles with kids on their way to class.

SOUND: BELL RINGS.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL — SAME

SNEERWELL, a beautiful cheerleader, and SNAKE, her assistant, stand talking near lockers in a crowded hallway.

SNAKE
Sally, what's your obsession with Joseph's lame ass brother? Charles is a loser. Who cares if he likes Maria?

SNEERWELL
Are you retarded? Joseph is the one with the crush on Maria. And Charles isn't a loser. He's just different. If I can get Maria away from Charles, then he is all mine!

SNAKE
(taunting)
Didn't know you had such a crush!

SNEERWELL
(angrily)
Shut up, Snake! Why do you think I had you start those internet threads last night? Charles has been doing a lot of yard work at Mrs. Teazle's house lately. If people think there is something going on between Charles and Maria's hot young step-mom, then Maria will never talk to him again.

SNAKE
So then you move in on Charles, and Joseph consoles Maria as the sensitive, caring Surface brother.

SNEERWELL
(sarcastically)
Do I need to go over it again, little Snakey?

SNAKE
Don't patronize me. Here comes Joseph.

ENTER JOSEPH SURFACE.

JOSEPH is a tall, handsome boy, 17 years of age.

JOSEPH
Ah, hello, Queen Sally and her apprentice Snake. Nice work, you two. The halls are buzzing, people are talking!

SNEERWELL
Everything going as planned. What's your brother's status?

JOSEPH
Charles still can't make his grades, or get on my mom's good side. I almost feel bad about these rumors—

SNEERWELL
Don't get all high and mighty on us. Your reputation is safe here. And how else will you get Maria off him?

JOSEPH
Yeah, whatever. Maria deserves better than my brother anyway.

SNAKE
I'm going to the library to check on the threads.
(points to MARIA)
Heads up, bogey at 12 o clock.

ENTER MARIA.

MARIA TEAZLE walks down the hall towards them.

SNEERWELL grabs MARIA by the arm.

MARIA is distressed. She is younger than the others, and appears naïve and innocent.

SNEERWELL
(feigning sympathy)
Hey Maria, sweetie, you look down, what's wrong?

MARIA
(directed at Joseph)
Don't you have the internet? The rumors on "CampusTalkHigh"? Everyone is talking about your scumbag brother and how he humiliated me!

SNEERWELL
Let's not take anything out on sweet Joseph, here. He's nothing like Charles, right, Joseph?

JOSEPH
Personally, I hate gossip. I don't even read "CampusTalkHigh." Our whole school is obsessed with that stupid website.

ENTER KATIE CANDOUR.

KATIE is a senior, along with JOSEPH SURFACE and SALLY SNEERWELL. KATIE is an attractive, confident, fast-talking cheerleader.

CANDOUR
What's up, fellow seniors and Maria? Did I hear "CampusTalkHigh"?

JOSEPH
Yeah, some interesting new threads up last night.

CANDOUR
So THAT'S why I can't stop hearing the word "Maria" being whispered?

MARIA
So I guess I'm not just paranoid…

CANDOUR
(checking her cell phone)
Yeah, what can you do? People talk, stuff spreads quickly these days. Speaking of stuff, how about Gabby and Phillip Freeland? Who knows if its true… but I trust my sources.

MARIA
The rumors are all so hateful!

CANDOUR
Yes, they are baby, all scandalous! I mean, your friend Pam in the theater wardrobe room?

MARIA
I know Pam. Pam wouldn't do that.

CANDOUR
Of course you do, honey. Who knows what you can believe on these internet sites? After all, little Tammy Testino's affair with Crawford Cassidy could never be confirmed either could it?

JOSEPH
People aren't afraid to get creative with their gossip.

MARIA
I think the people who spread the rumors are just as pathetic as the ones who make them up.

CANDOUR
(speaking very quickly)
The tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers! Like I said, what can you do? This school is full of dirty, gossiping adolescents.

SNEERWELL
Isn't it a shame?

CANDOUR
Today I heard Mrs. Clackitt telling another teacher that Harry Howard and Liz Tattle were caught having sex in the junior high bathroom!

SNEERWELL
No!

CANDOUR
Then Henry Bouquet told me about Tom Saunter and Bill Buff's after-school fight! But, of course, I would never spread these terrible things. Tale-bearers are as bad as tale-makers.

JOSEPH
Oh, Katie, if only everyone had your good nature…

CANDOUR
I can't stand when people are attacked behind their backs. Your poor brother.

JOSEPH
He isn't really into this kind of—

CANDOUR
(interrupting)
But it could be worse! At least he has his little crew of friends, somebody to eat lunch with.

ENTER CRABTREE and BACKBITE. Not very popular themselves, they live for gossip and jump on any opportunity to slander someone else. They clearly long for belonging in the "popular" group with CANDOUR, SNEERWELL, and JOSEPH SURFACE.

CRABTREE
Ladies, ladies, how are we this morning? Heard the latest gossip, have we?

CANDOUR
What, do you mean the—

BACKBITE
No, that's not it. Nancy Nicely is going to Prom with a freshman!

CANDOUR
Shut up.

BACKBITE
Ask Crabtree.

CRABTREE
They already bought matching outfits.

BACKBITE
Nancy's parents are forcing the arrangement. They wouldn't let her say no to the poor kid!

CANDOUR
That's why parents should never be in the know.

MARIA looks down.

CANDOUR
But not your stepmom Maria! She is so cool!

MARIA
Thanks.

SNEERWELL
Yeah, totally! Ever since she quit teaching and married your dad, she has been, like, the coolest mom ever!

MARIA
Yeah, she's… great.

CRABTREE
Speaking of parents, I overheard my parents talking about your uncle, Joseph. He's moving back to town?

JOSEPH
Yeah. He moved away when Charles and I were like 2 years old or something, and—

CRABTREE
--and he is loaded from what I hear!

JOSEPH
And all that is separating me from his trust fund is a high school diploma and a college acceptance letter.

CRABTREE
So it's safe to say that Charles won't be getting his hands on any of your uncle's money, seeing how things are going for him?

JOSEPH
Charles would be lucky to get into community college.

BACKBITE
Maybe he should spend more time studying his books and less time studying women!

MARIA
I've got to go.

EXIT MARIA.

SNEERWELL
Katie, go see if she is okay.

EXIT CANDOUR.

SNEERWELL
You idiot, Benjamin! Why would you say that in front of her?

BACKBITE
What? It's not like she hasn't heard about Charles and her stepmom yet.

CRABTREE
Everyone has.

CRABTREE and BACKBITE begin to back away slowly, still talking.

BACKBITE
I mean, I've heard some messed up stuff—

CRABTREE
Oh he's done some shit—

BACKBITE
(to JOSEPH)
But I know he's your brother and all—

CRABTREE
We can talk about this later—

EXIT CRABTREE and BACKBITE.

SNEERWELL
I wish those idiots would shut up for once.

JOSEPH
Maria seemed pretty upset.

SNEERWELL
Let me worry about her. You just keep up the charm.

SALLY AND JOSEPH part ways.

FADE OUT.

EXT. GOLF COURSE — DAY

Two well-dressed men around 50 years of age, PETER TEAZLE and his friend ROWLEY, stand at the tee box.

PETER misfires into the water, obviously frustrated.

ROWLEY
Ok, that's your fourth water hazard of the day and you're on pace to finish 12 beers before the 9th hole. Are you okay Peter?

PETER
You know, Rowley, I'm not.

ROWLEY
What could have possibly happened since yesterday?

PETER
I'm a married man, Rowley.

ROWLEY
Surely you and Anne aren't already having problems?

PETER
Unless she's disappeared since I left this morning…

ROWLEY
Whoa, whoa brother. Six months ago I heard the words "I do" come out of your mouth, and now you're ready to jump ship?

They walk to the golf cart and ride on the course to search for their golf balls, still talking.

PETER
She's changing, man, I'm telling you. I used to think the age difference wouldn't matter but its like she sees me as her father instead of her husband!

ROWLEY
Well give her some time to—

PETER
All she talks about is high school kids! She literally hacked into Maria's account on this "CampusTalkHigh" website and reads it all day! When Maria's friends come over she just grills them for new gossip. And don't get me started on that Sally Sneerwell girl. You'd think they were best friends the way my wife talks to her…

ROWLEY
Well maybe she just wants to relate with her step daughter. I mean, they've only been in the same house for six months. She's probably trying to bond or something. Women do that kind of shit.

PETER has dropped a new ball on the edge of the water, and takes his second shot, which lands in the sand trap.

PETER
Ah! (referring to his poor shot). Well Maria is definitely picking up some of her habits. She seems bent on doing exactly the opposite of what I want her to do.

ROWLEY
Not sweet little Maria…

PETER
You'd think as her father I would have some influence on her choice of boys. Well, she likes one of our neighbors all right, but not the right one.

ROWLEY
She's been going around with one of the Surface boys?

PETER
I've told her and told her what a good kid Joseph is. I mean, he is a really upstanding kid, don't you think? Firm handshake, looks me in the eye, well spoken, and a damn good little athlete! I don't know if it's just to spite me or what, but she won't stay away from his punk brother.

ROWLEY
I see where you're coming from, but is Charles really all that bad?

PETER
The kid's a slacker! Look at him! Hair down to his damn shoulder blades, always behind in school, doesn't even play any sports…

ROWLEY
Hm, does that description remind you of another high school boy from the 70s?

PETER
We were different! Times were different! And this is my daughter we're talking about. I want what's best for her.

ROWLEY
Look, all I'm saying is that some kids go against the grain. Doesn't mean they're bad people. Their dad was wild as Hell when we were younger, but I bet you couldn't find a soul in this town to talk bad about him, even before he passed away.

PETER
You're wrong, Rowley. You know I helped their family out after his death; I roomed with Oliver Surface at Princeton, for God's sake. I have been around these boys a lot, and I can tell character when I see it. It's Joseph.

ROWLEY
I hate it that you're so hard on Charles. The kid could probably use some support at a time like this.

PETER
At a time like this? You mean since their dad passed away?

ROWLEY
Well, with Oliver moving back and all—

PETER
He's moving back?! Here? What?

ROWLEY
Let's just say he's done pretty well for himself in those 15 years since he left. The dude's absolutely filthy rich from what I hear.

PETER
So he's moving back to help out his brother's family?

ROWLEY
He has been sending money for the family. But now he has put together a couple of trust funds for his nephews. Only thing is, he plans on learning a little more about the kids before he hands them seven figures.

PETER
Learn more about them?

ROWLEY
Its not like he has been around much during their lives. I think he wants to do a little investigating, see if they deserve it, you know?

PETER
May as well write a check to Joseph, in that case. Please tell me he doesn't know I am married?

ROWLEY
I don't know. I'm sure someone has told him.

PETER
Dammit, he definitely knows. We used to rail on the idea of getting married in college all the time. He's gonna give me a lot of shit for tying the knot. Hey if you see him, don't mention that we're having problems, okay? I at least want him to think I'm "happily" married.

ROWLEY
(laughing)
You got it man. Just don't start bickering with the lady around him.

PETER
Well that's nearly impossible to avoid. When an old geezer marries a young wife, the crime carries its punishment along with it…

ROWLEY
(sarcastically)
You've become quite a poet.

PETER
Shut up and hand me another beer.

Camera zooms back from golf cart to an aerial shot of the course, with the cart becoming smaller and smaller.

FADE OUT.

INT. PETER TEAZLE'S HOUSE — NIGHT

Voices are heard in a large, elegantly decorated home.

The voices are PETER and ANNE TEAZLE, bickering angrily with one another.

PETER and ANNE TEAZLE are in the kitchen screaming loudly in argument.

PETER
Do you see this credit card bill!

ANNE
Oh, don't act like we can't afford it Peter!

PETER
We? The only "we" here is that I make the money and you spend it. I'm taking full authority over the credit cards.

ANNE
Excuse me? Authority? If you wanted authority over me you should have adopted me, not married me! God knows you're old enough!

PETER
There it is, only a matter of time! Come out with it! You can piss me off all you want, but my checkbook isn't infinite, you know?

ANNE
I only spend what is necessary to maintain a certain lifestyle. A lifestyle YOU brought me into, mind you.

PETER

Well, that lifestyle is over. I'm about to teach you what really is "necessary". Hand-painted wallpaper from Paris in our guest bathroom where someone takes a shit twice a year?? Lets analyze that decision…

ANNE

Don't put the blame on me for trying to appease our guests. If we didn't live in such a nice house I wouldn't have to buy decorations to keep up with it!

PETER

That's the thing! If you had lived like this all your life, I might understand. It's like you have amnesia!

ANNE

I do not! I was impoverished once, so now my life is allowing me to make up for it!

PETER

I would hardly say you were impoverished. Maybe your teacher's salary wasn't extravagant, but impoverished?

FLASHBACK: ANNE'S LIFE BEFORE MARRIAGE.

--Black and white scenes from her old life—her apartment, her job as an English teacher, her old car, etc. accompany her slow-speaking voice.

ANNE

Oh, I think I would remember, Peter. I was at the school all day every day. I barely had enough money to pay rent and buy groceries to cook for myself?

PETER

(sarcastically)

You know how to cook?

ANNE

Us poor folk had to cook for ourselves sometimes. When our chefs were out of town, of course.

PETER

Ha! I'm glad you have such good memory. If you hadn't met me at Maria's back-to-school night, you would still be living like that. Now you need a driver in a Bentley to bring you to the grocery store and back!

END FLASHBACK.

SMASH CUT: INT. KITCHEN - SAME

ANNE
I have never asked Carl to drive me to the grocery store!

PETER
(frustrated)
You are missing the point! I have done all this for you. I have made you who you are now. The fashion, the money, the social life…

ANNE
Well then—there's just one more thing you can make me to add to all of your troubles then—and that is—

PETER
My widow?

ANNE
Ha!

PETER
Thank you honey, but don't flatter yourself. You may piss me off pretty often, but you won't ever break my heart, I promise you that. Thanks for the hint, though.

ANNE
Then why do you freak out about every little expense?

PETER
Did you have any of these expenses before you married me?

ANNE
I'm only keeping up with fashion, Peter! Do you want me to look like I shop at Wal-Mart?

PETER
Fashion! Ooh, Fashion! Were you in "fashion" before you married me?

ANNE
Well, I would think you'd want your wife thought a woman of taste.

PETER
Taste! There it is again! You didn't seem to have this taste before you married me.

ANNE
That's very true Peter. After marrying you I should never pretend to taste again. If our daily quarrel is over now, I'm going over to Sally Sneerwell's house and check on Maria.

PETER
(mockingly)
What a great idea. Go check on the girls. You seem to love being around them.

ANNE
They are lovely girls, Peter. Well-liked by everyone, including me!

PETER
They're little bitches, Anne. All I ever hear them talk about is high school gossip. You really like being a part of that?

ANNE
It's called freedom of speech. Girls like to gossip, so what? Let them have a little fun.

PETER
I think it's you that enjoys it the most.

ANNE
Look, honey. I just want them to think I'm a cool mom. I may join in on the gossip every now and then, but you know I don't mean it. Besides, don't you want me to spend the extra time with Maria? You should come by and check on them, too.

PETER
I'll come by later to make sure you aren't talking about me, I guess.

ANNE
Come shortly, or you'll miss Margarita Mondays!

EXIT ANNE.

PETER sits alone in his kitchen.

EXT. ANNE'S CAR — CONTINUOUS.

ANNE TEAZLE drives to SALLY SNEERWELL'S house.

EXT. BACKYARD POOL - CONTINUOUS.

SALLY SNEERWELL, KATIE CANDOUR, JOSEPH SURFACE, CRABTREE, AND BACKBITE lay on poolside chairs, sunbathing and gossiping while drinking frozen margaritas.

ENTER ANNE TEAZLE from the side of the house, and MARIA from inside.

SNEERWELL
Mrs. Teazle! Get over here!

ANNE
Sally, you make me feel like a dinosaur! I've told you a hundred times to call me Anne!

SNEERWELL
Just teasing you, girl. Margarita?

ANNE
Is the Pope Catholic?

SNEERWELL
(laughing)
Maria, you look like a disaster! Let Joseph make you a Margarita.

MARIA
Well I don't normally drink on—

SNEERWELL
(winking)
Nonsense! Joseph, take Maria in the kitchen and get her a drink.

EXIT MARIA AND JOSEPH.

CANDOUR
Who were we talking about?

CRABTREE
Vicki Vermilion.

BACKBITE
Or, rather, the mask of Vicki Vermilion.

CANDOUR
Oh, come on, she doesn't wear THAT much make-up. I've seen her natural color come and go…

SNEERWELL
Yeah, so have I: it comes on in her profile pictures and goes off again when you see her in person!

The group laughs.

BACKBITE
(still laughing)
Not only does it come and go, but her mom can fetch and carry it!

The group laughs again.

CANDOUR
Haha! I hate to talk like this about a friend. At least her sister is pretty, right?

CRABTREE
If you're into pale and wrinkly girls, yeah, I'd say she's a regular Victoria's Secret Angel!

BACKBITE
Ha! I think it runs in the family. Come to think of it, I've never seen her real face either.

SNEERWELL
Her make-up job is pure art compared to Olivia Ochre's attempts.

BACKBITE
Don't be so harsh on Olivia. It's not that she doesn't do a good job on her face. It's the fact that she forgets about her neck. It's like she has the face of a tan, hot, 16-year old girl and the neck of my grandmother!

CRABTREE
Exactly! It's like she doesn't realize the two are totally different colors!

CANDOUR
Ah! I can't stop laughing and I hate you for it! What about Gracie Simper?

BACKBITE
Well, she has very pretty teeth.

ANNE
Yes, she does. When she isn't speaking or laughing…which is never!

CANDOUR
You're so bad, Mrs. Teazle!

ANNE
Anne. Everyone please call me Anne. Anyway, she gets it from her mother. She can't put her dentures by her bed at night because they keep her up talking all night!

SNEERWELL
Oh, Anne you're a trip!

ANNE
Great, here comes Peter Pouter to spoil the fun.

ENTER PETER TEAZLE.

PETER
Afternoon, kids.

CANDOUR
Mr. Teazle! Hey! Maybe you can stop all this talking behind our friend's backs. Your wife is the worst one!

PETER
I'm sure you just can't stand it, huh, Katie?

CANDOUR
I try to be nice to everyone I know. I just can't stand to hear a friend be talked about.

PETER
Oh, I'm sure!

BACKBITE
Bullshit, Katie! You and I have been sitting here for an hour laughing at these people!

CANDOUR
But I never actually make any jokes. I can't help it if I laugh at what y'all say! That's what I always tell Olga when we eat lunch twice a week.

CRABTREE
Olga! She's the weirdest looking of them all!

BACKBITE
Have you seen her feet? Straight out of The Hobbit!

CRABTREE
And that red hair with Chinese eyes?

BACKBITE
Not to mention that monster sniffer between them!

CANDOUR
Haha!

PETER is obviously growing impatient with the direction of the conversation.

PETER
Look, guys, she's a sweet girl. Do you have to take a stab at everyone who isn't in this little circle?

ANNE
They're just having a little fun, Peter! Don't be such a Debbie Downer. You know frowning causes more wrinkles than smiling!

PETER
I do laugh. I like to laugh. But every laugh doesn't have to come at the expense of some other high school kid, Anne.

SNEERWELL
Mr. Teazle is right, guys. The sun is gone, let's go watch TV.

PETER
I just came to check in. I'll see you guys later.

EXIT PETER TEAZLE.

The group walks inside to find JOSEPH and MARIA talking in the kitchen.

CANDOUR
But I never actually make any jokes. I can't help it if I laugh at what y'all say! That's what I always tell Olga when we eat lunch twice a week.

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PETER
I just came to check in. I'll see you guys later.

EXIT PETER TEAZLE.

The group walks inside to find JOSEPH and MARIA talking in the kitchen.

JOSEPH
Why would you not want to hang around us anymore?

MARIA
Why would I? I thought y'all had a cool group of friends, but all you do is make fun of people, people who I like. I'm sorry that I don't enjoy that, maybe I'm not cool enough.

JOSEPH
They don't mean anything by it, Maria. Just harmless jokes. But hey, I'm not like them…

MARIA
Then why do you hang around them all the time?

ENTER ANNE TEAZLE, unnoticed by JOSEPH and MARIA.

JOSEPH
I grew up with them. Sometimes you can't choose your friends. And sometimes you can't choose who you like, either. I know you and Charles were talking some, but…

MARIA
Whatever I felt for that asshole of a brother you have is gone, I assure you. And I don't appreciate you coming on to me, either.

JOSEPH
Wait, Maria. Don't—

MARIA looks at her stepmother, ANNE suspiciously.

MARIA
Oh, hi Anne.

ANNE
Maria, Sally wants you in the den.

EXIT MARIA.

ANNE
What are you doing?

JOSEPH
Maria—um—started to suspect, well, our… situation. She was threatening to tell PETER about us. I was just trying to reason with her.

ANNE (suspicious)
Really? You seem to have a very tender way of reasoning. Do you usually argue that close to people?

JOSEPH
She's just naïve, you know. I had to… coax her a little bit.

ANNE
Well what does she know?

JOSEPH
Nothing, nothing. I just had to talk to her, that's all.

ANNE
We need to get back in there with the rest of them.

JOSEPH
We shouldn't walk in together.

ANNE
I'm taking Maria home. She doesn't need to hear any more of your "reasoning."

EXIT ANNE.

JOSEPH is left alone in the kitchen. He rubs his temples as if he has a headache.

INT. PETER TEAZLE'S STUDY – NIGHT

A dark, manly room with a pool table in the center is shown.

ENTER PETER, ROWLEY, and OLIVER SURFACE.

PETER
You boys care for a drink?

PETER, without waiting for a reply, walks to the kitchen to grab drinks.

EXIT PETER TEAZLE.

OLIVER
(racking the pool balls)
So the mighty Peter Teazle settled down and got married? I can't believe it. Has Hell frozen over?

ROWLEY
Try not to give him too much shit, Oliver. It's kind of a sore subject, and he's only been married six months.

OLIVER
Poor dude. He doesn't seem too fond of my nephew Charles, either. What's going on there?

ROWLEY
He straight-up doesn't like the kid. He thinks Charles is a punk, honestly. Charles helps out Anne around the house, and, between you and me, I think Peter suspects something.

OLIVER
Between Anne and Charles?

ROWLEY
It doesn't help that Anne is part of the "in crowd" with all these high school kids. They have this obsession with a website called "CampusTalkHigh," apparently, and Anne reads the thing daily.

OLIVER
What's it all about?

ROWLEY
I don't know, just gossip pretty much. It's like a message board where anyone can post under any name, and I think kids just make up shit to talk about each other.

OLIVER
So what does this have to do with Charles?

ROWLEY
I don't think he's involved with it or anything, but I know that it doesn't help with his reputation. This group of kids that Anne hangs around with includes Joseph, but not Charles. From what I've seen, I think Anne is a little too flirty with Joseph, not Charles.

OLIVER
I know how cruel kids can be in high school. It's all about reputation and popularity. It's bullshit. Anyway, I'm not going to judge Charles on anything but first-hand experience. As far as I'm concerned he hasn't done anything wrong.

ROWLEY
That's good to hear. I like him. It's almost honorable that he stays away from the so-called "popular" kids that Anne loves.

OLIVER
Do you remember what his dad and I were like in high school? Not exactly class-acts, ha. We would fill the popular kids' lockers with shaving cream every chance we got!

ROWLEY
And, rest his soul, both of you couldn't have turned out better.

ENTER PETER, carrying a tray with three glasses of scotch on ice.

PETER
Three scotches. Who couldn't have turned out better?

ROWLEY
Just complimenting Oliver on his good fortune.

PETER
Ollie man, of course! So glad you're back.

OLIVER
Feels good, I have to say. How's the married life?

PETER
(looking at Rowley)
So you heard, huh? Thanks, but lets not harp on it. We're happy.

OLIVER
Of course, wouldn't want to start out our visit on such a grave subject.

ROWLEY looks at OLIVER and opens his eyes wide, as if to tell him to be quiet.

A moment of silence follows.

OLIVER
(continuing)
Well—so I hear one of my nephews is a wild rogue, huh?

PETER
You could say that. Charles just doesn't have any motivation. He spends more time paying attention to his Mom's liquor cabinet than to his schoolwork.

PETER lines up his next pool shot.

With their mother always working, he hasn't had much guidance since his father passed.

PETER makes a ball in the corner pocket.

His brother, Joseph, on the other hand, would make his old man proud. Everyone speaks well of him.

OLIVER
Everyone speaks well of him? So he's a people-pleaser.

PETER
I'm just saying, no one dislikes him. He's a good kid. You can't blame him for not making enemies.

OLIVER
Not blaming him for anything. I'll make my own judgments on my nephews.

PETER
You'll see what I mean when you meet them. What's it been, 15 years?

OLIVER
Yep, haven't seen either of them since the diaper days. I've got a nice trust fund set out for both of them, pending inspection, of course.

PETER
Inspection?

OLIVER
Rowley and I have a plan.

PETER
A plan for what?

OLIVER
To see if these boys really are who you say they are. Round us up a couple more drinks and we'll fill you in.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

The three men are playing pool, still discussing the subject.

PETER
Can you run this by me one more time? I'm not—

OLIVER
The kid. Marcus. He's the volunteer coordinator for the high school's Senior Class Garage Sale. It's the big project going on this weekend at the school. Every student is required to put in at least 10 hours of work to graduate. I found Marcus online, and he told me that neither Joseph nor Charles has worked at all yet, and the final day is Friday.

PETER
So they're both going to have to work Friday?

OLIVER
Let me finish. Students can donate items to the sale in place of actually working. Apparently Joseph has reported large donations, but Marcus said he hasn't actually donated anything. Charles has donated a few shirts, but not nearly enough to count for his 10 hours.

PETER
So how does this help you in judging the character of the boys?

OLIVER
I am going to use this Marcus kid as my pawn. I send him to Joseph and Charles, separately, and he confronts them.

PETER
How are you going to see what happens?

OLIVER
Do you not have a daughter in high school? Technology, dear Peter. Every kid has a webcam these days. Before Marcus goes over there, he rigs his wireless webcam in his shirt, and we watch the whole thing from my laptop.

PETER
Sounds risky. How did you get Marcus to agree to this?

OLIVER
Just a little monetary encouragement. I hope you don't mind, he's meeting us over here any minute now.

SOUND: DOORBELL

OLIVER
Ah. That must be him now. We'll meet him, go over the plan again, and reconvene tomorrow night.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. PETER'S FRONT DOOR – NIGHT

PETER and ROWLEY say goodbye to OLIVER and MARCUS.

PETER
I think finally Oliver will be swayed towards Joseph after all this.

ROWLEY
We'll see. I've got faith in Charles still.

PETER
Maria is about to be home. I'll see you tomorrow.

EXIT ROWLEY.

PETER walks into the kitchen as the back door opens and MARIA walks in.

PETER
Hey, honey. Been hanging out with Joseph?

MARIA
Um, no, he was busy.

PETER
Doesn't he just grow on you, though? I mean, the more time I spend around him, the more I like him.

MARIA
You've made that very clear to me, Dad. In fact it's starting to get a little weird.

PETER
You don't have to snap back at me like that. It just bothers me that I can tell you prefer Charles and I don't know why.

MARIA
You know I haven't been seeing Charles. I have heard enough about him to know better. But that doesn't mean I'm gonna go for his brother, either! Let it go, Dad.

EXIT MARIA.

ENTER ANNE TEAZLE.

ANNE
Argument with Maria? I thought you were always in a good mood when I'm not around.

PETER
Oh Anne, you have the power to make me good-humoured all the time.

ANNE
I'm glad to hear that. Since that's the case, would you be a doll and lend your wife some spending money?

PETER
Guess I can't be in a good mood without paying for it. No more saying I don't give you enough money, then.

ANNE
Deal. I'm tired of fighting. You are more attractive when you're happy.

PETER
I miss us being happy also… Let's start again—

ANNE
And never fight again?

PETER
Never again. So make sure to watch your temper, baby, because if you remember, in all of our arguments, you always began first.

ANNE
I beg your pardon? You provoked every temper I had!

PETER
See! Here it is. Cool down, contradicting what I say is not the way to avoid fights, angel.

ANNE
Then don't start it with accusations, love.

PETER
Do you not see this? You're doing exactly what you know makes me mad.

ANNE
No, you just get mad for no reason.

PETER
Now you want to fight again.

ANNE
No, I don't. But if you're going to be so childish—

PETER
There! Who's starting it now?
ANNE
Um. You.

PETER
I see this "happy marriage" thing isn't going to work.

ANNE
I suppose it isn't!

PETER
I never should have shown you a taste of money!

ANNE
And I never should have married a 50 year-old man who no one else would have!

PETER
Like you had any better offers?

ANNE

I would have been better off marrying my first boyfriend. He had just as much money as you, and he's died since. I'd be better off than here with you!

PETER

I'm done with you! You are an ungrateful, spoiled bitch! And I'll go ahead and say it, now: I know you fooled around with Charles Surface! All those times he came to "clean the pool" or "mow the grass"?

ANNE

I will not stand here and be accused of sleeping with a high school boy! You have absolutely no grounds for something so absurd!

PETER

The only absurd thing is that you still live in this house!

ANNE

Well, that will be fixed very quickly! Never fight again, my ass! What a joke that was. I'm leaving, I'll send for my things!

PETER

They'll be on the street!

ANNE slams the door and leaves. PETER sits at the kitchen table, pours another scotch, and shows a tinge of regret on his face.

EXT. – SURFACE BROTHERS' HOUSE – NIGHT

LONG SHOT OF THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE. SUPERSCRIPT ON THE SCREEN READS:

THE SURFACE HOUSE
11:45 p. m. FRIDAY

INT. PLAYROOM – SAME

CHARLES and some friends sit around a poker table drinking and smoking.

CHARLES

I truly do not understand what people at our school do on Friday nights?

1st FRIEND
(referring to the poker game)
Hit me.

(looking back at Charles)
I don't either. I think they like reading CampusTalkHigh more than drinking!

CHARLES
They are so obsessed with that website!

(mockingly)
"Like, OMG, Sally is totes in love with Robbie! I have got to tell Amanda!"

They all laugh.

2nd FRIEND
So instead of getting drunk with their friends, they sit at home on the computer all weekend? Blows my mind.

CHARLES
I don't think they even try to get beer. Y'all know I'm better at everything after a couple beers. Shit, I've never lost at poker—or at least I never remember it, which is exactly the same thing.

1ST FRIEND
(laughing)
Yeah, no shit!

CHARLES
And they all claim these ridiculous love affairs! This isn't "The OC"! I mean, seriously, get drunk, and the first girl that pops in your head, that's the one, am I right?

ALL FRIENDS
(simultaneously)
Hell yes!

2ND FRIEND
Since you brought it up and all, without sounding gay about it, who's your favorite?

CHARLES
What, girl?

1ST FRIEND
No, your favorite AFC quarterback. YES, girl.

CHARLES
Since you bitches are so curious, I'll tell you. But I'm getting the same answers out of you afterwards.

1ST FRIEND
Sure.
(almost simultaneously)

2ND FRIEND
Yeah.

3RD FRIEND
Okay.

CHARLES
Alright, everyone got a beer? Cheers to Maria!

1ST FRIEND
Who the hell is Maria?

CHARLES
She's an angel, that's who.

2nd FRIEND
Aw, little Charlie has an angel!

CHARLES
Enough of this shit, get the deck of cards, we're playing Captain Dickhead, and I'm captain!

CHARLES begins dealing cards to the drinking game.

The boys are in a beer chugging contest when they hear a sound.

SOUND: DOORBELL

1st FRIEND
Isn't your mom gonna get that?

CHARLES
She's out of town, dumbass, or we couldn't be doing this right now. I gotta get that.

EXT. SURFACE HOUSE - SAME.

MARCUS stands at the front door to the SURFACE'S house.

MARCUS looks at his cell phone, which reads:

"I'M HERE, CAN U SEE?".

INT. — PETER'S HOUSE — CONTINUOUS

OLIVER, PETER, and ROWLEY sit around a laptop watching the video feed from MARCUS'S camera.

OLIVER checks his cell phone and confirms to MARCUS that the camera works.

OLIVER
Loud and clear!

EXT. SURFACE HOUSE — SAME

CHARLES answers the front door.

SOUND: Loud rap music plays from inside the house.

CHARLES
(Surprised and drunk)
Marcus? Sup buddy? I didn't think we had a tutoring session, or is it Monday already?

CHARLES laughs at his own joke.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE — SAME

PETER
(to Oliver)
Oh this doesn't look good.

OLIVER
Shut up.

EXT. CHARLES'S HOUSE — SAME

MARCUS
Its Friday, Charles. The Friday before the Senior Class Garage Sale? The Friday that you are supposed to help set up the garage sale, since you haven't contributed but two old t-shirts?

CHARLES
That's tonight, huh?

MARCUS
Tonight. Garage Sale begins at 6:00 am. And it's almost midnight.

CHARLES
I see, I see. We could have a slight problem, though, Marcus.

MARCUS
I don't think you understand. Every senior has to work on the garage sale to graduate, and you haven't—

CHARLES
Hold on now. I'm about 10 beers deep and on a serious heater in a poker game back there.
(points inside the house)

Didn't the teachers say you could donate a bunch of stuff instead of actually working?

MARCUS
Well, yeah.. but it would take a lot of—

CHARLES
Perfect! Come on in I've got tons of stuff!

CHARLES leads MARCUS inside and slams the door.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE — SAME

OLIVER
10 beers deep? Come on, man.

PETER
I've told you, this kid is trouble.

OLIVER
We'll see.

INT. CHARLES'S HOUSE — SAME

A tracking shot follows MARCUS and CHARLES through the house. They walk through hallways, up the stairs, to a door

in the back of the house. The music is loud now, and the sounds of laughter and yelling are heard.

CHARLES
(to MARCUS)
Let me tell them to play on without me for a minute.

CHARLES opens the door to the playroom, where three friends of his are sitting around a poker table, smoking and drinking.

(to FRIENDS)
Y'all play a round without me, ok?

1ST FRIEND
What now, Charles? A booty call drop by or something?

CHARLES
We both know I'm not that lucky. Y'all know Marcus, from school? He came by to pick up some shit for that garage sale tomorrow.

2ND FRIEND
Oh yeah, I used to cheat off that kid in Algebra II. Bring him in for a beer!

CHARLES pokes his head out the door.

CHARLES
(to Marcus)
Want a beer?

MARCUS
I probably shouldn't…

CHARLES
Nonsense! I know you'd rather be here than at the school, unloading furniture and what not!

CHARLES and MARCUS enter the PLAYROOM.

CHARLES
(looking at each friend separately)
Pull a chair up for Marcus.

Get him a beer.

Deal him in.

MARCUS
No, no I don't know how to play, and I don't have time for a game.

1ST FRIEND
He looks too sober. I'll load the funnel.

CHARLES
Guys, I don't think Marcus wants to funnel a beer right now.

1st FRIEND
You're right. That was rude. I should have offered him a shot.

MARCUS
I didn't come here to drink, guys.

2ND FRIEND
(to the other friends)
If he isn't looking to drink, maybe we shouldn't be in here. Let's go play in the kitchen.

(to Charles)
We'll be in the kitchen until y'all finish your business.

CHARLES
Okay I'll be down in a minute.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER, PETER, and ROWLEY sit around the screen, somewhat baffled at what they just saw.

ROWLEY
Jesus Christ, those kids can drink!

PETER
I had heard rumors, but I mean...

ROWLEY
Did we drink that much?

PETER
Not even in college!

OLIVER
I think I may have seen enough.

ROWLEY
Let's not completely give up on Charles yet. We may as well see what happens.

PETER
You have to admit, its pretty entertaining.

OLIVER
Where's Joseph, by the way?

ROWLEY
He definitely isn't home…

PETER
They're all at the school, setting up for the garage sale, where these clowns are supposed to be.
(pointing at the computer)

INT. CHARLES'S PLAYROOM – SAME

MARCUS walks around the room inspecting all of CHARLES'S belongings.

MARCUS
You're gonna need to donate a good bit of stuff to take care of your hours. You sure you're willing to do this?

CHARLES
Look, if I don't graduate high school, I don't get my hands on any money from my rich uncle. I'll donate anything you need.

MARCUS, aware that CHARLES is talking about OLIVER, asks more questions.

MARCUS
Rich uncle, huh? And he's giving you money if you graduate high school?

CHARLES
Yeah, he got rich overseas on oil or something, and since my dad died, he's been helping our family. He set up trust funds for Joseph and me, but I'm the definite favorite.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER watches and listens attentively to his laptop.

OLIVER
The favorite, huh? That money isn't guaranteed!

INT. CHARLES'S PLAYROOM – SAME

MARCUS
Really? How do you know?

CHARLES
He always sends me the most bad ass presents for Christmas and Birthdays and stuff. I can just tell. Joseph is always writing letters to him and shit, trying to suck up. Uncle Oliver sees right through it.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER throws his hands up in the air.

OLIVER
(yelling at Charles on the screen)
I should have seen right through you, you spoiled brat!

INT. CHARLES'S PLAYROOM – SAME

CHARLES
Anyway, he's moving back right after graduation to "surprise" us with the money.

MARCUS
Well, since you're about to inherit some funds, I assume you don't mind donating some nice items?

CHARLES
Whatever gets me my hours. What are you low on, what do y'all need? I've got plenty more clothes…

MARCUS
Let's see what you have.

MONTAGE – CHARLES arbitrarily gives away his things

-- Charles grabs shirts, pants, and shoes. Marcus nods his head and marks them with post-it notes.

-- Charles shows him video game consoles, controllers, and games. Marcus accepts them.

-- Charles presents his childhood toy collection, and Marcus nods again.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER
I gave him a lot of that!

ROWLEY
Its just old toys and clothes, though. I wouldn't be too upset. It could be worse.

INT. CHARLES'S PLAYROOM – SAME

ENTER 1ST FRIEND.

1ST FRIEND
Charles, what's the hold up, man?

CHARLES
Almost done. Gotta give up a few more things.

1st FRIEND
Well, make it snappy, we've got a game to play.

CHARLES
Actually, will you stay up here and help me out? I don't know how much this stuff is worth. We could use a second opinion.

1st FRIEND
Anything to speed up the process, I guess.

MARCUS
All right, this is some good stuff. Probably 4 hours worth of actual work. But we're gonna need some donations that we can sell for higher prices. How about some furniture?

CHARLES
Why don't we go to the attic? There's a bunch of my dad's old stuff in there that we never use.

They walk in the hallway, pull down the ladder, and enter the attic.

MARCUS walks over to an antique two-person couch and inspects it.

CHARLES
How about that old thing? It's been here since I was born, and I don't think we've ever used it.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER
Old thing?!? That's an antique! My father gave that to Charles's dad as a marriage gift! It's a family heirloom!

PETER
That is worth thousands of dollars I'm sure…

INT. CHARLES'S PLAYROOM – SAME

1ST FRIEND
Sell it. If your mom wanted it, it wouldn't be in the attic.

MARCUS
We'll take it. That will cut out, oh, let's say, two hours of your work.

MARCUS puts a post-it note on the couch.

MARCUS
Just let me mark it so I'll know what to grab.
(looking around the attic)

What else you got? How about some books? We need some more books.

CHARLES
My dad had a whole library, pretty much. Check this out.

CHARLES opens an armoire door to reveal shelves filled with old books.

I've never even looked at them, but take your pick.

1st FRIEND
Niiiiice. I hate books.

MARCUS
(browsing the titles)
Oh, wow, this is perfect. I'll take these as well. Let's say 30 books, two more hours. Just three hours to go.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER is becoming visibly upset.

OLIVER
I've got to go over there and stop this! That's my brother's personal library! Half of those are signed originals!

ROWLEY
No, man, you can't. Let it be, he'll learn his lesson.

OLIVER
These are family treasures that he is just giving away! I'll never forgive him!

INT. CHARLES'S ATTIC – SAME

CHARLES
(to Marcus)
You sure are stingy on the hours, huh?

MARCUS
Well, I didn't have to let you off duty tonight, did I?

CHARLES
All right, fair is fair. Anything else you had your eye on?

MARCUS walks around the attic, inspecting items. He comes upon a painting of a man, and looks at it closely.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

The camera zooms in slowly on the computer screen to reveal the artists signature on the painting. It reads "Oliver Surface."

OLIVER
He wouldn't…

INT. CHARLES'S ATTIC – SAME

MARCUS
Who's this painting of?

CHARLES
That one? That's actually my uncle Oliver, the one I told you about earlier. He painted it himself in college.

MARCUS
(aware that Oliver is listening)
Oh, this is him? Either he can't paint or he's uglier than I expected.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER
Easy, Marcus…

ROWLEY
Hold on, let's hear what Charles thinks.

INT. CHARLES'S ATTIC – SAME

MARCUS
I'll take the painting. We don't have a lot of art in the sale.

CHARLES
Actually, Marcus, I don't think I can give that one away.

MARCUS
Why not? The guy's not exactly Pablo Picasso.

CHARLES
The guy's just been really good to me. I can't just give away his self-portrait to some garage sale.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER looks at ROWLEY and PETER.

OLIVER
Ha! The little punk is my nephew, after all!

INT. CHARLES'S ATTIC – SAME

CHARLES
What if you took some other paintings up here?

MARCUS
This just seems like that one we're missing. Look, give me this one painting, and you're off the hook.

CHARLES
I'll give you five others, but I'm not giving away this one man.

MARCUS, having completed his mission, prepares to go.

MARCUS
Okay then, I tell you what, I'll take a couple of these other paintings and we'll call it even. You've been generous enough, and I gotta get back. I'll write off your 10 hours. Help me load this stuff up and you're good to go, Charles.

CHARLES
Awesome, man, thank you, Marcus. Yeah, of course I'll help you load it up.

CHARLES thinks for a second.

Actually, do you mind if I ride over to the garage sale with you? I need to talk to my brother.

MARCUS
Yeah, no problem.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE — CONTINUOUS

OLIVER
I knew I was right about Charles! Just like his dad, loyal to the bone!

PETER
But he just gave away priceless family heirlooms?

OLIVER
He just didn't know any better about that other stuff. But when it came down to family, the kid clearly values it! I can't believe you thought so low of him.

INT. — PETER'S HOUSE — NIGHT - LATER

MARCUS sits next to OLIVER on the couch.

MARCUS
Well, sir, I think, like Mr. Teazle said…

(looks at Peter)
you saw Charles in, sort of, his element. It's a shame he's so wild.

OLIVER
True. But he would not sell my picture.

MARCUS
He really likes to drink…

OLIVER
But he would not sell my picture.

MARCUS
And they way they talk about girls…

OLIVER
But he would not sell my picture.

ENTER ROWLEY.

ROWLEY
All right, Peter's wired.

MARCUS
Wired for what?

OLIVER
Like you were. With the camera. Peter Teazle here is going to take over. His wife is a chaperone at the garage sale right now, and Joseph and the other kids are working too.

CUTAWAY: ANNE TEAZLE at the school garage sale

ANNE is walking around the gym with a clipboard, checking the inventory. JOSEPH SURFACE walks through the frame, and he and ANNE exchange glances.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE - SAME

Peter wants to do some investigating himself.

MARCUS
So he's going to talk to Joseph instead of me?

OLIVER
Yeah, he's got it covered.

MARCUS
So… I'm done?

OLIVER
You're off the hook, kid. Here.

OLIVER hands MARCUS some cash.

Get back to the school, I've got your number. I'll call you if we need you.

EXIT MARCUS.

OLIVER
(to ROWLEY)
Peter knows what to do, right?

ROWLEY
I told him, don't worry. When he finds Joseph, he'll turn on the webcam, and we'll watch the conversation here, just like we did with Charles.

OLIVER
This is easier than I thought.

INT. PETER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

PETER is driving to the high school.

People are walking in and out of the gym at the high school, carrying various items for the garage sale.

PETER'S car pulls into view and parks.

INT. — HIGH SCHOOL GYM — NIGHT

The garage sale is shown, which is located in the gym. The gym floor is covered with furniture, clothing, and miscellaneous items. Students are organizing the items while adult chaperones lead them.

ANONYMOUS CHAPERONE
We open to the public at 6 a.m. guys! Let's get this place organized before the early shift gets here!

SUPERSCRIPT ON THE SCREEN READS:

HIGH SCHOOL GARAGE SALE
2:15 a. m.

INT. — LOCKER ROOM — CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH SURFACE sits in the locker room alone. Another student peeks his head in the door.

STUDENT
Here she comes.

JOSEPH
Are you sure its her?

STUDENT
Yes.

JOSEPH
Stay on lookout. Don't let anyone else come in here.

STUDENT shuts the door.

ENTER ANNE TEAZLE.

JOSEPH
Did anyone see you?

ANNE
No, everyone's too busy to notice, anyway.

JOSEPH
Well you're late. We said 2:00.

ANNE
Oh, I'm sorry. I guess I should have told the other parents that I was going to rendezvous with a student in the boy's locker room?

JOSEPH
I'm sure that would go over well. What's the situation with your husband? Does he suspect anything?

ANNE
Oh, he suspects something, all right. He's jealous of Charles!

INT. GARAGE SALE – CONTINUOUS

PETER walks around the floor of the garage sale looking for JOSEPH.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH
(to himself, under his breath)
Thank you, internet!

ANNE
If he would just let Maria be with Charles, then I would be out from under his radar, don't you think?

JOSEPH
(to himself)
Not quite…

(aloud)
Oh, yeah, sure. And you would also realize that I am not attracted to Maria.

ANNE
I want to believe you, Joseph. It's just—the things I read on the internet about you, Maria, even me! I don't know what's true and what Sally and her friends just make up!

JOSEPH
I understand. It's embarrassing, honestly. With the social media these days, who knows what to believe?

ANNE
And to start rumors about me? Maria's step mom? I mean, I have been nothing but nice to Maria's friends. Then Peter gets mad at me for being too nice to them! What have I done to deserve this?

JOSEPH
Mr. Teazle falsely accuses you of sneaking around with Charles, but has no grounds for it, aside from internet rumors. Sounds unfair to me.

ANNE
Completely unfair.

JOSEPH
Don't take it, then. You see, when a husband accuses his wife of infidelity and loses all confidence in her, well, you've lost all trust in your marriage. You owe it to yourself, and to women everywhere, to get back at him.

ANNE
So what you're saying is that the best way to cure his jealousy is to give him reason for it?

JOSEPH
(grabbing her hand)
Exactly. You're too innocent, Anne. You get so impatient of Peter's jealousy because it's based on rumor, not fact! Your reputation precedes you, only you haven't had enough fun with it.

ANNE
You think? What if he starts suspecting you and me?

JOSEPH
(leaning closer to her face)
If everyone already thinks you're sneaking around with Charles, no one is ever going to suspect a tiny little *faux pas* with his handsome brother.

ANNE
I guess they wouldn't…

JOSEPH
(an inch away from her lips)
Besides, your husband thinks I'm the most upstanding kid in school…

ANNE
And so do I…

They kiss.

The door opens during the kiss. The STUDENT keeping guard pokes his head in.

STUDENT
(coughs)
Eh hem…

JOSEPH
(pulling away, wiping his mouth)
I told you not to come in here!

STUDENT
I'm sorry, Joseph. But someone is looking for you.

JOSEPH
Well who is it?

STUDENT
It's Mr. Teazle. And he says he knows you're in here.

ANNE
Peter?? No, no, no, he can't find me in here.

JOSEPH
(to the STUDENT)
Stall him as long as you can!

(to ANNE)
Get in here, don't make a sound!

JOSEPH guides ANNE into one of the football lockers, and closes it.

(to the STUDENT)
Here, hand me that broom!

The STUDENT tosses a broom to JOSEPH, who pretends to sweep the locker room floor.

INT. GARAGE SALE – SAME

PETER turns on the hidden webcam, and looks into it.

PETER
(to the camera)
Here we go.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER and ROWLEY sit together watching the laptop. The video feed turns on, and they see PETER saying "here we go" into the camera.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

ENTER PETER TEAZLE.

PETER
(To Joseph)
There he is! Joseph, I knew I could find you in here. Cleaning, of course, always keeping the old locker room clean.

JOSEPH
Oh, hey, Mr. Teazle. Yeah, you know, a lot of good memories in this room. Just straightening up in case any garage sale patrons wonder in here.

PETER
Looks good. Even got the helmets straightened up above the lockers? Which one's yours?

JOSEPH reluctantly points to his locker, which conceals ANNE.

JOSEPH
Uh, that one. I keep it closed so no one, you know, snoops around.

PETER
Of course, of course, gotta keep your privacy in here, right?

JOSEPH
Right.

JOSEPH gives the student keeping guard the eye signal to leave.

EXIT STUDENT.

PETER adjusts his hidden camera, making sure OLIVER and ROWLEY can see everything.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER
(Talking into the computer)
Come on Peter, get down to business!

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

PETER
Well, Joseph, now that we're alone, I have a little private business…

JOSEPH
(anxiously)
Should we talk about it outside?

JOSEPH looks towards the exit, desperately wanting to leave the locker room.

PETER
No, no, I can't let anyone hear this. This might seem, a little, strange—but what I want to talk to you about is—my wife, Anne.

ANNE TEAZLE'S eyes widen inside the locker as she hears PETER mention her name.

Lately, she's been, well… her behavior hasn't made me very happy.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE — CONTINUOUS

OLIVER
What the hell is this? I don't want to hear about Peter's marriage problems!

INT. LOCKER ROOM — CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH
I'm sorry to hear that, Mr. Teazle.

PETER
Call me Peter, son. Anyway, I have it on pretty good authority that she's been sneaking around on me.

JOSEPH
Really? No way!

PETER
I know. And between you and me, I think I know who the other person is.

JOSEPH
Wow, Peter. Who do you think it could be?

PETER
I know you're a good kid, and you understand how this makes me feel.

JOSEPH
Of course, of course! I feel your pain!

PETER
I know you do. It's nice to have someone I can trust. Do you not know who I am thinking of, though?

JOSEPH
I mean, I really have no idea. Is it someone I know?

PETER
I'd say you know him pretty well.

JOSEPH
It couldn't be a friend of mine?

PETER
You could say that.

JOSEPH
I don't even know where to begin guessing—

PETER
Try your twin brother, Charles.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE — CONTINUOUS

OLIVER AND ROWLEY
(Simultaneously)
Charles?

INT. LOCKER ROOM — CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH
Charles?

PETER
Charles.

JOSEPH
My brother! There's no way!

PETER
I know you don't want to think these things of your own brother, but it's true.

JOSEPH
Look Mr. Teaz—Peter—if you read this on "CampusTalkHigh" or something, that's just internet gossip, you really shouldn't buy into it.

PETER
It's not just that. Charles is always doing our yardwork, cleaning our pool, all while I'm away from home.

JOSEPH
But surely Mrs. Teazle has too much principle? I couldn't see her doing that to you.

PETER
You expect that principle to hold up when a strong, handsome young man starts flirting with her?

JOSEPH
Well, maybe—

PETER
I mean, with our age difference, I'm sure she has no sexual attraction towards me. Charles is closer to her age than I am! If I did catch her, and everyone found out, I would be laughed at anyway—the old bachelor who married a girl half his age, what did he expect?

JOSEPH
True. You can't let anyone know about this.

PETER
After all I did for your family. The nephew of my own best friend Oliver… The fact that he would do that just burns me up.

JOSEPH
I wouldn't have guessed it, but you know Charles. No regard for anyone but himself.

PETER
I mean, I was like a father to him! To you both, you've always been welcome in my house!

JOSEPH
I know, I know. I will say, he is my brother. I can't fully believe this until I see proof. If you can prove it, he is no longer my brother. Anyone who would take the wife of a man as gracious as you is a real lowlife.

PETER
I get it, Joseph. That's the difference between you two. You're loyal to family.

JOSEPH
And it's hard to suspect Mrs. Teazle of cheating on you with one of us.

ANNE fidgets nervously inside the locker while listening to the conversation.

When PETER begins his next lines, the camera changes to a POV shot from ANNE'S eyes, looking at PETER and JOSEPH through small slits in the locker door.

PETER
I really do love Anne, and I want us to stop all this fighting. We've been going at it lately, and not even over this. Mostly about money, actually. She even hinted that she would prefer me dead the other night. Not that she meant it, but still.

ANNE sheds a tear inside the locker, and looks on through the slits in the locker as her husband talks to JOSEPH.

Its probably time we ended this little experiment and got a divorce anyway. I'm gonna give her half of everything and let her be young again.

JOSEPH
That's really generous of you, Peter.

PETER
Yeah, she'll have no reason to complain. But I don't want to let her know that just yet.

JOSEPH
(to himself)
Neither did I.

PETER
But enough about me. Tell me about your situation with my lovely daughter, Maria?

JOSEPH looks at his locker, which contains ANNE.

JOSEPH
(softly to PETER)
Huh? What? No, no, another time, please.

PETER
Come on, man, you can tell me. What's the deal? It doesn't seem like you're making much progress with her?

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER and ROWLEY are intrigued.

OLIVER
Well, this is an interesting development.

ROWLEY
Peter has always wanted Joseph and Maria to go out together. Maria has been more involved with Charles, though.

OLIVER
Interesting…

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH is becoming visibly uncomfortable. He keeps trying to nudge PETER towards the door so ANNE can't hear him.

JOSEPH
(softly)
Let's not talk about it. What's a little high school drama when you've got marriage problems?

(to himself)
Dammit!

PETER
And I know you don't want Anne to find out that you like Maria, but I'm sure she would be thrilled to hear it.

JOSEPH
(to himself)
I doubt that…

(to PETER)
Look, Mr. Teazle—I'm sorry—Peter. I'm really too worried about this whole Charles thing to talk about my own problems right now.

ENTER STUDENT.

STUDENT
Pst! Joseph! Your brother is out there looking for you.

CUTAWAY SHOT: CHARLES wanders the garage sale floor, asking people if they have seen JOSEPH.

JOSEPH
(to himself)
You have got to be kidding me!

(to the STUDENT)
Tell him I went home to get… or… to shower or something!

PETER
(to the STUDENT)
Wait! Don't do that.

(to JOSEPH)
I've got an idea. Let him in.

JOSEPH and PETER look at each other for a moment.

PETER whispers in JOSEPH'S ear.

JOSEPH
(to the STUDENT)
Go get him.

EXIT STUDENT.

PETER
Ok, buddy, hear me out. Before Charles gets here, I hide somewhere. You ask him about, you know, what we've been talking about. I hear the truth.

JOSEPH
This is kind of a low blow to my brother, don't you think?

PETER
You said it yourself he is innocent, didn't you? This is the perfect opportunity to prove it. I can't pass this up. I'll jump in your locker!

PETER walks over to JOSEPH'S locker.

JOSEPH
No!

ANNE nervously looks on from inside the locker.

ANNE grabs the handle inside the locker, holding it shut as PETER tries to open it.

PETER
(tugging on the locker door)
What's going on with… Hey! There's somebody in here!

JOSEPH
(nervously)
Mr. Teazle! Don't!—Ok, you caught me. I didn't want to say, but before you came in here earlier, I… was with a girl. It's a little embarrassing, so I told her to hide in there when you came in.

PETER
Ah ha! You scoundrel, you! I knew that was lipstick on your cheek!

PETER gives JOSEPH a friendly punch on the arm as JOSEPH self-consciously wipes off his cheeks.

But she's heard everything we just talked about!

JOSEPH
Her lips are sealed, trust me. She's just a freshman, and doesn't hang around our friends, anyway. This is sort of a secret thing.

PETER
I see, I see. Well, we don't have time to get into that right now. I'll get in the equipment closet.

JOSEPH
Yeah, good. Right over there.

PETER
You sneaky bastard, you!

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINIUOUS

OLIVER
No don't hide! Now we can't–

The computer screen goes black as PETER closes the closet door.

OLIVER
See.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

PETER has just closed the door to the equipment closet.

ANNE
(Peeping her head out)
Can I sneak out before Charles gets here?

JOSEPH
Just hold tight.

Just as ANNE closes the locker, PETER pokes his head out of the closet.

PETER
Pst! Hey! Remember to really grill him!

JOSEPH
(as he closes the door on PETER)
I've got it, be quiet!

As JOSEPH closes the closet door on PETER, ANNE pokes her head out of the locker again.

ANNE
(whispering to JOSEPH, referring to PETER)
Can't you lock him in there?

JOSEPH
No! Be quiet!

PETER again sticks his head out of the closet.

PETER
You sure that girl won't talk?

JOSEPH
(closing the door again)
YES. SHUT UP!

Simultaneous with the closing of the closet door, the door to the locker room opens, and CHARLES SURFACE enters.

CHARLES
Dude, what are you doing? I couldn't find you anywhere. You sketch off with a girl or something?

JOSEPH
(grabbing the broom)
Nah man, just… working, you know?

CHARLES
That kid outside. He said you were in here cleaning with Mr. Teazle. Where'd he go?

JOSEPH
I think he went outside to help unload some furniture?

CHARLES
Probably heard me coming and left. The old geezer has never been too fond of me.

JOSEPH
Well, actually Charles, he thinks he has a reason for that.

CHARLES
I bet he found the water in his vodka bottles, didn't he?

FLASHBACK:

--A PARTY AT THE TEAZLE'S HOUSE. CHARLES RAIDS PETER'S LIQUOR CABINET, REPLACING THE EMPTY BOTTLES WITH WATER. VOICEOVER ACCOMPANIES THE SHOT.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

But I didn't think he ever actually pinned that one on me? I mean, it could easily have been Maria. Or anyone at the party, for that matter.

CUTAWAY SHOT: PETER in the closet.

PETER
(to himself)
That bastard!

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH
(Still talking to Charles)
No, dumbass, not that.

CHARLES
Then what? He doesn't like me because I don't make straight A's or play football? Or he doesn't want me talking to Maria?

JOSEPH
No. When I ask you this, you have to promise to be 100% honest with me.

CHARLES
Geez, ok, what?

JOSEPH
Have you ever hooked up with Mrs. Teazle?

CHARLES
What? Me? Haha, no! Is that seriously what he thinks? The old guy gets himself a hot young wife and gets jealous of his daughter's friends?

JOSEPH
Look, it's not that funny, he was pretty upset about–

CHARLES
So the old guy is reading CampusTalkHigh too, huh? Didn't see him being into that kind of thing.

JOSEPH
He has his reasons to suspect–

CHARLES
Not that I don't think Mrs. Teazle is hot or anything. I mean, don't you?

JOSEPH
Uh, well–

CHARLES
She's a definite MILF. Even though, I guess, technically she hasn't had a kid of her own… But still, I mean, she's super hot.

ANNE still sits in the locker, smiling to herself, obviously enjoying the flattery.

JOSEPH
Yeah, I get it. So all the times you've been over there—the yard work, the pool cleanings, all that—you've never tried anything with her?

CHARLES
Nope. Like I said, I've had my share of fantasies. She may have been a little flirty with me once or twice, but nothing serious.

JOSEPH
(speaking loudly and enunciating each syllable for PETER to hear)
All right, then. I'm sure Mr. Teazle will be very pleased to hear this.

CHARLES
Besides, you know I like Maria. And I think she even believed it for a second after that shit was written on the internet. Don't tell me you buy into that stuff?

JOSEPH
Of course not! I'm sure Peter read it from Maria's account and got paranoid.

CHARLES
Yeah, that's probably what happened.
(sitting down)

Haha, that's funny you asked me about Mrs. Teazle.

JOSEPH
Why is that?

CHARLES
Come on, man. I've seen you two stare at each other. If she has a favorite twin, it's you, my brother.

JOSEPH
What? No—that's not funny.

CHARLES
Don't play dumb, dude, it's just us in here.

JOSEPH
(looking back and forth at the locker and closet)
I mean, it's just, not true—

CHARLES
No, I'm serious. Don't think I forgot that time at the Christmas Party—

JOSEPH
Come on—

CHARLES
When I found you two "talking" upstairs—

JOSEPH
Dude—

CHARLES
And a few weeks ago when she was—

JOSEPH
Charles stop! I need to tell you something.

CHARLES
I know you do, just tell me—

JOSEPH
Mr. Teazle is listening. He had me ask you about his wife. I knew you were innocent, or I wouldn't have done it.

CHARLES
What the Hell, man? He's in here? Where?

JOSEPH
(points to the closet)
In there.

CHARLES
Seriously? The old dude was too scared to ask me himself?

(yelling at the closet)
Mr. Teazle! Come out! I know you're in there!

CHARLES opens the door to the closet to find PETER standing there, embarrassed.

(to PETER)
Really, Mr. Teazle?

PETER
Ok, Charles, I'm sorry. I wrongfully accused you. Don't be mad at your brother, I made him do it.

CHARLES
(sarcastically)
Oh, for real?

PETER
But hey! I heard all I need to hear, that you have never made an advance on my wife, and I promise I will never think twice about your character again.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

OLIVER and ROWLEY'S video feed has come back on as PETER exits the closet.

ROWLEY
What did we miss?

OLIVER
Looks like nothing. I guess Peter was just paranoid, after all.

ROWLEY
I was just starting to get into it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

CHARLES
So, that's all you heard?

CHARLES nudges JOSEPH with his elbow.

Good thing, huh?

JOSEPH
All right, all right, glad that's cleared up. There's probably some more work to do out there–

CHARLES
I mean, how ridiculous would that be? Your wife and me? You may as well have accused Joseph instead of me!
(winks as JOSEPH)

PETER
I got sucked into the internet gossip like a teenage girl. Pretty stupid, huh?

ENTER STUDENT.

STUDENT
Joseph, they need you out here. It's your shift.

JOSEPH
Be there in a second.

(to PETER and CHARLES)
So we're all friends now, great. Let's get out of here. It's clean enough.

PETER
We'll meet you out there. Your brother and I have some catching up to do.

EXIT JOSEPH.

(to CHARLES)
You know kid, if you hung around your brother a little more, you might improve your reputation a little. He's a class act.

SOUND: TEXT MESSAGE BUZZ

PETER checks his phone.

The phone screen reads: "Text Message from Joseph Surface".

PETER clicks "Read".

The message reads: "Plz don't tell Charles about grl in locker, she doesn't want anyone 2 know."

PETER puts his phone back in his pocket.

CHARLES
Yeah, yeah. I'm just not the goody-goody type, Mr. Teazle. I mean, I'd rather have fun on a Friday night than do

homework and surf the internet message boards. Joseph can be a little boring, you know?

PETER
Come on, you don't give the kid enough credit. He's got a wild side.

PETER looks to the locker, contemplating telling CHARLES about JOSEPH'S secret lover.

CHARLES
If wild is drinking espresso past 5 p. m., then he's a regular rock star.

PETER
(laughing)
Careful what you say about him, it could come back to bite you.

CHARLES
(also laughing)
What, you gonna tell on me?

PETER
No, no, no. He told me not to—but I have to show you.

(whispering)
Want to see your brother's wild side?

CHARLES
I'd love to.

PETER
(whispering)
When I found him in here, he was with a girl!

CHARLES
You're kidding. Sneaking off during the garage sale? At the school? He would never.

PETER
Sh! Its true. And the best part is—

(points at the locker, whispers)
she's in the room right now.

CHARLES
Bullshit!

PETER
Sh! I'm serious! A freshman!

CHARLES
In Joseph's locker? Open it up lets see if she's hot!

PETER
We can't, he made me promise. And he'll be back any minute.

CHARLES
Come on, what's the worst that could happen? Just a little peep.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

ROWLEY
Yeah, just a little peep!

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

PETER
(blocking CHARLES from the locker)
No way, he'd never forgive me!

CHARLES
I'll tell him I did it.

PETER
(trying to stop CHARLES from opening the locker)
Stop, here's Joseph!

POV: JOSEPH'S view as he opens the door to enter the locker room. He sees CHARLES fling open the door to the locker containing ANNE.

SLAM ZOOM to ANNE TEAZLE, wide-eyed and silent.

CLOSE-UP OF CHARLES.

CHARLES
Holy shit.

CLOSE UP OF PETER.

PETER
Holy shit.

CLOSE UP OF JOSEPH.

JOSEPH
Holy shit.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

CLOSE UP OF ROWLEY AND OLIVER.

ROWLEY AND OLIVER
(simultaneously)
Holy shit.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Silence fills the room as the camera alternates between close-ups of everyone's stunned faces.

CHARLES, surprised but somewhat amused by the situation, breaks the silence.

CHARLES
Well, Mr. Teazle, she's hot, all right. One of the oldest freshman girls I ever saw. Must have been held back. I see you all have had a little game of hide-and-seek going, but I'm not quite sure who is "it"? Any idea, Mrs. Teazle? No? Joseph, can you explain this? Cat got your tongue, too? Mr. Teazle, I found you in the dark

(points to the closet)
but I guess you're out now! Also quiet. I sense that you all understand each other, then.

(backing out the door)
Brother, I hate to see that you've caused such an upstanding man as Mr. Teazle so much, should I say, uneasiness? Mr. Teazle, I guess some "class acts" do have a wild side, after all!

EXIT CHARLES.

The others stand in silence for a few seconds.

JOSEPH
Now Peter, before–

PETER
(sternly)
Mr. Teazle.

JOSEPH
Yes, of course, sorry. Mr. Teazle. I know it looks bad. But if you will let me explain—

PETER
By all means. Explain.

JOSEPH
What happened was, Mrs. Teazle here, knowing my affection towards your daughter Maria, and, also aware of your jealousy and temper, and, also knowing how close I am to your family, she, uh, came here to talk with me, you know, about Maria. But, knowing that you've been suspecting of her lately, as I mentioned, she hid in my locker when she heard you coming. And that, Mr. Teazle, is the whole truth.

PETER
I guess that makes sense… I did suspect her sneaking around. Though it was with your brother, not you. And I'm sure Anne will back you up on this?

ANNE
Not one word of it.

PETER
Excuse me?

ANNE
That is complete and utter bullshit.

PETER
So you two aren't even going to collaborate on your story?

JOSEPH
(to Anne)
Mrs. Teazle, what are you—

ANNE
Shut up you little bastard, if you won't tell him, I will.

JOSEPH
I don't think you—

PETER
Shut up Joseph!

ANNE
Peter, I did not meet Joseph in here for anything to do with Maria. In fact, I wasn't even aware of his affection for her. I came for him. At least to talk, maybe more.

JOSEPH
She's lying, Peter!

ANNE
No, I'm finally telling the truth. Peter, I don't expect you to forgive me. But what you said in here earlier, when you had no idea I was listening, touched my heart. You're a good, honest man, and you don't deserve what I have put you through.

(looking at JOSEPH)
As for this smooth-talking hypocrite-who seduced the wife of his fatherly neighbor, all the while manipulating him to get to his daughter—I hope everyone finds out what a filthy hypocrite he is. I know Maria will.

EXIT ANNE.

JOSEPH
Mr. Teazle, you know I—

PETER
Will not be welcome in my house. I'll leave you to your conscience.

EXIT PETER.

JOSEPH stands alone in the locker room.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

ROWLEY and OLIVER look at each other in shock.

OLIVER
Did that really just—

ROWLEY
Yeah.

OLIVER
Maybe this wasn't such a good idea after all.

INT. GARAGE SALE – MORNING

The garage sale is shown in time lapse as the inventory is slowly bought by customers and cleared out of the gym.

JOSEPH numbly works a cash register, not speaking to anyone.

SALLY SNEERWELL, KATIE CANDOUR, SNAKE, and others are seen working also. Shots of each of them indicate that they are whispering about the incident in the locker room, which has spread through the school.

EXT. CAR – EARLY MORNING

JOSEPH drives away from the garage sale.

EXT. SURFACE HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

A TIME LAPSE SEQUENCE shows the sun rising outside JOSEPH and CHARLES'S house.

INT. KATIE CANDOUR'S BEDROOM – NEXT DAY

SUPERSCRIPT:

"3:00 P.M.
THE NEXT DAY"

CANDOUR eagerly enters an online chat room. All dialogue is shown as typing, with objective point-of-view shots moving to each character's bedroom as they type. Voice-overs accompany typing.

CANDOUR
OMG tell me u have heard!

BACKBITE
Everyone at the garage sale was talking about it!

CANDOUR
About Mr. Teazle walking in on them in the locker room?

BACKBITE
How crazy is that?

CANDOUR
I can't believe it. I feel so sorry for them, of course…

BACKBITE
I don't feel sorry for Mr. Teazle. The guy's been obsessed with Joseph his whole life.

CANDOUR
Joseph? Who told you that? It was Charles that got caught with Mrs. Teazle!

BACKBITE
Get your facts straight, lady, it was Joseph.

CANDOUR
LOL you get yours straight. Charles got busted, Joseph framed the whole thing.

BACKBITE
I'm telling u, I heard it right.

CANDOUR
And I'm telling u that u heard it wrong.

ENTER SNEERWELL INTO THE CHATROOM.

SNEERWELL
Well, well, well, Katie. What a sad little story about Mrs. Teazle! Or should we call her Anne now?

CANDOUR
She was such a cool mom, too.

SNEERWELL
Can't trust appearances! I always thought she was a little too "cool" with us anyway. A little skanky, to be honest.

CANDOUR
She's so young, she just fit in well with our friends. A little too well, I guess. So do u know all the deets?

SNEERWELL
Everyl is saying that Joseph was

BACKBITE
Ha! I knew it was Joseph!

CANDOUR
U too Sally? No! It was Charles and Anne caught in the locker room!

SNEERWELL
Charles? U misheard someone, sweetheart.

CANDOUR
OMG I did not! Anne Teazle and Charles Surface were totally caught hooking up. Joseph was just the informer.

BACKBITE
Well whichever Surface brother it was, it doesn't really matter. Mr. Teazle won't heal any faster regardless.

CANDOUR
I'm sure he is devastated emotionally.

BACKBITE
No, you idiot, I'm talking about his actual wound. They fought.

CANDOUR
OMG no way! I didn't hear of a fight!

SNEERWELL
Neither did I!

BACKBITE
What? That's the best part of the story!

SNEERWELL
Then tell us what happened!

BACKBITE
So Mr. T, he's real upset, right

CANDOUR
Yeah, we get that

BACKBITE
I mean, like, totally pissed off

SNEERWELL
Get to the juicy stuff will you??

BACKBITE
So "listen here, you little prick," says Mr. Teazle

CANDOUR
Yes, to Charles…

BACKBITE
No, no, to Joseph. "We're settling this shit right here, right now," he says

CANDOUR
No way it was Joseph, he wouldn't have fought Mr. Teazle

BACKBITE
I'm telling you, it was Joseph. So right after this, Mrs. Teazle freaks out and runs out of the locker room. Charles runs out to make sure no one at the Garage Sale sees her. Then, they start wrestling on the locker room floor.

ENTER CRABTREE INTO THE CHATROOM.

CRABTREE
Fist-fighting, Benjamin, not wrestling. I know for a fact they were throwing punches.

CANDOUR
So this is all true?

CRABTREE
All of it. And Mr. Teazle got messed up big-time.

BACKBITE
He broke his left arm when he was thrown on the ground!

CRABTREE
Arm? He shattered his cheekbone and broke three ribs!

CANDOUR
Poor man!

CRABTREE
I know. Charles didn't want all this to happen, but he had to do it.

CANDOUR
I knew it was Charles.

BACKBITE
Crabtree doesn't know what he's talking about.

CRABTREE
Bullshit I don't! I know for a fact that Mr. Teazle threw a chair, and that two of the urinals in the locker room were ripped right off the wall!

SNEERWELL
How am I supposed to believe either one of you idiots? Let's just go to Joseph and Charles's house and see for ourselves.

CANDOUR
Fair enough. Pick me up?

CRABTREE
Me too.

BACKBITE
Same.

SNEERWELL.
Ugh. Fine. Be outside your houses or I'm not stopping.

All sign out of the chat room.

MONTAGE – SALLY PICKS UP OTHERS FROM THEIR HOUSES

-- SALLY PICKS UP KATIE CANDOUR

-- SALLY PICKS UP CRABTREE

-- SALLY PICKS UP BACKBITE, WHO ISN'T OUTSIDE AND ENDS UP RUNNING DOWN THE STREET AFTER THE CAR BEFORE SALLY STOPS

END MONTAGE

EXT. SURFACE HOUSE – DAY

The four gossipers burst into the Surface house looking for answers.

SNEERWELL
Hello? Anyone home?

CANDOUR
Joseph?

BACKBITE
Charles?

CRABTREE
We're just coming over to check on you!

After searching every room in the house, they realize no one is home.

SNEERWELL
(has an idea)
Of course!

CANDOUR
What?

SNEERWELL
Next door! They must be next door at the Teazle's!

BACKBITE
Brilliant!

CRABTREE
Let's go!

The four gossipers eagerly jog next door.

SALLY rings the doorbell.

OLIVER
(answering the door)
Can I help you?

The four kids look at each other, confused. They have never met OLIVER before.

SNEERWELL
Oh! You must be Mr. Teazle's doctor!

CRABTREE
Of course he is! So what's the news?

CANDOUR
Is he okay?

CRABTREE
Can he breathe with those broken ribs?

The four kids begin speaking too quickly for OLIVER to understand, asking multiple questions at a time.

OLIVER
(yelling)
Excuse me!

The kids are silenced and stare at OLIVER.

Thank you. Now, I'm not a doctor, just a friend of Peter's. I assume you know Maria?

CRABTREE
Oh, just a friend of Mr. Teazle's. Well, I guess you've heard of his accident, then?

OLIVER
I'm afraid I haven't.

BACKBITE
You don't know how badly he is wounded?

OLIVER
Are you sure about this?

CRABTREE
Completely. He got in a fight—

BACKBITE
With Joseph Surface—

CRABTREE
It was actually Charles

OLIVER
Easy, kids, pump the brakes a minute. I think you may have heard some things that were a little exaggerated.

OLIVER looks into the driveway at a car pulling up, and looks back at the kids.

OLIVER
And here's the man himself. Doesn't look all that injured to me.

ENTER PETER TEAZLE.

PETER gets out of the car and looks at the group on his front step with a confused glance.

Peter, you're just in time to quell the suspicions of these young ones.

PETER doesn't respond, assuming that OLIVER is referring to the kids' knowledge of JOSEPH and ANNE TEAZLE.

BACKBITE
My God, Mr. Teazle, you're walking!

OLIVER
(sarcastically)
How could you drive with the broken arm and ribs?

PETER looks around at the group.

PETER
What the Hell are you talking about? I'm fine!

CANDOUR
Oh, no! So Charles is the injured one!

SNEERWELL
No one was at his house! Is he in the hospital?

CRABTREE
You couldn't have shown some mercy, Mr. Teazle? He's only in high school!

PETER
(yelling)
No one is in the hospital! There was no fight!

The gossipers let out a sigh of relief.

OLIVER puts his arm around PETER.

OLIVER
Your daughter's friends here were about to get dressed for your funeral, buddy. They had me pinned for your doctor making a house call!

PETER
Wait, why? Where did you guys hear I was hurt?

BACKBITE
Let's just say we're relieved that the fight was just a big rumor. Of course, we would have understood your anger, considering what happened...

PETER
I should have known it would be all over town by now...

CRABTREE
With such an age difference, it's hard to make a marriage really work.

PETER
Excuse me, son?

BACKBITE
Technically, Anne is closer to our age than to yours…

PETER
You need to learn to watch your mouth—

CANDOUR
(to her friends)
Guys, Mr. Teazle doesn't deserve any of this! He was such a good husband to her. We should feel sorry for him!

PETER
Trust me, I don't want the pity of a bunch of high school brats!

PETER slams the car door and walks towards his house in anger and shame.

BACKBITE
I promise we won't tell a soul anything but the truth!

PETER
I promise you people can leave my house! Go home!

CANDOUR
Fine, we'll leave!

(aside to SNEERWELL)
You'd think he would be a little nicer about it!

PETER
Now!

PETER and OLIVER go inside PETER'S house, PETER slams the door and the four gossipers are left outside.

They stand there for a second and look around.

SNEERWELL
R-U-D-E rude! Back next door we go! One of the brothers has to be getting home soon, anyway.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

PETER stands with his back against the door.

PETER
(in disbelief)
Those kids!

OLIVER
I know.

PETER
I mean… Wow. My daughter goes to school with kids like that?

OLIVER
Rowley and I thought you would care for a drink. We took the liberty of opening the Scotch.

OLIVER and PETER walk into the study, where ROWLEY is hitting pool balls aimlessly.

ROWLEY
Heard some yelling in there. What's the deal?

PETER
Seriously, Rowley? My life is being ruined by a bunch of high school kids!

PETER gulps his scotch.

OLIVER
(nervously)
Well, hey, at least I've seen both my nephews like we planned?

PETER
Oh, yeah, they're a precious couple!

ROWLEY
So, I guess you've changed your opinion of Joseph?

PETER
I've changed my opinion of all the terrible gremlins my daughter goes to school with.

PETER finishes his glass of scotch with a second gulp, and pulls the hidden camera off his shirt.

PETER
So, you saw everything?

PETER points to the computer monitor.

OLIVER
Well, I mean, there were some blackouts here and there, and the audio—

ROWLEY
The audio was fuzzy… it was pretty fuzzy.

OLIVER
And with you in the closet and all we couldn't—

ROWLEY
We obviously couldn't see what happened when—

PETER
Cut the shit, guys, you saw everything.

OLIVER and ROWLEY look at each other.

They look back at Peter.

OLIVER AND ROWLEY
(simultaneously)
We saw everything.

OLIVER
You know, if you step back from it all, in a few years, this would be pretty funny.

PETER
How is my wife having an affair with my neighbor's son remotely humorous?

OLIVER
Well, with you in the closet, and Anne in the locker, and how the kid was trying to hide you from each other…

ROWLEY
It was just kind of ironic, is all…

OLIVER
Because you were so high on Joseph this whole time.

PETER
Joseph Surface. That hypocritical bastard.

ROWLEY
And then Charles, of all people—

OLIVER
After you thought he was the one with Anne—

PETER
(loudly)
I get it, guys! Like it was straight out of the movies! I'm gonna have to move out of this town.

OLIVER
I'm sorry, we're sorry. It's not fair to laugh at this, laugh at your marriage. I would never say I told you so, buddy…

PETER
Oh, by all means, Mr. Anti-Marriage, rub it in! You were right. Getting re-married at my age is kind of funny, isn't it? Its funny kind of like a clown is funny. And I'm the clown!

PETER pours another glass of scotch.

It's so funny, I might even check out "CampusTalkHigh" tonight! I can't wait to see the rumors about me and my family! Maria will be thrilled! And Anne, oh, she will love this. She's always in the know about the latest gossip on "CampusTalkHigh"!

PETER takes another gulp and reaches for the computer.

Here! Why don't we log on right now! Anyone can read that site for free, and Anne has it bookmarked on her browser!

OLIVER grabs the computer and closes it.

OLIVER
Look, Pete, we shouldn't have joked about this. I'm sorry. Anne's been crying in your room for the last hour. I'm sure you'd like to talk to her?

ROWLEY
She came home right after the Garage Sale, and asked me to de-fuse the situation a little before you saw each other

again. She wants to really apologize, and I'm sure you want to hear it?

OLIVER
I've got to go next door and talk to my nephews. Why don't you two stay here, talk to Anne, then walk over and we'll figure this thing out.

OLIVER walks out the front door.

ROWLEY looks at PETER.

ROWLEY
You want to go talk to her?

PETER
Why not.

PETER and ROWLEY walk down the hallway, where the door to the master bedroom is left open.

ANNE is heard sobbing quietly in the bedroom.

PETER
(pointing at the bedroom)
Look, she isn't coming out.

ROWLEY
But she didn't lock the door, see? She didn't even close it all the way.

ROWLEY and PETER walk closer to the door and peek in.

(whispering)
Look, man, she's in tears.

PETER
Dammit, I've always had a weak spot for a crying woman. But don't you think it would be good for her? You know, to cry and think about it?

ROWLEY
Don't be a dick. You know she has been crying all morning, probably wondering if you were coming home.

PETER
Sh! She's looking up!

ANNE lifts her head off the pillow, looks at the doorway, and puts it back down.

She looks so cute when she cries! Ok, I'm going in.

ROWLEY
Atta boy.

PETER starts to walk in, but hesitates and comes back out.

PETER
On the other hand, if I go in there, and we make up, people will laugh at me ten times more.

ROWLEY
Who are you worried about laughing at you? Kids! Listen to yourself, man!

PETER
I just don't want to be a cuckold, you know.

ROWLEY
No, I don't know! What the Hell is a cuckold?

PETER
You know, it's the guy, like in old stories and stuff, whose wife cheats on him, and he grows horns or something?

ROWLEY
You're growing horns now? What?

ROWLEY takes a deep breath and puts his hands on PETER'S shoulders so that they are facing each other.

Forget whatever it is you're talking about. If you care about what these kids think, you'll only fuel them more. Go in there, make up with your wife, and show them that their bullshit doesn't affect you!

PETER
You're right. You're right. All right. I'm going in. Nice pep talk by the way.

PETER WALKS IN THE BEDROOM AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

INT. SURFACE HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

JOSEPH SURFACE has returned home to find SALLY SNEERWELL waiting on him.

SALLY and JOSEPH are talking in the Surface's living room. CANDOUR, CRABTREE, and BACKBITE have gone home, and CHARLES has not yet been home since the garage sale.

SNEERWELL
(yelling)
We're screwed! Now that Mr. Teazle hates you, he'll probably let Maria get with Charles just so you can't have her! It was so stupid of me to team up with you!

JOSEPH
We're screwed? I don't see the "we" in this! My name, my reputation is ruined! What happened to you? My adorable brother MIGHT go after Maria instead of you?

SNEERWELL
He will and you know it! This is all your fault, I had him in the palm of my hand and you ruined our plan!

JOSEPH
(sarcastically)
Poor Sally Sneerwell, the most popular girl in school, who can't get her man for once in her life…

SALLY hits JOSEPH on the arm.

SNEERWELL
Shut up!

JOSEPH
Look, I'm the one who got screwed here, and I'm calmer than you are.

SNEERWELL
That's because you don't give a shit about anyone! You just wanted to be the first guy to hook up with Maria! You don't actually care about her like I do your brother!

JOSEPH
And how is this my fault again?

SNEERWELL
If you had any actual feelings for Maria, you wouldn't have seduced her step mom! It was set up perfectly! Her dad loved you, and hated Charles. All you had to do was not

screw up! But instead you couldn't keep your hands off her step mom!

JOSEPH
When you put it that way – ok, this is kind of my fault. But I don't think our plan is totally at a loss yet.

SNEERWELL
Oh, wise one, please tell me how.

JOSEPH
You know how you always get that kid, Snake, to start rumors and stuff on "CampusTalkHigh"?

SNEERWELL
Yes.

JOSEPH
Well what if he started a thread about you and Charles? Maybe found some pictures of you two at a party, I'm sure there are some on the internet.

SNEERWELL
I see where you're going with this… I'm sure he can scrounge some up.

JOSEPH
All right. So we get Snake to put that–

The front door is heard opening and closing.

SNEERWELL
Who's that?

JOSEPH
Probably Charles.

SNEERWELL
He can't find me here with you! He'll think we're together!

JOSEPH
Shit, okay, go in the dining room. I'll get you when he goes upstairs.

EXIT SALLY SNEERWELL.

ENTER CHARLES SURFACE.

CHARLES
What's up, bro?
(teasing)

What a night, what a night? Who would have thought the garage sale would be so eventful?

JOSEPH
I don't want to hear about it anymore, please. Where have you been all morning?

CHARLES
I've been around.

JOSEPH
Whatever. Did Uncle Oliver come over last night when you were home? Mom said he was going to check on the house.

CHARLES
Not while I was here, but I went to the garage sale around midnight. I think he's coming tomorrow. Tomorrow's Sunday, right?
JOSEPH
Yeah.

CHARLES
Yeah, he's definitely getting in town tomorrow. No worries, I'll clean up.

JOSEPH
Good. To be honest, I couldn't even tell you what the dude looks like.

CHARLES
Well it's not like he comes home for Christmas!

JOSEPH
At least he sends his money!

JOSEPH and CHARLES give a high five and laugh.

The doorbell rings.

CHARLES
You expecting someone?

JOSEPH
Probably more people coming to taunt me about last night.

JOSEPH and CHARLES walk to the front door. JOSEPH looks out of the peephole.

POINT OF VIEW SHOT through the peephole of OLIVER standing at the door. The boys do not recognize him as their uncle.

JOSEPH
It's some old guy.

CHARLES looks out of the peephole.

CHARLES
Could be Mr. Teazle's buddy. You know, coming to chew you out or something.

JOSEPH
Probably is. I'll tell him to leave.

They open the door.

JOSEPH
(to Oliver)
I take it you're a friend of Peter Teazle's?

OLIVER
As a matter of fact, I am.

JOSEPH
With all due respect, sir, I have learned my lesson and will apologize to Mr. Teazle himself.

OLIVER
I understand that, but –

JOSEPH
No, let me finish. I really don't need all of his adult friends coming over to hand down life lessons to me. I get that what I did was wrong.

OLIVER
I know Joseph, but the reason I'm here–

JOSEPH
I don't need to hear it!

CHARLES, hearing the conversation, steps to his brother's side.

CHARLES
Like my brother said, sir, he is well aware of his mistakes. We're going to have to ask you to leave. We have things to do.

OLIVER
I'm afraid that you don't know who –

CHARLES
Mister! We don't need to know who you are. My brother and I are very tired, and Joseph will talk to Mr. Teazle himself. Have a good day.

JOSEPH and CHARLES close the door in OLIVER'S face and begin to walk away.

The doorbell is heard again seconds later.

CHARLES
Can you believe this guy?

JOSEPH
I'm gonna say we're calling the cops! That'll get him off the porch!

JOSEPH and CHARLES open the front door again. This time they find OLIVER again, along with ROWLEY, PETER, ANNE, and MARIA TEAZLE.

PETER
It seems a little rude that two dutiful nephews would lock their own uncle out on his first visit.

ANNE
It's a good thing we came to rescue poor Oliver!

ROWLEY
It seems the boys aren't too fond of strangers!

JOSEPH and CHARLES look at each other in silence, as they piece together the fact that this is their UNCLE OLIVER, whom they wanted to impress.

JOSEPH
Oh my goodness! We are so sorry, Uncle Oliver!

CHARLES
You must understand, we didn't recognize you!

JOSEPH
And all that stuff we were saying, it was just because—

CHARLES
Because our mother told us not to let in any strangers!

JOSEPH
Strangers, of course! You understand, right?

OLIVER, PETER, ANNE, MARIA, and ROWLEY enter the house slowly, as CHARLES and JOSEPH walk backwards into the house, facing the other five.

OLIVER
Of course, I understand! Peter, my friend, and Rowley, look at my oldest nephew!

JOSEPH backpedals slowly as the others walk towards him. He begins biting his fingernails.

(looking at Joseph)
You both know what I have done for him and his family. How I helped them after the death of his father, my own brother. And how gladly I would have financed his higher education, which I have already held in a trust fund for him.

JOSEPH looks OLIVER straight in the eyes as OLIVER talks to him.

Now try to imagine my disappointment to discover him a sneaky rat, lacking any convictions or morals!

CAMERA switches to PETERS face.

PETER
My friend Oliver, I would be surprised at this accusation, had I not myself found him to be a conniving, phony hypocrite!

CAMERA moves to ANNE'S face.

ANNE
And if he pleads not guilty to your charges, by all means, ask me!

JOSEPH and CHARLES have backed themselves into a wall.

JOSEPH
(looking at Peter)
Mr. Teazle, you told Oliver?

PETER
Didn't have to tell him. He watched the whole thing from his computer.

PETER holds up the hidden camera and shows JOSEPH and CHARLES.

OLIVER
As for your brother, here, our little friend Marcus did some undercover work on him—

CHARLES
(to himself)
He knows I gave away the stuff...

JOSEPH
Uncle Oliver, could I at least explain myself?

CHARLES
(to himself)
Yes! Talk brother, talk!

OLIVER
I suppose you think you can justify yourself?

JOSEPH
I'd like to try.

OLIVER
(to Charles)
And I guess you think you can explain yourself, too?

CHARLES
Uh, well, not really—

OLIVER
Can't think of a good excuse for selling priceless family heirlooms?

ROWLEY
(to Oliver)
You didn't seem too mad at him last night—

OLIVER
I can't be too angry, honestly…
(to Peter)
Didn't we watch Charles give away antique family furniture, his dad's library, and original paintings of his great aunts and uncles in exchange for a few service hours in his class garage sale?

CHARLES
Now, Uncle Oliver, I may have given away some things, some-nice things… but this garage sale at the school, it's meant to help the less fortunate! There were people out there today who needed them more than I did!

OLIVER
Charles, quit sucking up. I forgive you. After all, you did keep the most important painting of them all.

INT. ATTIC – CONTINUOUS

The painting of OLIVER sits in the attic, untouched.

INT. SURFACE HOUSE – CONTINUOUS

ANNE
Hey, Oliver? I think there's someone else here that Charles wants to make peace with–

OLIVER
Judging by her blush… Maria?

MARIA, standing behind the adults, steps forward, but is reluctant to speak.

PETER
Its all right Maria, I approve now.

MARIA
Well, I don't have much to say, except that I'm glad Charles is happy. As for me and him, I don't think we will work out.

CHARLES
What?

PETER
(to Maria)

Wait, what? When I thought he was a punk, you wouldn't have anyone else. Now that I give my blessing, you don't like him anymore?

MARIA
Why don't you ask Sally Sneerwell why I don't like him?

CHARLES
Sally Sneerwell?!

JOSEPH interjects.

JOSEPH
Charles, as much as I hate it, I have to speak up here.

JOSEPH motions for everyone to follow him down the hallway. He pushes open a swinging door to reveal SALLY SNEERWELL in the dining room.

PETER throws his hands up in the air.

PETER
Seriously? Another hidden girl? Do you keep one in every room!

JOSEPH
I could tell you why Maria thinks Charles likes Sally, but it would be easier just to show you.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The whole group stands behind JOSEPH, who is sitting at a computer.

The computer screen is shown loading.

"www.CampusTalkHigh.com" shows up, with a list of different threads, each containing a rumor about someone at their high school.

Everyone is looking at the screen.

ANNE
There's the one started about me and Charles!

PETER
So this is where people read about our fight!

MARIA
There! There are picture of Charles and Sally together!

CHARLES
Just pictures! At a party! That doesn't mean we're together!

As everyone is looking at the website, a thread appears at the top of the screen in all caps labeled:

"BIGGEST STORY OF THE YEAR!!"

Everyone looks at each other, and JOSEPH clicks the link.

The computer screen fills the shot.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN:

"Attention CampusTalkHigh readers: Over the past year, I have been paid by Sally Sneerwell to post rumors on this website. She has used this website as a tool to manipulate not only who she calls her close friends, but almost our entire student body. Nothing is or has ever been based on any factual information. I am sorry for any pain this has caused anyone, and I hope this message can help repair any damage done. And Sally, if you're reading this, good luck.
-Anonymous"

After reading the message, everyone slowly looks up at SALLY.

SNEERWELL
Yeah, right. Like any loser wouldn't write that to clear his name!

Silence and angry stares fill the room.

Oh yeah, like you all are perfect little angels!

SALLY begins to walk out of the house.

ANNE
Sally, before you go, I'd like to personally thank you for the trouble you have caused me, my husband and daughter, and everyone else in this room. And I'd also like to request that next time you and your group of "friends" is looking for a "cool mom" to hang out with and buy alcohol

for you, you might want to look elsewhere. I don't want to see you hanging around my daughter ever again.

SNEERWELL
Ugh, fine! You were never a "cool mom" by the way! I hope your old husband lives for 50 more years!

EXIT SALLY SNEERWELL.

PETER
What a troubled little girl.

ANNE
More like malicious bitch!

PETER
(aside to ANNE)
But not for that last comment, right?

ANNE
(aside to PETER)
No, honey.

OLIVER
Joseph, anything to say?

JOSEPH
I- I don't really know what to say. I'm sorry? I should go see if Sally's okay. She might do something rash.

EXIT JOSEPH.

OLIVER
They go well together. Oil and Vinegar.

ANNE
Now there's no reason for Maria to turn Charles away, right?

MARIA KISSES CHARLES ON THE CHEEK.

MARIA
I guess I'll give him a shot.

PETER
(to CHARLES)
Now, I've got a few ground rules to lay down here—

CHARLES
Yes, of course.

PETER
No more drinking!

CHARLES
Yes, sir.

PETER
She's home by 11 o'clock, no questions asked!

CHARLES
Yes, sir.

PETER continues to give CHARLES his rules for dating MARIA, as everyone else laughs.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS.

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