

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL INDOOR POOL COMPLEX NEAR DAWN

A Swimmer's arms reaching through the water, stroke after stroke, lap after lap. This is BILLY DARCY, high school senior and swimming prodigy. He is confident, yet shy, lending him the perception of careless arrogance.

INTERCUT:

INT. BENNETT HOME NEAR DAWN

LIZZIE BENNETT sits at her desk, her face illuminated by the desk lamp as she studies. Extremely intelligent and self-confident, she is beautiful, yet not obviously so. It is a beauty that grows on you, shining through her personality, good humor, and grace. Her voice is deep with a rich, British accent.

INT. POOL DAY DAWN

Billy switches strokes from freestyle to the butterfly.

INT. LIZZIE'S BEDROOM DAY

The clock radio ALARM goes off. Lizzie rushes to silence it and glances at her sleeping sister, 15-YEAR-OLD LANEY.

INT. BENNETT BASEMENT DAWN

Lizzie pulls a load of laundry from the dryer and carries it to her room.

INT. LIZZIE'S BEDROOM DAWN

Lizzie folding laundry.

INT. POOL DAY DAY

Daylight is just starting as Billy pulls his tall, dripping body from the pool.

EXT. POOL COMPLEX DAY

Billy shoulders his duffle bag and begins jogging home.

INT. DARCY HOUSE DAY

Billy stands at the kitchen counter gulping down a quart of orange juice.

INT. DARCY UPSTAIRS HALLDAY

Showered and dressed, Billy walks down the hall and KNOCKS on another bedroom door.

BILLY

You up?

MUFFLED REPLY from inside. He continues down the hallway. The door opens and JULES DARCY, Billy's 16-year-old sister appears. She trudges to the bathroom.

INT. BENNETT UPSTAIRS BATHROOM DAY

Lizzie is struggling to get 9-year-old twins, MADDIE AND KATRINA, ready for school.

INT. BENNETT KITCHEN DAY

Lizzie's sister, JENNA BENNETT, a tall pretty blonde, sets cereal boxes, bowls, and spoons on the table. Getting milk from the refrigerator, she tosses her hair back. A large burn scar covers some of her neck and part of her jawline.

INT. LIZZIE'S BEDROOM DAY

Lizzie sets a pill and a glass of water by Laney's bed. She gently brushes Laney's hair from her face.

LIZZIE

Laney? Wake up.

Laney turns over and opens her eyes. She smiles at Lizzie.

LIZZIE

(continuing)

Morning.

LANEY

Morning.

LIZZIE

Wake up and there's your pill.

Laney nods and sits up. Lizzie grabs her back pack and goes out. Laney eyes the pill with disgust.

INT. BENNETT MASTER BEDROOM DAY

Lizzie stops in. The bed is unmade. A number of prescription bottles sit on the nightstand.

LIZZIE

Mum? You awake?

MRS. BENNETT appears from the bathroom. She looks pale, tired. She sits on the edge of the bed. She smiles weakly.

MRS. BENNETT

I'm up. Don't worry, honey. Get to school. We'll be fine.

Lizzie nods and goes out.

INT. DARCY HOUSE DAY

Billy eating breakfast. Jules comes in. She grabs cereal and sits down at the table. She eyes Billy with his huge stack of pancakes and smiles. He offers her a bite. She smiles and shakes her head. He goes back to eating.

DISSOLVE:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DAY

Lizzie pulls into the parking lot. She, Jenna, and Laney get out and walk towards the school. Laney runs ahead.

JENNA

What do you have first period?

LIZZIE

English. As if I don't know it already. You?

JENNA

Calculus.

LIZZIE

Oh, dear.

Jenna looks apprehensively up at the school building.

JENNA

I'm thinking home schooling would
be a good idea this year.

LIZZIE

For some people perhaps. For
us it would be psychological suicide.

They pass two MALE STUDENTS standing up straight, their heads bent as they have a drooling contest to see who can produce the longest continuous stream. Lizzie smiles and shakes her head. They pass four GIRL STUDENTS arguing over the color of another GIRL'S highlights. Lizzie rolls her eyes.

LIZZIE

Besides, think of all the fun
we'd miss. Girls bonding, boys
spitting. Who wouldn't
want to be a part of all this?

LIZZIE

I'm surprised you would, Lizzie.
For all your usual optimism, you
never seem to want to have a boyfriend.

LIZZIE

So few of them are worth the trouble.
But who knows, maybe we'll find someone
intelligent enough to like you.

JENNA

I won't hold my breath.

LIZZIE

Good, we wouldn't want you to
become asphyxiated.

Jenna laughs.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT DAY

A jeep pulls in and parks. Billy and Jules get out, along with Billy's best friend, CHRIS BRINLEY, a friendly, lively jock with a heart of gold. Jules runs ahead to catch up with her friends. Billy and Chris saunter into school. Chris' overt friendliness complements Billy's more reserved acknowledgement.

CHRIS

Hey, Dooley, you owe me money!

DOOLEY, a student, turns and talks as he walks.

DOOLEY

Pay you at lunch.

A TRIO OF GIRLS overtake them.

GIRLS

Hey, guys.

CHRIS

Ladies! Top of the mornin' to ya.

Chris smiles broadly. Billy lifts his head in a silent hello.

CHRIS

Bill, as always, a way with words.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAYDAY

Billy and Chris walk down the hall. As they pass the glass windows of the Main Office, Chris spots Jenna's profile as she stands with Lizzie at the front desk. He slows to a stop.

BILLY

What?

Chris doesn't answer, but continues to stare. Billy moves on.

POV CHRIS: Jenna laughs at something Lizzie says.

From down the hall,

BILLY
Yo...Brinley!

Chris follows Billy.

INT. CLASSROOM DAY

Billy is sitting in the back right corner of the room, his long legs stretched out beneath his desk. The teacher, MR. HALBURTON, addresses the class.

MR. HALBURTON
Can anyone tell me why Othello would yield so easily to Iago's machinations?

The door opens. Lizzie enters and hands a pass to the teacher.

LIZZIE
Sorry, got lost.

HALBURTON
Ah, you're new?

LIZZIE
Yes, sir.

HALBURTON
From?

LIZZIE
Um, Stratford...England.

HALBURTON
Ah, welcome. Welcome. Please, sit.

Lizzie takes the one available seat, in the front row.

HALBURTON
Miss Bennett, perhaps given your background you can help us with our understanding of why Othello was so prone to Iago's meddling.

As she tries to get settled, Lizzie answers automatically, almost absently.

LIZZIE

Oh, he was, um...insecure.

HALBURTON

Good. Yes...but why?

POV BILLY: his notebook where he scribbles "insecure" below Othello's name.

He goes back to looking bored.

LIZZIE

Well, um, he doesn't think he deserves Desdemona and doesn't really know how he got her.

HALBURTON

Yes, yes. Support that in the text, please.

Lizzie looks at him like he's mad and looks around to see why she's being put on the spot. No one seems to care.

LIZZIE

I-I don't have a-

A GIRL next to her passes Lizzie a copy of the play.

LIZZIE

(grudgingly)

Oh, thank you.

Lizzie thumbs through the book quickly.

LIZZIE

(continuing)

OK...um...here. Act One, scene three, he says, 'Rude am I in my speech, And little bless'd with the soft Phrase of peace,' blah, blah. Also, he's a Moor, the only black man there, and right away he has to defend the fact that he won her without some kind of sorcery. So after all that, he's ready to believe anything Iago insinuates about his wife being unfaithful.

Silence. Someone COUGHS. Halburton is glowing.

HALBURTON

Yes, yes. Thank you.

Lizzie glances around. Other STUDENTS are writing. Some raise their eyebrows at her. Billy studies a hangnail.

INT. CAFETERIA DAY

The cafeteria is full. At one table, Billy is eating. Chris is looking around.

BILLY

What?

CHRIS

Huh?

BILLY

Who you looking for?

CHRIS

(shrugging)

You ever get a feeling--?

BILLY

Nope. Numb from the waist up. Why?

CHRIS

I dunno. I thought I-

POV CHRIS: Jenna entering the cafeteria from the food line, tray in hand, with Lizzie behind her taking a lunch menu from a display on the wall. They take a seat at a table near the door.

Chris jumps up and grabs his tray.

CHRIS

(to Billy)

C'mon.

BILLY

I'm eating.

Chris heads for Jenna and Lizzie's table. Billy SIGHS.

JENNA

It's sadistic. Whoever came
up with history should be shot.

LIZZIE

Oh, yes. Let me see. That
would be...hmmm, everybody.

Jenna picks at her food.

JENNA

What is this?

Lizzie consults the menu.

LIZZIE

Barbequed beef.

JENNA

Oh. I don't suppose—

She is interrupted by Chris' abrupt arrival. He plops
himself halfway down the table from Jenna, grinning at them
as he sits.

CHRIS

Hey.

JENNA

Um...hi.

He nods at Lizzie who studies him with curious amusement.

CHRIS

Hey.

Lizzie

Hey.

Just then Billy arrives with his tray and sits on Lizzie's
side of the table across from Chris. He sets his tray down
with a loud SLAP and greets Jenna with a bored, indulgent
expression.

BILLY

Hey.

JENNA

Hey.

Lizzie BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. Jenna is mortified.

JENNA

Lizzie!

LIZZIE

I'm sorry. Perhaps I should
have neighed.

CHRIS

I'm Chris.

JENNA

(shyly)

Hi.

Seeing Jenna would leave it at that, Lizzie indicates
Jenna.

LIZZIE

Jenna Bennett. I'm Lizzie.

CHRIS

That's Billy.

Billy nods and continues eating. Lizzie stifles a laugh.

CHRIS

You just move here?

JENNA

Mmmm-hmmm.

CHRIS

You're what...English?

BILLY

What was your first clue?

CHRIS

Just eat.

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
info@filmmakers.com