

#justsaying

by

Mikey Jackson

(Radio play, approx 38 minutes)

Characters:

Mallory Finch

Mum

Dad

Aimee Taylor

Aimee's Mum

Mr Johnson

DC Lennox

Mrs Ball

Station Announcer

www.mikeyjackson.com

SCENE 1: EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL YARD

FX: WE, THE LISTENERS ARRIVE AMID THE COLLECTIVE HULLABALOO OF PUPILS DURING THEIR BREAK.

MALLORY: (TO US) It was only a prank. A childish act of revenge. Just a stupid throwaway comment I posted on social media in the heat of the moment. I didn't mean to cause so much trouble. Or harm.

SCENE 2: INT. AIMEE'S PARENTS' HOUSE. LANDING/AIMEE'S BEDROOM

FX: THREE IMPATIENT KNOCKS ON THE PARENT SIDE OF THE BEDROOM DOOR.

AIMEE'S MUM: Aimee. Just because you're off school at the moment, it doesn't mean you can doss in bed all day.

FX: MORE KNOCKS, HARDER THIS TIME.

AIMEE'S MUM: Aimee! Ignoring my words won't make me go away.

MALLORY: (TO US) The situation. It just...

FX: AIMEE'S MUM HAS HAD ENOUGH. SHE WRENCHES OPEN THE DOOR AND MARCHES INTO AIMEE'S BEDROOM.

AIMEE'S MUM: Get out of that bed. Now! You can help me with the housework.

MALLORY: (TO US) ...spiralled out of control.

AIMEE'S MUM: Aimee. Aimee! I'm not going to tell you again. Don't you dare pretend you're asleep. I've had qu-

FX: A PREGNANT PAUSE HEAVIES THE AIR. NO SOUND, YET WE FEEL SOMETHING IS VERY WRONG.

MALLORY: (TO US) With one single online remark, I ruined the lives of so many...

FX: AIMEE'S MUM PICKS UP A BOTTLE OF PILLS AND GIVES IT A RATTLE. OH, SHIT, ALMOST EMPTY.

AIMEE'S MUM: Oh, my God! Aimee!! How many have you taken? Can you hear me?

MALLORY: (TO US) ...and caused the death of one.

AIMEE'S MUM: Aimee!! How many pills have you swallowed?

FX: THIS WOMAN IS IN HYSTERICS. WE HEAR RAPID TAPPING OF HANDS UPON CHEEKS AS SHE STRUGGLES TO FREE HER DAUGHTER FROM UNCONCIOUSNESS.

AIMEE'S MUM: Speak to me! Please!! Oh, God, no!

FX: AIMEE'S MUM BREAKS DOWN IN TEARS AS –

MALLORY: (TO US) If only they'd noticed the hashtag at the end of my comment. #justsaying. Simply my personal opinion, not a proven fact. At least then they wouldn't have taken it so seriously. And Aimee Taylor would still be alive.

FX: AIMEE'S MUM'S CRIES ECHO AS THEY MERGE WITH –

SCENE 3: EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM

FX: – THE PIERCING SQUEAL OF BRAKES, THE CLATTERING OF RAILS AS A TRAIN PULLS INTO THE STATION.

MALLORY: (TO US) My name is Mallory Finch. You've no doubt heard about me on the TV news. Or in the newspapers. Or on the internet. It's a massive story.

FX: THE AUTOMATIC TRAIN DOORS SWISH OPEN. A HECTIC MESS OF PASSENGERS SCUTTLE IN AND OUT.

MALLORY: (TO US) For those of you who haven't, my sole claim to fame doubles up as the worst mistake of my life. Like, ever.

FX: THE EXODUS OF ANTS GOES ON AROUND HER.

MALLORY: (TO US) Up until then, I was just another face in a very large crowd. A fuzzy grey background girl. Nobody takes any notice of fuzzy grey background girls. Why? We're not interesting enough. Fuzzy grey background girls are never big news.

FX: RAPID BEEP-BEEPS, THEN MULTIPLE SWISHES AS THE DOORS SLIDE SHUT.

MALLORY: (TO US) Well, that is, until the day that changed everything. Forever.

FX: AND AS THE TRAIN PULLS AWAY FROM US –

MALLORY: (TO US) I guess by now you're pretty confused by my ramblings. My fault for kicking off my story somewhere in the middle. Maybe I should take you right back to the beginning.

SCENE 4: EXT. PRIMARY SCHOOL YARD

FX: THE LIVELY CHAOS OF CHILDREN AT PLAY.

MALLORY: (TO US) I first met Aimee Taylor at primary school. We instantly hit it off as friends. She could be a right bossy cow at times. But in contrast, I was a submissive soul. Looking back, I guess that's why we clicked so perfectly.

SCENE 5: EXT. MEADOW

FX: BIRDS CHIRP FOR THE LOVE OF SUMMER. TWO YOUNG CHILDREN GIGGLE WITH GLEE AS THEY CHARGE THROUGH A GRASSY MEADOW.

MALLORY: (TO US) For the next few years, we were the best of friends. Virtually inseparable. But it's true what they say. All good things must come to an end. You see, a certain something got in the way.

FX: WE TRADE ALL SOUNDS FOR SUDDEN SILENCE.

MALLORY: (TO US) Puberty.

FX: CUE THE SINISTER DAH, DAH, DAHHHHHHHH!

MALLORY: (TO US) Aimee Taylor was the first girl in our class to develop boobs. And as such, she found herself promoted to the dizzy heights of inspirational adult figure amongst goggle-eyed, prepubescent wannabees. The entire population of the school laid down its arms to become her wall-to-wall entourage, eager to be led by the newly crowned queen.

FX: A ROYAL FANFARE, TA-TA-TA, TA-DA-DA DAAAA!

SCENE 6: EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL YARD

FX: THE BUSY BUZZ OF ADOLESCENT PUPILS.

MALLORY: (TO US) By the time we reached secondary school, Aimee was long gone from my life. She had zero time for insignificant friends of yesteryear. Oh, no, she was far too busy enjoying the role of most popular girl. Nobody dared to challenge her throne. Otherwise –

AIMEE: (QUEEN OF HEARTS STYLE) Off with her head!

FX: THE RAZOR-SHARP BLADE CAREERS DOWN THE GUILLOTINE SHAFT, SLICING A HEAD CLEAN FROM ITS RESIDENT NECK. NEXT, A FLUMPH OF WICKER AS THE HEAD LANDS IN THE BASKET BELOW.

MALLORY: (TO US) So where next in the tour of my joke of a life?

SCENE 7: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. LOUNGE

FX: THE CLOSING LINES OF "HAPPY BIRTHDAY," COURTESY OF MALLORY'S PARENTS.

MALLORY: (TO US) Ah, yes. My recent sixteenth birthday party.

MUM: Look lively, Mallory. Blow out the candles.

MALLORY: (TO US) That's Mum. Ruth to everybody else.

DAD: Don't forget to make a wish.

FX: ONE LONG PUFF EXTINGUISHES ALL FLAMES.

MALLORY: (TO US) And that's Dad. Steve to everybody else.

FX: CLAPS AND CHEERS ALL ROUND.

DAD: Aren't you going to tell us what you wished for?

MUM: Of course she can't, you idiot. Her wish will only come true if she keeps it a secret.

DAD: Yeah, only if you believe in all that superstitious claptrap.

MUM: Oh, Steve. Stop being so cynical. Now, who wants a slice of birthday cake?

DAD: Ooh, yes please, love.

FX: CAKE SLICING AND SHARING IN PROGRESS AS –

MALLORY: (TO US) So what exactly was my secret wish? Simple. More than anything in the world, I wanted to be popular.

MUM: Queue up in an orderly fashion please. There's enough cake to go round. After all, there are only three of us here.

MALLORY: (TO US) Yes. You heard correctly. Three people at a milestone birthday party; a total of which included me. #fail. Oh, and my parents were only in attendance by default. #epicfail. I did invite a few people from school. But one by one, the apologetic excuse texts accumulated on my phone. I'll read them out to you.

FX: BEEP-BEEP, INCOMING MESSAGE.

MALLORY: (QUOTING) Soz. Can't make it to your party. Folks found out I stole their vodka for Aimee's party. Grounded, big-time. Sad smilie.

FX: BEEP-BEEP NOTIFICATION 2.

MALLORY: (QUOTING) Sorry, Malls. Whole family struck down with the lurgy. Have a great b-day.

MALLORY: (TO US) Okay, so those two texts sounded like genuine reasons for no-shows. But the third message really took the wet yellow stuff.

FX: BEEP-BEEP NOTIFICATION 3.

MALLORY: (QUOTING) Sorry, Finchy. Something has come up.

MALLORY: (TO US) Talk about short and sweet. This message basically translated as:

MALLORY: (QUOTING) Not sorry at all, Finchy. I had no intention of celebrating your birthday with you. Oh, and I can't be bothered to think up a suitable excuse for my absence.

FX: MALLORY BLOWS A CHILDISH RASPBERRY.

MALLORY: (TO US) I rest my case. #fuzzygreybackgroundgirl.

FX: A 70s STYLE TRAGIC WAH, WAH, WAHHHHH!

MALLORY: (TO US) So that's why I wished for popularity. And no, before you think it, I am not a hungry fame-chaser like those talentless airheads who enter dumb TV reality shows in the hope of becoming famous for... well... just being famous. All I ever wanted was to be noticed. Hah, and I certainly got that wish all right. I got noticed with a capital N.

MUM: (WITH A GOB FULL OF CAKE) Mmm, this cake is gorgeous. Would you like a slice, birthday girl?

MALLORY: No, thanks, Mum.

MUM: Are you sure? It's very good.

MALLORY: Dead sure.

MUM: Mallory, you're not one of those anorexics you hear about on the telly, are you?

MALLORY: No, Mum. I just don't fancy any at the moment.

MUM: Typical. You could have told me you didn't care much for cake.

MALLORY: I never said I didn't like it.

MUM: And there was me, slaving over a hot oven. Baking all day and night. Squirting on icing 'til the early hours.

DAD: I thought you said you bought it from Sainsbury's.

FX: A GROAN FROM MUM, WELL AND TRULY RUMBLED.

MUM: Yes, thank you, Steve. That may well be true, but it's hardly the point, is it?

MALLORY: If it makes you happy, I'll grab a slice later.

MUM: Make sure you do, young lady.

MALLORY: I will, I promise.

MUM: I'll be watching you.

MALLORY: I know you will.

DAD: (EXCITED) Give her the present, give her the present.

MUM: All right, all right, keep your hair on. What's left of it.

FX: WE HEAR MUM PASSING ACROSS THE PRESENT.

DAD: Hurry up and open it.

MUM: Give her a chance, Mr Impatient.

FX: MALLORY TEARS OFF THE WRAPPING PAPER. THEN COMES AN UNSURE SILENCE. IT'S CLEARLY NOT SOMETHING SHE EXPECTED.

MUM: Well? What do you think?

DAD: Do you like it?

MALLORY: Um. Thanks, Mum. Thanks, Dad. (UNCERTAIN) What is it?

DAD: It's a digital voice recorder.

MALLORY: A voice recorder?

DAD: Don't you remember? About... ooh... must be six months ago now. The three of us were walking through the shopping centre. You spotted that man using one, and you said, "Ooh, that's cool. I'd like one of those."

MUM: So we thought we'd buy you one for your birthday. Isn't that great?

MALLORY: Um. Yes. It's... something I've always wanted.

DAD: That's a relief. For a moment there, I thought we'd gone and made an embarrassing blunder.

SCENE 8: EXT. RAILWAY STATION PLATFORM

FX: BING BONG, A STATION ANNOUNCEMENT.

ANNOUNCER: (D) The next train will be the blah, blah, blah to blah, blah, blah.

MALLORY: (TO US) The truth is, yes. I did once spot somebody using a voice recorder. And yes. I did say it was cool. But to claim that I said I wanted one of my own can only be described as a slight parental exaggeration.

FX: BING BONG.

ANNOUNCER: (D) We are currently experiencing delays with some services due to blah, blah, blah, leaf on the track, blah, blah, blah.

MALLORY: (TO US) What I don't get is how they remembered something I said six months ago. Parents aren't supposed to listen to their children. And of course, vice versa. It's the law.

SCENE 9: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. LOUNGE

FX: DAD RIFLES THROUGH HIS CD COLLECTION.

DAD: What this party needs is some music.

MUM: You make sure you don't bore us with all your cheesy drivel. It's Mallory's big day, not yours.

DAD: (WITH A SIGH) Yes, dear.

MUM: Oh, Mallory. Who'd have thought it, eh? Sixteen years of age. There are so many things you can legally do now. Like... um... smoke, for instance.

FX: THE CD RIFLING CONTINUES.

DAD: I think you'll find they upped the age of buying cigarettes a while back.

MUM: Oh. Did they?

DAD: Yep.

FX: DAD PULLS A CD FREE OF THE RACK.

DAD: Aha, just the CD I was looking for.

MALLORY: It doesn't bother me anyway. Smoking is a disgusting habit.

MUM: What else can Mallory legally do?

DAD: Buy a lottery ticket.

MUM: Ooh, no, the minimum age is eighteen now. Shame. You could have won a million pounds.

MALLORY: Yes, Mum. Pity the odds of that happening are a billion trillion zillion to one.

MUM: According to this search on my phone, you can get married, drive a moped and join a trade union.

MALLORY: (TO US) What Mum failed to include in her list was, at sixteen years of age, I could also legally consent to sex. But with no boyfriend on the scene and zero popularity, the odds of that happening were also a billion trillion zillion to one.

FX: THE HI-FI SUDDENLY (AND WITHOUT WARNING) SPEWS OUT THE CRINGE-FEST VIBES OF "THE BIRDIE SONG."

DAD: Wahey. Let's get this party started.

FX: THANKFULLY, THE CD JUMPS. DA, DA, DA, DA, DA!

DAD: No!

SCENE 10: INT. AIMEE'S PARENTS' HOUSE. LOUNGE

FX: TRENDY DANCE MUSIC, A PARTY IN FULL SWING.

MALLORY: (TO US) Aimee Taylor had much more fun on her sixteenth, two days before mine. Her parents let her have a house party. With alcohol and boys and everything.

FX: THE GAIETY ECHOES TO NOTHING AS –

SCENE 11: INT. AIMEE'S PARENTS' HOUSE. HALLWAY (EARLIER)

FX: AIMEE'S MUM AND DAD OPEN THE FRONT DOOR.

AIMEE'S MUM: Now, remember, Aimee. Two ground rules for tonight. One: Don't wreck the house. And two: Don't forget to feed the cat.

AIMEE: (EAGER TO GET RID OF THEM) Yeah, yeah, got that. Bye, Mum, bye, Dad. See you both when you get back.

FX: AIMEE CLOSSES THE FRONT DOOR, SHUTTING OUT HER PARENTS, THE WORLD, EVERYTHING.

AIMEE: Yes!

FX: WE CAN'T SEE THE AIR PUNCH, BUT IT'S OBVIOUS SHE'S JUST THROWN ONE.

SCENE 12: EXT. AIRPORT

FX: A PLANE TAKES OFF AND SOARS INTO THE SKY.

MALLORY: (TO US) Her parents weren't even around to supervise. They'd flown off for the weekend to sunnier climes.

SCENE 13: INT. AIMEE'S PARENTS' HOUSE. LOUNGE

FX: DANCE MUSIC, JOYOUS PEOPLE, PARTY TIME.

MALLORY: (TO US) They say Aimee lost her virginity that night. To a twenty-one-year-old apparently. I don't know how true it is, I wasn't there. Fuzzy grey background girls never get invited to parties.

SCENE 14: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. LOUNGE

FX: "THE BIRDIE SONG" RETURNS.

MALLORY: (TO US) Well, apart from this type of party. #facepalm.

FX: AND THE SONG FADES AWAY AS WE GO TO –

SCENE 15: EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL YARD

FX: THE USUAL LUNCHTIME PLAYGROUND NOISE.

MALLORY: (TO US) Now, this will sound really lame to you, but I had a massive crush on Nathan Edwards, this really good looking boy in my year. When I say a crush, I mean wow, it was true love I was feeling. I remember our very first meeting. He opened a door for me. Unfortunately, it was the one and only time Nathan actually did anything for me. And that was probably just out of politeness. Nevertheless, as my feelings for him grew, I hoped and prayed there would be further opportunities. My head kept saying, “No chance. Don’t make a fool of yourself. Move on.” But it was far too late. My heart had developed chronic selective deafness.

FX: AGAIN, THAT 70s WAH, WAH, WAHHHHHH OF FAILURE.

MALLORY: (TO US) That’s when I made up my mind. No longer did I wish to be a fuzzy grey background girl. It was time for me to climb the slippery ladder of status. You see, if me and Nathan got together, I’d actually be somebody. And I knew exactly who could make that happen. Aimee Taylor.

FX: IT’S THAT SINISTER DAH, DAH, DAHHH!

AIMEE: What do you want, Mallory?

MALLORY: Do you remember when we were best friends?

AIMEE: That was a long time ago.

MALLORY: Not for me, it isn’t. It seems like only yesterday. We used to have so much fun during those lazy, hazy, sunny days of summer.

AIMEE: Sunny days? Hah. False memory. During the school holidays, it mostly rained.

MALLORY: Don't you recall all the good times we had?

AIMEE: Mallory, stop living in the past. Things move on and people move with them. It's about time you did too.

MALLORY: (DISAPPOINTED) You've changed.

AIMEE: Yes. For the better. Oh, and whatever you want, make it quick. If people see me talking to you for too long, they'll think I'm going soft.

MALLORY: I need a big favour.

AIMEE: Hah. No chance.

MALLORY: Aimee, please. There's this boy. I think I'm in love with him. In fact, I know I am.

AIMEE: Don't tell me. He doesn't even know you exist.

MALLORY: Oh, he does a bit. He once opened a door for me.

AIMEE: Wow. One door. Must be true love. ... Look, why don't you just ask him out.

MALLORY: I'm too scared. You were always so much better at things like that.

AIMEE: And does this boy have a name?

MALLORY: Yes. Nathan Edwards.

AIMEE: (A GIGGLE) Nathan Edwards?

MALLORY: What's so funny?

AIMEE: Oh, nothing you'd understand.

MALLORY: Fine. I get it. You don't want to help me.

AIMEE: Hey, I never said I wouldn't assist. ... All right, listen. Here's the deal. I'll put a good word in for you with Nathan. But you've got to do me a favour in return. My maths homework. For a whole year.

MALLORY: (TO US) This was how it always worked. Oh, the joys of playground politics. Total nobodies like me trading favours with the cool kids for, say, a step up the ranks, a taste of notoriety, or in my case, love. Oh, and the subsequent popularity it would bring. Nathan was well fit. Being with him would really get me noticed.

AIMEE: Well? Do we have a deal?

MALLORY: Yes. Deal.

MALLORY: (TO US) It was then when I spotted the object of my desires in all his glory.

MALLORY: Look. There he is now.

AIMEE: Right. Mallory. You wait here while I have a quick chat with Nathan. I'll be back in five.

MALLORY: Okay.

AIMEE: (CALLING) Hey, Nathan. Wait up. I need to talk to you.

FX: AND AS AIMEE TROTS OFF IN HIS DIRECTION –

MALLORY: (TO US) The two of them disappeared round the side of the main building. I waited patiently, finding it difficult to contain my excitement. Wow. Nathan Edwards. My potential future boyfriend. The plan was bound to work. Aimee Taylor could pull more strings than a puppeteer. However...

FX: THE SHRILL OF ALARM BELLS.

MALLORY: (TO US) ...alarm bells soon began to ring in my head. Five minutes had already turned to ten. What was taking her so long?

FX: HURRIED FOOTSTEPS AS MALLORY CANTERS TOWARDS THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING.

MALLORY: (TO US) Something was definitely not right. So I decided to investigate. I soon wished I hadn't.

FX: THE ALARM BELLS STOP. THEN COMES A SHOCKED AND DEVASTATED GASP FROM MALLORY.

MALLORY: Aimee! What are you doing?

AIMEE: What do you think I'm doing? I'm having a snog with Nathan.

MALLORY: You can't do that!

AIMEE: I can do what I like, I'm the most popular girl in the school.

MALLORY: You said you'd put a good word in.

AIMEE: (ALMOST LAUGHING) Yeah, I know. But then I decided to put a good tongue in.

MALLORY: You bitch.

AIMEE: That's my name, don't wear it out.

MALLORY: Admit it, Aimee. You had no intention of doing me that favour.

AIMEE: Oh, Mallory, are you that much of a plank to think somebody as gorgeous as Nathan would be interested in a boring nobody like you?

FX: MALLORY, LOST FOR WORDS. AIMEE CHUCKLES, HIGHLY AMUSED.

- AIMEE: Oh, my God. You actually think you're in his league.
- MALLORY: If that's the way you want to play it, you can say goodbye to that maths homework. The deal's off.
- AIMEE: I don't think so somehow. I kept my part of the bargain.
- MALLORY: What? You call getting off with the boy I fancy putting a good word in for me?
- AIMEE: No. I call getting off with the boy you fancy waking you up to the fact that you didn't stand a chance in Hell.
- FX: A HUNDRED WHISPERS, ALL AT ONCE, ALL AIMED AT MALLORY.
- MALLORY: (TO US) It didn't take long for Aimee to spread the news of this mega-embarrassing incident. Within half an hour, the entire school knew how much of a total numpty I really was. #doublefacepalm.
- FX: NOW, A RAGING STORM OF LAUGHTER.
- MALLORY: (TO US) It felt as if the world, his brother and their second cousin twice removed were all laughing at me.
- FX: MORE LAUGHTER, COMING FROM ALL ANGLES.
- MALLORY: (TO US) This was it. No more Miss Nice Mallory. This was war. It was time for me to plot my revenge. All I needed to do was kick Aimee right where it would hurt the most.
- FX: ALL LAUGHTER ECHOES TO NOTHING. WE SAMPLE DEATHLY SILENCE AS –
- MALLORY: (TO US) Her reputation.
- FX: ANOTHER SINISTER DAH, DAH, DAHHH!

SCENE 16: INT. SECONDARY SCHOOL CORRIDOR

FX: THE SHRILL OF THE END OF LUNCHTIME BELL. AND AS A
MIGRATION OF PUPILS HEAD IN NO PARTICULAR HURRY
TO THEIR CLASSROOMS –

AIMEE: Hi, Mr Johnson.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, hello, Aimee. What did you get up to at the weekend?
Anything exciting?

AIMEE: Yeah, my birthday party. How come you didn't turn up? I gave
you an invite.

MR JOHNSON: I... erm... didn't think it would be appropriate for me to –

AIMEE: Don't you like me?

MR JOHNSON: Yes, of course I do, but –

AIMEE: Do you think I'm pretty?

MR JOHNSON: Umm... maybe I shouldn't answer that question.

AIMEE: Oh, come on. Nobody's listening.

MR JOHNSON: Well... yes... I can see you're an attractive girl.

MALLORY: (TO US) Meet Mr Johnson, our art teacher. Nice guy, but way
too naive. Aimee flirted with him constantly, no doubt for better
grades, but I don't think he ever realised he was being duped.
Of course, nothing sexual was actually going on between them.
Every pupil knows that opening your legs to a teacher is a total
no-no. It's technically fraternising with the enemy. Breaking this
set-in-stone rule would see the end of Queen Aimee's reign. If
her royal subjects got wind of a scandal like that, she'd be
stripped of her title and thrown to the lions. Oh, and branded a
dirty little slapper.

FX: THERE'S A SINISTER AIR TO MALLORY'S CHUCKLE TO
HERSELF AS SHE ADDS –

MALLORY: (TO US) Perfect.

SCENE 17: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. MALLORY'S BEDROOM

FX: A FLUTTERING OF FINGERTIPS ACROSS A LAPTOP
KEYBOARD.

MALLORY: (TO US) That evening, I connected to the internet and put my plan into action. One single comment. That's all it would take to totally trash Aimee's street-cred.

FX: AS SHE TYPES, SHE READS ALOUD –

MALLORY: "Aimee Taylor and Mr Johnson seriously need to get a room. #justsaying."

MALLORY: (TO US) If you don't know what hashtags are – like, if you're really old or something – they're kind of like abbreviated sub-comments. For example, you might want to shout from the rooftops about how your favourite singer has the best voice in the world. Thing is, not everybody will agree with your opinion. Therefore, if you don't want to sound preachy, you tell the world, "Hey, I'm not asking for a debate. I'm just saying." Hence the addition of #justsaying.

FX: ONE HIT OF THE ENTER KEY.

MALLORY: (TO HERSELF) There. Mission accomplished.

FX: MALLORY CLOSES THE LAPTOP.

MALLORY: (TO US) There was no going back now. The deed was done. For me, it was time for bed. Goodnight.

FX: MALLORY SWITCHES OFF THE BEDSIDE LAMP.

SCENE 18: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. MALLORY'S BEDROOM

FX: THE MORNING CALL OF THE ALARM CLOCK.

FX: MALLORY STIRS, GROANS, REACHES OUT AND SLAMS FOR SILENCE. SHE CLAMBERS FREE OF HER BED AND OPENS THE LAPTOP.

MALLORY: (TO US) The first thing I did the next morning was power up my laptop. I couldn't help myself. I needed to find out just how much of an impact my comment had made on the social networking universe.

FX: TAPPY-TAPPY OF FINGERS UPON KEYBOARD.

MALLORY: (TO US) I didn't think for a second it would be anywhere near the size of the asteroid collision that wiped out the dinosaurs. After all, fuzzy grey background girls never cause commotions. But wow, I certainly never expected this.

MALLORY: (GOBSMACKED) Oh. My. God.

SCENE 19: EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL YARD

FX: A HUNDRED SCHOOL CHILDREN CHANT, "SLAG. SLAG. SLAG. SLAG," OVER AND OVER AGAIN THROUGHOUT –

MALLORY: (TO US) My little remark had caused the stir of the year, the decade, the century. I didn't have much of a friend-count on my profile, but they'd told their friends, and their friends had passed it on to theirs, and so on and so on. And now, people I'd never even heard of were quoting it, reposting it, sharing it and congratulating me for having the balls to air my views. Overnight, my post had gone viral. For the first time in my life... I was popular.

FX: WAR DRUMS BEAT IN THE DISTANCE. A LYNCH MOB IS GATHERING. AND STILL WE HEAR, "SLAG. SLAG. SLAG. SLAG."

MALLORY: (TO US) The Aimee Empire was crumbling. The oppressed were rising. The entire school had turned against her. Oh, my God, I'd single-handedly started a revolution. Finally, yes, finally, Aimee Taylor was getting her comeuppance.

FX: THE CHANTS, THE NOISE, THE DRUMS ALL CRASH TO A SUDDEN HALT AS –

AIMEE: Mallory Finch, you are so dead!

FX: A CATFIGHT SCUFFLE BREAKS OUT BETWEEN AIMEE AND MALLORY.

MALLORY: Get your hands off me!

AIMEE: I'm going to kill you!

FX: NEW CHANTING: "FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT, FIGHT."

FX: MR JOHNSON INTERVENES, STRUGGLING TO QUASH THE BRAWL.

MR JOHNSON: Hey! Break it up, you two!

FX: EASIER SAID THAN DONE.

MR JOHNSON: (LOUDER) I said break it up!

FX: HE MANAGES TO WRENCH THE WARRING GIRLS APART. THE CHANTING CEASES.

MR JOHNSON: What's this all about?

AIMEE: Mr Johnson, Mallory's been posting lies about us on the internet!

MR JOHNSON: What do you mean lies about us?

AIMEE: Take my phone and have a look for yourself. Go on.

FX: MR JOHNSON TAKES A PEEK, THEN GROANS.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, Mallory, you stupid, stupid girl. Do you realise how much trouble it would cause if people took this comment seriously? Delete it at once.

AIMEE: That won't do any good, Mr Johnson. It's gone viral.

MR JOHNSON: Viral? What does that mean?

AIMEE: Thanks to that cretin, it's all over the internet.

MR JOHNSON: Oh, Jesus.

MALLORY: I'm sorry, Mr Johnson, I really am.

MR JOHNSON: It's a bit late in the day for apologies, don't you think? What on earth made you post such a comment in the first place?

FX: THE HEAD TEACHER, MRS BALL, INTERRUPTS.

MRS BALL: Everything all right, Mr Johnson?

MR JOHNSON: Oh, um, yes, Mrs Ball. Just a small misunderstanding, that's all.

MRS BALL: Can I have a private word? In my office.

MR JOHNSON: Um. Yes. Certainly.

FX: MRS BALL AND MR JOHNSON DEPART.

MALLORY: (TO US) If you haven't already guessed, Mrs Ball is the head teacher. Anyway... Mr Johnson was led away to the office of doom. It was pretty obvious they weren't planning to discuss the weather. Oh, I so wish I could have been a fly on the wall.

SCENE 20: INT. MRS BALL'S OFFICE

FX: A FLY BUZZES AROUND THE ROOM AND LANDS ON –
YES, YOU'VE GUESSED IT – A WALL.

MRS BALL: Mr Johnson, I'm sorry, but I have no choice but to suspend you forthwith.

MR JOHNSON: What? Over a stupid mindless comment?

MRS BALL: That stupid mindless comment, as you call it, has triggered fifteen phone calls already this morning from concerned parents. And I'm guessing they won't be the last.

MR JOHNSON: Have you actually read what was written?

MRS BALL: As a matter of fact, I have.

MR JOHNSON: Then surely you can see it for what it is. Pure speculation.

MRS BALL: Interesting choice of word. Speculation. It leads me to speculate where she got such an idea in the first place.

MR JOHNSON: Do you seriously believe I'm having an improper relationship with one of my pupils?

MRS BALL: No, of course not.

MR JOHNSON: Thank God for that.

MRS BALL: But comments like that don't get plucked out of thin air. Something must have prompted the girl to write what she did.

MR JOHNSON: There is nothing going on! I swear on my life.

MRS BALL: You need to look at it from my point of view. I have to be seen to be taking action. After all, an incident like this could seriously harm the reputation of the school.

MR JOHNSON: Jesus.

MRS BALL: Don't you worry, the suspension will only be temporary. Until this nasty business blows over.

MR JOHNSON: How long will that take?

MRS BALL: How long is a piece of string?

FX: THE FLY BUZZES AWAY.

SCENE 21: INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM

FX: CLASSROOM ATMOS.

MALLORY: (TO US) Mrs Ball sent Aimee home for the foreseeable future. One, to keep us apart. And two, to save the girl from the constant barrage of threats and abuse. Things were bad enough without facilitating any more trouble.

SCENE 22: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. HALLWAY

FX: THE TWIST OF A KEY, THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

MALLORY: (TO US) However, when I arrived home, I realised the situation was about to go from bad to worse.

FX: MALLORY CLOSSES THE DOOR BEHIND HER. A TROUBLED MUM MEETS HER IN THE HALLWAY.

MUM: Mallory. The police are here.

MALLORY: What? Why?

MUM: They say they want a word with you.

SCENE 23: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. LOUNGE

MALLORY: (TO US) There were two police officers in attendance. But only one did all the talking. She called herself DC Lennox. Tough looking woman. I bet her husband feared for his life during lover's tiffs. And probably even during sex.

FX: EVEN IN THE DARKNESS OF AUDIO, WE CAN FEEL IT'S A TENSE SITUATION.

DC LENNOX: Mallory, can you tell me the reason why you posted such a controversial comment online?

MALLORY: I just wanted to get Aimee back for humiliating me.

DC LENNOX: Hmm. "Aimee Taylor and Mr Johnson seriously need to get a room." That's quite a specific viewpoint.

MALLORY: It's the first thing that popped into my head.

DC LENNOX: Yes, but something must have planted it there.

MALLORY: No, I just... made it up.

DC LENNOX: Mallory. Be honest. Do you think there's something going on between the two of them?

MALLORY: The hashtag. You're forgetting about the hashtag.

DC LENNOX: Something untoward perhaps?

MALLORY: #justsaying. Don't you get it?

DC LENNOX: I'm perfectly au fait with the mechanics of social networking. I have profiles on all those websites myself.

MALLORY: Then you'll understand.

DC LENNOX: All I want to know is whether or not you believe Mr Johnson is having an improper relationship with Aimee Taylor.

MALLORY: No way.

DC LENNOX: Oh, really? Judging by your comment, you seemed pretty sure at the time.

MALLORY: God, I wish I'd never written it now.

DC LENNOX: Ah, but the point is, you did. What I want to know is, why?

MALLORY: I've told you why.

DC LENNOX: Mallory. People seldom make remarks as serious as this without an underlying reason. If there's anything you can tell me. Anything at all.

MALLORY: Am I under arrest?

DC LENNOX: No.

MALLORY: So I'm not in any trouble then?

DC LENNOX: Again, no. However, you will be if I find out you've been withholding information, no matter how trivial or insignificant. And we are talking serious trouble here.

MALLORY: Okay, fine. I included Mr Johnson in the comment because Aimee is always flirting with him. It was the best way I could think of to get my revenge on the cow.

DC LENNOX: Flirting with him?

MALLORY: Yes.

DC LENNOX: In a sexual way?

MALLORY: Sort of seductive. But only mucking about.

DC LENNOX: Riiiiight. And how does Mr Johnson react to these advances?

MALLORY: React?

DC LENNOX: Does he ask her to stop?

MALLORY: No, he just...

DC LENNOX: Just what?

MALLORY: Kind of goes along with it.

FX: DC LENNOX, A SUDDEN CHANGE OF TONE. JUDGE
TURNED TO EXECUTIONER.

DC LENNOX: I see. Thank you, Mallory. You've been most helpful.

MALLORY: I haven't got Mr Johnson into trouble, have I?

DC LENNOX: No, no, no. These questions are purely routine.

MALLORY: (TO US) Of course, as we've all learnt from TV cop shows, "Purely routine," always translates as, "Holy crap. Time to conduct a serious investigation." It was then when I realised. I'd just landed Mr Johnson in serious shit.

FX: A SINISTER PROGRESSIVE CHORD, LOUDER AND
LOUDER. THEN SUDDEN SILENCE AS WE HEAD TO –

SCENE 24: POLICE STATION. MINOR'S INTERVIEW ROOM

MALLORY: (TO US) The next morning, DC Lennox requested the company of Aimee and her mother. Now, where's that fly on the wall?

FX: THE BUZZING FLY ENTERS OUR SOUNDSCAPE –

MALLORY: (TO US) Ah, there it is.

FX: – AND LANDS ON THE NEAREST WALL.

DC LENNOX: Aimee. This may seem like a personal and intrusive question, but I need to ask it. Are you sexually active?

AIMEE'S MUM: Of course she's not. She only recently turned sixteen.

AIMEE: Mum, you're not helping.

AIMEE'S MUM: Nor is she with perverted questions like that.

AIMEE'S MUM: (THEN, TO DC LENNOX) I thought this interview was about the lies that sick girl posted online. Why is my daughter getting the third degree? Don't you realise she's the victim here?

DC LENNOX: All I'm trying to do is establish the facts. Now, Aimee. I'll ask you again. Are you sexually active?

FX: A MOMENT OF HESITATION, THEN –

AIMEE: Yes.

AIMEE'S MUM: What? When did this happen?

DC LENNOX: Mrs Taylor. Aimee's right. You're not helping.

FX: AIMEE'S MUM MAKES "NEVER BEEN SO INSULTED IN ALL MY LIFE" NOISES.

DC LENNOX: Aimee. Do you have a steady boyfriend at the moment?

AIMEE'S MUM: What's that got to do with anything?

DC LENNOX: Mrs Taylor, please. I must remind you, you're only in attendance as an appropriate adult. If you interrupt proceedings again, I will have to ask you to leave. Is that understood?

AIMEE'S MUM: (BEGRUDGINGLY) Yes.

DC LENNOX: Good. Now, Aimee. Are you in any kind of relationship?

AIMEE: Well, I am seeing somebody. But it's nothing serious.

DC LENNOX: And is that somebody Mr Johnson?

AIMEE: Ugh, get real! There's no way I'd go out with him. He's, like, old and everything. And he's a teacher.

DC LENNOX: So you're saying nothing untoward is going on between the two of you?

AIMEE: Huh, I'd like to see him try.

DC LENNOX: Okaaaay. But what I don't understand is why you feel the need to flirt with him.

AIMEE: Flirt with Mr Johnson? God, I only do it as a joke. Did Mallory tell you that?

DC LENNOX: I'm not at liberty to divulge that inf–

AIMEE: But it was her though, wasn't it? Such a bitch. How could she do this to me? We used to be friends. Really good friends.

FX: AIMEE STARTS CRYING.

AIMEE: Because of what she said, all my friends have disowned me. Everywhere I go, people are hurling abuse and calling me names. And now, strangers in the street have started propositioning me. They think I'm a slag. Because of what that bitch posted online, my life is ruined!

FX: AIMEE BAWLS AND BAWLS AND BAWLS.

FX: THE FLY TAKES OFF AND BUZZES AWAY.

SCENE 25: INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM

MALLORY: (TO US) That afternoon, the police pulled Mr Johnson in for questioning. I'm guessing it wasn't a pretty sight.

FX: YES, AGAIN, THAT BUZZING FLY LANDS ON A WALL.

DC LENNOX: "Aimee Taylor and Mr Johnson seriously need to get a room." Any idea what motivated Mallory Finch to post this comment?

MR JOHNSON: Gross stupidity, I'd say. Christ knows why she had to go and involve me in her petty little squabbles.

DC LENNOX: How would you best describe your relationship with Aimee Taylor?

MR JOHNSON: To be quite honest, Detective Constable, I'm not too keen on the way you just emphasised the word "relationship."

DC LENNOX: To be quite honest, Mr Johnson, I'm not too keen on the way you just avoided my question. Therefore, I'll ask it again. How would you best describe your relationship with Aimee Taylor?

MR JOHNSON: What relationship? I treat her no differently to any other pupil.

DC LENNOX: Oh, so you let them all flirt with you?

MR JOHNSON: That's not what I meant.

DC LENNOX: I see there's quite an age gap between you and your wife.

MR JOHNSON: Twelve years, yes. But what has that got to d-

DC LENNOX: You married her when she was eighteen.

MR JOHNSON: Yes. And now she's twenty-eight. Your point being?

DC LENNOX: Am I right in assuming she's a former pupil of yours?

MR JOHNSON: That is correct. And common knowledge. But I'd like to point out, we didn't start dating until at least a year after she left scho-

DC LENNOX: Do you have children?

MR JOHNSON: No. Not yet anyway.

DC LENNOX: After ten years of marriage? Any particular reason why?

MR JOHNSON: My wife is a career woman.

DC LENNOX: Ah, so it's not because she feels she couldn't trust you around minors?

MR JOHNSON: What the hell is that supposed to mean?

DC LENNOX: You pushed the boundaries of trust when you began a relationship with somebody who had been previously placed in your care.

MR JOHNSON: That's not fair. We were in love. We still are.

DC LENNOX: How you were allowed to continue teaching is the million pound question. But let me tell you this, Mr Johnson. If we unearth even the slightest element of truth in Mallory's comment, you will never work with children again.

FX: THE FLY BUZZES AWAY.

MALLORY: (TO US) The situation had got way out of control. I never meant to cause so much trouble for everybody. Therefore, I vowed the next morning to do whatever I could to put things right. To make everything normal again.

SCENE 26: INT. AIMEE'S PARENTS' HOUSE. LANDING/AIMEE'S BEDROOM

FX: AGAIN, THE SUICIDE DISCOVERY PLAYS OUT. FIRSTLY, THE IMPATIENT KNOCKING.

AIMEE'S MUM: Aimee. Just because you're off school at the moment, it doesn't mean you can doss in bed all day.

MALLORY: (TO US) But little did I know...

FX: MORE KNOCKS, HARDER THIS TIME.

AIMEE'S MUM: Aimee! Ignoring my words won't make me go away.

MALLORY: (TO US) ...the next morning would be way too late for me to make amends.

FX: AIMEE'S MUM BARGES INTO THE ROOM.

AIMEE'S MUM: Get out of that bed. Now! You can help me with the housework. Aimee. Aimee! I'm not going to tell you again. Don't you dare pretend you're asleep. I've had qu–

FX: THEN COMES THAT WEIGHTY SILENCE. NEXT, THE RATTLE OF THE ALMOST EMPTY PILL BOTTLE.

AIMEE'S MUM: Oh, my God! Aimee!! You stupid girl! How many have you taken? Can you hear me? Aimee!! How many pills have you swallowed?

FX: URGENT TAPPING OF CHEEKS, TAP, TAP TAP!

AIMEE'S MUM: Speak to me! Please!! Oh, God, no!

SCENE 27: EXT. SECONDARY SCHOOL YARD

FX: THE BUZZ OF PUPIL ACTIVITY MORPHS INTO A HUNDRED VOICES RAPIDLY WHISPERING, "GOSSIP, GOSSIP, GOSSIP, GOSSIP," OVER AND OVER AGAIN AS –

MALLORY: (TO US) Although there wouldn't be an official announcement for quite some time, news of Aimee's suicide spread like wildfire on the social networking grapevine. Her death had once again made her the main talking point. Oh, the irony. By lunchtime, the entire school was talking about it. Except me. As a fitting punishment, Mum and Dad had confiscated my phone and laptop. With zero access to the internet, I was the last one to know.

FX: THE "GOSSIP, GOSSIP" WHISPERS CEASE.

SCENE 28: EXT. STREET

FX: THE SOUND OF MALLORY RUNNING.

MALLORY: (TO US) I was desperate to find out for sure. So I kept on running. I didn't stop until I reached Aimee Taylor's house.

SCENE 29: EXT. OUTSIDE AIMEE'S PARENTS' HOUSE

FX: MALLORY RACES UP TO THE FRONT DOOR. SHE JABS THE DOORBELL MULTIPLE TIMES, URGENT, RAPID, DING-DONG, DING-DONG, DING-DONG, DING-DONG!

MALLORY: (TO HERSELF, UNDER HER BREATH) Please don't be dead, please don't be dead, please don't be dead.

FX: AIMEE'S MUM ANSWERS THE DOOR, ANGRY AND CLOSE TO TEARS.

AIMEE'S MUM: You've got a bloody nerve showing your face around here!

MALLORY: Is it true what they're saying?

AIMEE'S MUM: You killed my daughter, you heartless bitch!

MALLORY: No! She can't be dead! Please tell me she's not dead!

AIMEE'S MUM: Get out of here before I swing for you, you little cow! Go on, leave me alone!

SCENE 30: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. HALLWAY

FX: WHIMPERING, SOBBING, MALLORY BARGES IN THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR. SHE LOSES HER FOOTING AND COLLAPSES ONTO THE HALLWAY CARPET.

FX: MUM ENTERS FROM THE LOUNGE.

MUM: Mallory, what on earth's the matter?

MALLORY: She's dead, Mum! Aimee's dead! Oh, God, it's all my fault!

MUM: Mallory, calm down, love. Calm down.

FX: SHE ATTEMPTS TO CONSOLE HER DAUGHTER, BUT THIS GIRL IS EXPLODING WITH CRAZED HYSTERIA. HER PIERCING SCREAMS ECHO TO TOTAL SILENCE AS –

MALLORY: (TO US) A doctor was called out. He gave me a sedative to help me sleep. He also told Mum it would be in my best interest to be kept off school. Just for now.

SCENE 31: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. HALLWAY

FX: THE DOORBELL SINGS FOR ATTENTION.

MALLORY: (TO US) This was nowhere near the end of my family's troubles. The next morning, Mum had the shock of her life when she answered the front door.

FX: MUM OPENS THE DOOR TO A HECTIC MESS OF JABBERING REPORTERS, ALL ASKING A BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS, PEPPERED WITH SPORADIC CAMERA FLASHES.

MUM: Go away. No comment. Leave us alone.

FX: SHE SLAMS THE DOOR IN THEIR FACES.

MUM: Oh, great, that's all we need. Things are bad enough without the ruddy press sensationalising it all.

FX: MALLORY DESCENDS THE STAIRS.

MALLORY: Mum, what's happening?

MUM: Get back to bed, you. The doctor said you need to rest.

MALLORY: I'm all slept out. Were they reporters?

MUM: Yes. All thanks to you. Stupid cow.

SCENE 32: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. LOUNGE

FX: THE DRAMATIC OPENING THEME TUNE OF A TV CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMME THUNDERS ON AS –

MALLORY: (TO US) Overnight, the whole sorry affair had been transformed into a colossal media circus. It seemed as if every broadcaster imaginable was hungry for a share of the carcass. The TV presenters said things like:

MALLORY: (QUOTING) The main headlines tonight. A sixteen-year-old schoolgirl has committed suicide after a vicious comment posted about her on social media went viral.

MALLORY: (QUOTING) With a suspended schoolteacher right at the heart of the Aimee Taylor scandal, is the Department of Education really doing enough to protect our children?

MALLORY: (QUOTING) In light of the Aimee Taylor teen suicide, we ask, should social networking be banned?

SCENE 33: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. LOUNGE

FX: THE DRAMATIC MUSIC CONTINUES LOW IN THE
BACKGROUND AS –

MUM: This is all your fault, Mallory. Look what you've done. Those reporters, they were camped outside all day. I couldn't go to the shops, to work, anywhere.

DAD: Yeah. Because of you, we feel like prisoners in our own home.

MALLORY: I didn't mean to cause so much trouble.

MUM: If you had a brain in your head, we wouldn't be in this pickle. For God's sake, when will it all end?

MALLORY: I'm really sorry.

DAD: Apologies aren't going to make things better.

FX: THE LANDLINE PHONE BURSTS INTO LIFE.

MUM: Don't answer that. It's bound to be the press again. Oh, Mallory, why? I hate to say this, but right at this moment, I'm ashamed to be your mother.

MALLORY: What? No! You don't mean that!

DAD: You've brought this on yourself, girl.

MALLORY: No, please!

MUM: Get to bed, we're sick of the sight of you!

FX: THE PHONE CONTINUES TO RING AS A SOBBING MALLORY DEPARTS.

MALLORY: (TO US) It was official. I was the most hated person on the planet. Even my own parents had turned against me. I knew then there was only one way I could fix this.

SCENE 34: INT. FINCH HOUSEHOLD. MALLORY'S BEDROOM

FX: MALLORY HASTILY GETS DRESSED.

MALLORY: (TO US) I woke up at the crack of dawn. My plan? To get out of everybody's hair. I thought about packing some belongings, but no. Where I was going, I would only need one possession.

FX: SHE HEADS OUT, GENTLY CLOSING THE DOOR.

MALLORY: (TO US) My digital voice recorder.

SCENE 35. EXT. TRAIN STATION PLATFORM

FX: BING BONG, A STATION ANNOUNCEMENT.

ANNOUNCER: (D) Keep away from the edge of the platform. The train now approaching is not scheduled to stop at this station.

MALLORY: (TO US) So here I am, recording my story, awaiting my fate, sitting on a cold bench at a railway station. I guess this voice recorder must be almost full by now, so I'd better use the time I have left to say goodbye. Oh, and to apologise to all the people I've hurt along the way.

FX: BING BONG.

ANNOUNCER: (D) Keep away from the edge of the platform. The train now approaching is not scheduled to stop at this station.

MALLORY: (TO US) By now, you've probably worked out my true intentions. I'm waiting for a train. But I'm not going anywhere. You see, this is the best way to end it all. Unlike the Aimee Taylor incident, pills don't always work. And I know I'd totally bottle out of slitting my wrists. I so hate the sight of blood. Oh, and there's always the risk that somebody might discover me in time. But jumping in front of a train. Well, that's a different story altogether. The moment I leap off that platform, there will be no going back.

FX: BING BONG.

ANNOUNCER: (D) Keep away from the edge of the platform. The next train is not scheduled to stop at this station.

MALLORY: (TO US) I'll leave this voice recorder on the bench in the hope that somebody finds it and does something good with my story.

FX: WE CAN TELL SHE'S FIGHTING BACK THE NEED TO CRY AS SHE DECLARES –

MALLORY: Goodbye, world. It was pretty good while it lasted.

FX: MALLORY CLICKS OFF THE VOICE RECORDER, PLACES IT ON THE BENCH, THEN STANDS UP AND WALKS OVER TO THE EDGE OF THE PLATFORM.

FX: THEN, A DISTANT RUMBLE. OH, GOD, IT'S THAT APPROACHING TRAIN. WE HEAR MALLORY'S HEARTBEAT LOUD AND CLEAR, PUMPING FASTER AND FASTER, BADOOM, BADOOM, BADOOM, BADOOM.

FX: BING BONG.

ANNOUNCER: (D) Keep away from the edge of the platform. The train now approaching is not scheduled to stop at this station.

FX: THE TRAIN HORN CALLS OUT, NAAA NAAAA! THE RUMBLING AND RATTLING GROWS LOUDER AND LOUDER, AS DOES MALLORY'S HEARTBEAT, BADOOM, BADOOM, BADOOM, BADOOM.

ANNOUNCER: (D) Keep away from the edge of the platform. The train now approaching is not scheduled to stop at this station.

FX: THE TRAIN IS ALMOST UPON US, RUMBLE, RUMBLE, RATTLE, RATTLE. MALLORY'S HEARTBEAT, BADOOM, BADOOM, BADOOM, BADOOM, LOUDER AND LOUDER.

ANNOUNCER: (D) Keep away from the edge of the platform. The train now approaching is not scheduled to stop at this station.

FX: A DEAFENING, TERRIFYING CLATTER-CLATTER WHOOSH HHHHH AS THE TRAIN RUSHES PAST.

FX: AND THEN... THE TRAIN LEAVES US. IT'S RUMBLE FADES INTO THE DISTANCE. WE'RE LEFT WITH AN UNEASY HUSH. DEATHLY SILENCE. NOTHING. WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED. UNTIL –

FX: – SOBBING UNCONTROLLABLY, MALLORY RETURNS TO THE BENCH. SHE COMPOSES HERSELF AND CLICKS THE VOICE RECORDER BACK ONTO RECORD.

MALLORY: (TO US) Hello, world. Yes, it's me again. In the end, I couldn't go through with it. Right at the very last moment, I realised my death would be pointless. It wouldn't turn back the clock. And it certainly wouldn't bring Aimee back. Oh, and those bastard TV news channels would only report it as just another dumb teenage suicide. Another senseless waste of a young life.

SCENE 36: EXT. MEADOW

FX: TWO YOUNG GIRLS GIGGLE AS THEY CANTER THROUGH THE SUMMER GRASS.

MALLORY: (TO US) I now know I must take responsibility for my actions. Face my demons. And learn from my mistakes. Hopefully, in time, all the pain and hurt I've caused will heal. Or at least not smart so much. I am sorry, so very sorry. And I won't rest until everybody knows that.

FX: WE ENJOY THE LAUGHTER OF CHILDKIND AMID THE JOYFUL TWITTERING OF BIRDS.

MALLORY: (TO US) Oh, and I will do everything I can to clear Mr Johnson's name and get him reinstated. After all, he is an innocent man. And hey, how's this for a great idea? I reckon I should find out how to set up a charity for victims of cyberbullying. Oh, yes, the Aimee Taylor Trust sounds like a fantastic plan.

FX: THE GIGGLES AND SUMMER SOUNDS CONTINUE.

MALLORY: (TO US) It's all so very clear now. The Aimee I knew and loved will always be right here in my head. In my memories. The two of us. The best of friends, enjoying the lazy, hazy, sunny days of summer where, during the school holidays...

FX: OH, HERE COMES A SUDDEN DOWNPOUR OF RAIN.

MALLORY: (TO US) ...it mostly rained. Buckets and buckets of the stuff.

FX: THE RAIN CONTINUES AS –

MALLORY: (TO US) My name is Mallory Finch. This is my story.
#justsaying.

FX: WHEN MALLORY CLICKS OFF THE VOICE RECORDER,
ALL SOUNDS CEASE.

FX: BUT THEN WE CLOSE WITH ONE FINAL GIGGLE OF
YESTERYEAR.

THE END