

YOUNG AT ART

Written by

April Hartman

73 Sparks Ave, Pennsville, NJ 08070  
856-275-9206

FADE IN:

A quaint house in a suburban neighborhood. There is a basketball hoop on the garage and bike near the front door indicating children live here. The peacefulness outside does not reflect the chaos within.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A family of four occupy the kitchen, each doing something different, creating a hectic environment. MOTHER, a fit woman wearing a purple NYU t-shirt and black baseball cap flips pancakes while holding her phone between her ear and shoulder.

MOTHER

I know, but my son is moving to college today! ... Well the client can't just change deadlines whenever they please ... Okay send the draft and I'll finalize it by midnight.

FATHER, a tall man wearing a purple NYU t-shirt that matches his wife's, sits at the kitchen table and holds a cup of coffee with one hand, while the other types on his cell phone. Amused, he talks to himself.

FATHER

I can't believe this guy, we're already giving him a deal. Although, I respect his ambition. Reminds me of me...

Mother sets a steaming stack of pancakes on a plate in front of SIENNA, a seven-year-old girl with big eyes and rosy cheeks. She looks annoyed as she dramatically stabs her pancake stack, ruining the smiley face made out of whipped cream. She is known for her impressive wit and ambition despite her age. Most of what she knows she learned from her brother.

ALEX, Sienna's six foot tall, 18-year-old big brother, enters, carrying a bin from upstairs. He is known for being friendly and popular at school, and a role model to Sienna, practically since the day she was born. The gap in their age and how busy their parents are with work has naturally lead Alex to be a sort of guardian for Sienna growing up.

Alex puts the bin down near the front door, then catches his mom's phone as it slips from between her shoulder and ear, handing it to her.

He places the coffee creamer in front of his dad, earning a nod, then suppresses a laugh as he wipes the whipped cream off the table near Sienna's plate. He takes his seat next to Sienna.

ALEX  
Si, don't play with your food.

Sienna lets out a low growl like a bear that's been poked, but obeys.

FLASHBACK - OUTSIDE SIENNA AND ALEX'S HOUSE

A five-year-old Sienna sits upon a small blue bike that used to belong to Alex. 16-year-old Alex has duct-taped pillows around every one of Sienna's limbs so she looks like the Michelin Marshmallow Man.

ALEX  
Just pedal and keep looking forward.

SIENNA  
What if I fall?

ALEX  
I won't let you get hurt.

Sienna begins to pedal, but just as she picks up speed she falls to the ground. Before she could even roll over, Alex has scooped her into his arms, jumping around.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Sienna that was amazing!

SIENNA  
I fell.

ALEX  
Are you hurt?

Sienna looks herself over and realizes she has no scrapes or evidence of falling thanks to Alex's pillows.

SIENNA  
No...

ALEX  
See, I told you. Now try again!

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

ALEX  
Whatcha thinking about?

Sienna stays silent.

FATHER  
Let's hit the road kids, NYU waits  
for no one!

Sienna lays her head on the table and Alex pats her back.

EXT. NYU DORM BUILDING - DAY

Alex and his parents unload boxes and bins from the back of the Volvo. Sienna sits on the curb. Other families push carts, talk to RA's, hug and say goodbye. Sienna overhears a family to her right.

RACHEL'S MOTHER  
Call me everyday, okay?

RACHEL  
Everyday?

RACHEL'S MOTHER  
Rachel!

RACHEL'S MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Just kidding, Ma. I will.

RACHEL'S LITTLE BROTHER  
Am I ever going to see you again?

Sienna prefers to look at the ground. Alex picks her up and giving her a piggyback ride, with their parents following closely behind.

FLASHBACK - THE COUNTY FAIR

Six-year-old Sienna is getting upset because she can't keep up with her family's pace. 17-year-old Alex notices.

ALEX  
What's wrong?

SIENNA  
You're too fast.

Alex squats down so Sienna can jump onto his back. She happily does so.

ALEX

Don't worry, I'll never leave you behind.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY - ALEX'S DORM ROOM

Alex sits her on his desk chair.

MONTAGE - UNPACKING ALEX'S THINGS

-- Their dad moves furniture around

-- Their mom wipes down every surface in the room

-- Alex carefully sets up his desk

-- Sienna stays on the chair and watches everyone

-- Their dad places a mini fridge in the corner of the room, wiping his brow

-- Their mom hangs Alex's clothes

-- Alex unrolls his rug and sets up his bed

BACK TO DORM ROOM

Alex and his parents plop on the edge of his bed.

FATHER

We'd better get going.

MOTHER

There's lasagna in your mini fridge if you feel snacky, but make sure you go to the dining hall so you can make friends! I know you won't have any trouble with that you've always been good at making friends. I remember when you were in kindergarten and so many kids wanted to come to your birthday party that I had to bake two cakes! Two!--

ALEX

Okay Ma, I got it.

Alex laughs a little as he hugs his mom. He hugs his dad next, and his parents leave his room. He turns to Sienna.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Si? Come on, you can't give me the silent treatment forever.

SIENNA

Yes I can.

ALEX

Ha!

SIENNA

I don't want you to go to college.

ALEX

I know. But you'll be okay without me.

Sienna stays silent.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Have I let you down before?

Sienna slowly shakes her head, smiling a little. Alex pulls Sienna into a tight hug.

FLASHBACK - A HOSPITAL

11-year-old Alex sits in a chair beside their mother's hospital bed. Their dad carefully places a pink bundle in his arms.

MOTHER

Her name is Sienna.

ALEX

I've always wanted a little sister.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Alex hears their mother calling for Sienna from the hallway. He lets go of her, ruffling her hair a little and making her laugh for the first time in days. Sienna turns and walks out of his room. Alex lays on his bed, looking at the ceiling. It's silent, the only sound is muffled voices beyond his door. He looks over at his desk, gaze landing on a framed photo of his family, Sienna proudly on his shoulders. He throws his arm over his eyes with a shaky breath.

INT. SIENNA'S BEDROOM - DAY

MOTHER (O.S.)  
 SIENNA, WAKE UP! YOU DON'T WANT TO  
 BE LATE FOR YOUR FIRST DAY OF  
 SECOND GRADE!

Sienna groans, rubbing her eyes, aiming her voice down the stairs to where her parents are.

SIENNA  
 ALEX NEVER SHOUTED TO WAKE ME UP!

She sluggishly gets dressed and walks out of her room like a zombie.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sienna perks up at the sight of bacon on the table. She loads up her plate.

SIENNA (V.O.)  
 At least I don't have to share the  
 bacon anymore.

MOTHER  
 Can you handle walking to school?

Sienna pauses mid-chew.

SIENNA  
 I've never done that without Alex.

FATHER  
 Your mother and I have to get to  
 work. You're a big second-grader  
 now, I'm sure you can do it.

Sienna looks at her parents who are looking at their phones. She grabs her pink backpack and storms out the front door.

EXT. SIENNA'S NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Sienna absent-mindedly kicks a rock as she walks to school, disgruntled by her parents' seeming lack of concern about her. She talks to herself.

SIENNA  
 (mockingly)  
 "You're a big second-grader now."

She's continues kicking the rock, watching her feet.

FLASHBACK - DOWN THE STREET FROM SIENNA'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

16-year-old Alex holds five-year-old Sienna's hand as they approach her school, kicking a rock between them.

ALEX

Okay, we're almost there. Shoot!

Sienna kicks the rock and it skids a few feet ahead.

ALEX (CONT'D)

GOALLLL!!!!

Sienna bursts into laughter, still holding Alex's hand while he pumps his free hand in the air.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Okay, now go show kindergarten who's boss.

SIENNA

I'm scared.

ALEX

Just be yourself. Everyone will love you.

Sienna smiles, and Alex gently pushes her towards the open door of her school. She skips in.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

SIENNA

I wonder what Alex is doing right now.

Sienna looks up and realizes she wasn't paying attention. She's lost. Just as she begins to panic, two people hold her hands.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

Kelsie! Morgan!

MORGAN

What are you doing here? School is that way.

SIENNA

I don't know.

KELSIE

What's wrong?



SIENNA

Alex hasn't called since we took him to college.

MORGAN

Really? When I go to college, I'm gonna call my little sisters everyday.

SIENNA

My mom and dad are always so busy with work that they never play with me. What if that happens to Alex, too?

KELSIE

What are you going to do?

SIENNA

I think I have a plan. Will you guys help me?

The three girls look at each other, Morgan and Sienna with mischievous smiles, Kelsie with more of a nervous one. Nonetheless, they each nod before walking into school together.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Alex jumps off a bus. He has his phone in his hand with the GPS up. A stranger harshly bumps him walking by, knocking the phone to the ground.

ALEX

Dude...

Alex picks the phone up and sees the screen is cracked. He heads for a busy pizza shop.

INT. PIZZA SHOP

PIZZA SHOP WORKER

Whadoyawant?

ALEX

Um --

PIZZA SHOP WORKER

Let's go kid, I got people waiting.

ALEX

Right, sorry, uh, what do you recommend?

The pizza shop owner roles his eyes, turning away from Alex.

PIZZA SHOP WORKER

Next!

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Alex exits the shop, drooping shoulders reflecting how defeated he feels. He looks around Times Square, clearly feeling overwhelmed, then heads back to the bus stop he just arrived at.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sienna, Morgan and Kelsie pause in the hallway before entering their classroom.

SIENNA

Okay, meet at table six for lunch, I'll explain everything.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Sienna, Morgan and Kelsie file into the classroom, searching for their names on desks. Their teacher, MRS. KEEGAN smiles warmly. The girls smile back, but their smiles fade when they see their seats are far away from each other.

MRS. KEEGAN

Welcome to second grade girls! Mrs. Allen told me you were three peas in a pod last year. I'm looking forward to getting to know each of you!

SIENNA, MORGAN, KELSIE

(in unison)

Thank you Mrs. Keegan.

Once the rest of the seats in the classroom fill, Mrs. Keegan begins with introducing herself and handing out worksheets with the words "Get to know ME" across the top. Sienna turns it over and begins drawing on the blank side.

MONTAGE - THE CLASSROOM

(classical music plays)

- Sienna carefully draws a city skyline
- Mrs. Keegan draws a circle on the chalkboard
- The circle transitions to the face of the clock
- Sienna takes her new box of crayons out
- Mrs. Keegan reads from a book
- The face of the clock is shown again

BACK TO CLASSROOM

Sienna puts down her crayon, and smiles with satisfaction.

MRS. KEEGAN  
Okay kids, lunchtime!

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Sienna waves Kelsie and Morgan over to where she sits as they reach the end of the lunch line. She proudly puts her drawing on the table. Morgan and Kelsie lean over the picture to get a better view, and to keep outsiders from seeing it.

SIENNA  
This, is mission Bring Alex Home.

MORGAN  
Woah! You're really good at drawing, is that a giraffe?

SIENNA  
It's a tree.

MORGAN  
Oh.

SIENNA  
Focus! This mission is top secret, promise not to tell anyone about it.

Morgan and Kelsie immediately offer their pinkies to solidify their promise.

SIENNA (CONT'D)  
Good. Now.  
(Using her drawing to explain)  
Alex went to college last week.  
(MORE)

SIENNA (CONT'D)

He said he'd have to work really hard there, and my parents, who are no fun at all, always say they have to work hard. So, it's clear that to stop Alex from becoming boring like my parents, we need to go save him.

Morgan and Kelsie follow along attentively.

KELSIE

How do you know he wants to be saved?

SIENNA

Think about it. You're both big sisters, if you moved somewhere and had to work all the time, wouldn't you want to go home?

MORGAN

Yeah!

SIENNA

My parents are too busy to even notice he needs to be saved, so it's up to us.

MORGAN

How do we do it?

SIENNA

When I was sad, Alex said I could visit him on a bus.

MORGAN

Like a school bus?

SIENNA

Kind of, but we have to pay for it. Alex and I used to take the bus to the zoo sometimes, and he bought the tickets on his phone.

Morgan pulls out her smart phone, she's the only one who has one.

MORGAN

My parents just got this for me! My dad said I can use it to buy stuff if I ever have an emergency.

KELSIE  
(fascinated)  
Woah...

SIENNA  
This is an emergency! Try typing in  
a bus to New York City on Friday.

The girls put their heads together as they watch Morgan search. Spell check fixes any mistakes that could have derailed them.

MORGAN  
Look! There is a bus on Friday at  
3:15pm. We could go right after  
school.

KELSIE  
But how do we get to the bus stop?

Morgan opens the maps app.

MORGAN  
I use this when I go on walks with  
my sister. It says we can walk to  
the bus stop in seven minutes.

SIENNA  
Perfect! Morgan, we'll tell our  
parents we're sleeping over at  
Kelsie's house. Kelsie, you tell  
your parents you're sleeping over  
at my house. We'll be back before  
anyone realizes we're gone.

KELISE  
Well... okay.

Morgan opens the page with the Greyhound bus tickets again. She enters 3 for the number of tickets, and clicks "Buy Now." Morgan, Kelsie and Sienna cheer, drawing the attention of a lunch aide. Morgan quickly shoves the phone in her pocket, and the girls eat their lunch.

INT. ALEX'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Alex is lying on his bed, throwing a baseball up and catching it, clearly bored. His roommate comes in for a moment, then leaves just as quickly without saying a word. Alex sighs.

ALEX  
I didn't think it'd be this hard to  
find friends.

Alex picks up his phone and his thumb hovers over the contact that says "Homebase <3." He pauses, then puts his phone back down, locking the screen. He lays still for a moment.

FLASHBACK - ALEX'S HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL FIELD

17-year-old Alex is up to bat. It's the bottom of the 9th inning in the State Championship. The first pitch is a strike. Alex shifts in the batter's box. The next, a ball. Alex hears Sienna in the crowd.

SIENNA

Hit it hard, Alex!

The next pitch comes speeding in, and Alex makes direct contact sending the ball over the fence. He trots around the bases and is engulfed by hugs from his teammates as they celebrate the win. Fans pour onto the field. six-year-old Sienna emerges from the crowd, jumping into Alex's arms.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

I knew you could do it!

ALEX

Thanks, Si.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

ALEX (CONT'D)

Why am I being such a baby?

He shoots up out of his bed.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Look at me talking to myself. If I stay in this room I'll go crazy. Or, crazier, I guess.

Alex grabs his bag and heads out the door.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - DAY

In his rush, Alex nearly runs straight into RACHEL, an 18-year-old bookworm who lives in his building.

ALEX

Ah, sorry.

Before Rachel can respond, Alex has rushed off. She smiles a little.

RACHEL

No problem.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Sienna, Morgan and Kelsie sit on a bench at a bus stop. Morgan clutches her phone with the tickets.

MORGAN  
Why is it called the big apple?

SIENNA  
I don't know, I didn't even see any apple trees.

MORGAN  
Weird.

SIENNA  
Yeah. And the state is New York, but so is the city. So it's called New York, New York!

MORGAN  
They couldn't think of something else?

SIENNA  
I guess not. What if I was Sienna Sienna?

MORGAN  
Morgan Morgan!

Sienna and Morgan crack up at themselves.

SIENNA  
This is the most fun I've had in days!

Sienna and Morgan catch their breath, and notice Kelsie is looking at the ground.

SIENNA (CONT'D)  
Kels, what's wrong?

KELSIE  
We're going to get caught.

SIENNA  
No way. All we have to do is use Morgan's map to find Alex's school, and he'll bring us home.

KELSIE  
He doesn't even have his car.

SIENNA

We'll take the bus! Oh, there it is!

Kelsie, Morgan and Sienna look at the approaching bus. It comes to a stop and the door swings open right in front of them. They sit frozen for a moment, until Morgan jumps up, grabbing Kelsie and Sienna's hands.

MORGAN

Like I tell my little sisters when they go to the dentist, it's time to be brave. Let's go!

INT. BUS - DAY

Morgan leads the way with Sienna and Kelsie following behind. RUDY, the bus driver, a 62-year-old man with a round face and wrinkles near his eyes from smiling, holds up his hand. He narrows his eyes a little, but when Morgan holds up the phone with the tickets, he shrugs and waves them on. They sit together behind Rudy, right at the front of the bus.

RUDY

You girls look a little young to be travelling alone.

SIENNA

We're cousins. We were with our grandparents this week while our parents were away for a wedding. Now, we're going home.

MORGAN

(whispering)

Hey, you're pretty good at lying.

KELSIE

Lying is bad.

SIENNA

Shh!

Rudy laughs a little at the girls whispering.

RUDY

Look, it's not my job to worry about you kids. But, it is my job to get you where you're going safely. I'm Rudy. Stay up here by me, I'll let you pick the music.

Even Kelsie is excited by this offer.



## MONTAGE - ON THE BUS

-- Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan pointing out the window as they pass cows

-- A graphic that shows a bus moving from Columbia, MD and crossing into Delaware

-- Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan looking out the window as the bus goes over the Delaware Memorial Bridge

-- A graphic that shows a bus moving from Delaware and crossing into New Jersey

-- Sienna and Kelsie pointing at airplanes as they pass the Newark Liberty International Airport, Morgan sleeping

-- A graphic that shows a bus moving from New Jersey and crossing into New York

## BACK TO THE BUS

The bus comes to a stop. People start getting off until only Morgan, Kelsie and Sienna are left. They get up to leave.

RUDY

Be safe kids.

SIENNA

We will, I'm going to find my brother!

RUDY

Did your parents send him to pick you up?

SIENNA

Uh, yeah, kind of.

Rudy begins to narrow his eyes again, but Morgan is already pulling Kelsie and Sienna off the bus.

KELSIE, MORGAN, SIENNA

(in unison)

Bye Rudy, thank you!

## EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - NIGHT

Sienna, Morgan and Kelsie stand on a busy sidewalk holding hands. Morgan pulls out her phone.

MORGAN

Sienna, what should I put in the map?

SIENNA

College.

Morgan types the word in, and presses begin.

MORGAN

Only a 12-minute walk, let's go!

Morgan and Sienna each take one of Kelsie's hands, and the three start their journey walking down the street. Morgan stops to point at a giant pizza. Kelsie and Sienna pull her along.

INT. NYU LIBRARY - NIGHT

Alex walks to a dimly lit corner in the library, books in hand as he approaches a stack of books already there. He sits, then stretches and rubs his eyes. When he opens them, Rachel is walking towards him.

RACHEL

You found my secret spot.

ALEX

Your what?

RACHEL

I usually sit in this corner.

ALEX

Oh, sorry.

Alex begins to gather his books and get up, nearly bumping into her, but Rachel stops him when she realizes who he is.

RACHEL

Wait, didn't you almost run into me earlier?

Alex hesitates, then remembers.

ALEX

Ah, I'm so sorry. I was in a rush to get out of my room, I felt like I was losing it in there.

RACHEL

No worries, I get it. You can stay here, as long as you don't mind if I join you.

ALEX

Not at all.

The two sit and begin reading, stealing glances here and there.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WALLACH ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan walk through large double doors of a building. There is artwork all around.

KELSIE

Sienna, is this where you took Alex?

SIENNA

I don't remember. We only saw his dorm so maybe this is like a classroom.

MORGAN

(whispering)

Woah look at that guy's mustache!

Kelsie, Morgan and Sienna turn to see FRANCIS, a 45-year-old art director in a floral suit with a curly handlebar mustache walking towards them. He smiles too widely, and reminds Sienna of the Joker.

FRANCIS

You must be Sienna! I'm Francis. How was your flight?

SIENNA

Flight?

FRANCIS

Oh, my mistake! Please forgive me I don't speak Italian very well.

SIENNA

It's okay I don't either.

FRANCIS

(laughing too hard)

Oh! Such a sophisticated sense of humor for a little girl! And these must be your sisters.

Kelsie starts to step forward as if she is about to correct Francis, but Morgan holds her back.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Well, you all must be exhausted. A limousine is coming to take you to your hotel. There you'll find anything you could possibly need, including an outfit for the news broadcast tomorrow!

SIENNA

News broadcast?

FRANCIS

Yes! We're so excited to be part of your first televised interview. I'm still amazed you're not even on social media, but I suppose the mystery of your appearance adds something to the wonder of being an art prodigy!

Sienna is sure now that Francis thinks she is someone she's not.

FLASHBACK - SIENNA AND ALEX'S DRIVEWAY

16-year-old Alex is trying to teach five-year-old Sienna how to play basketball. He shoots his regular sized basketball and swishes it. Sienna has a much smaller version.

ALEX

See? Use this hand to shoot, and this hand to guide it.

Sienna furrows her brow, then slings her ball right through a garage window, shattering the glass. She and Alex stand silent for a moment, until Sienna starts to cry.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey, shh it's okay, I'll tell mom and dad I did it.

SIENNA

Lying is bad.

ALEX

But this is to help you, so it's a little different.

Sienna nods as if she understands and Alex wipes a tear rolling down her cheek. He scoops her up and carries her inside.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

SIENNA (V.O.)

It's okay to lie because I'm helping Alex.

KELSIE

Um, sir --

SIENNA

Yes, we are very tired.

FRANCIS

Well get a good night of rest and be here promptly at 8 tomorrow morning! As long as you little rascals don't screw anything up for me, I'll get that promotion I should've gotten years ago and finally prove to my mother that being an Art Director is just as impressive as being an artist. I'd bet my brother doesn't even know how to make a hotel reservation himself, all he does is paint...

There's an awkward silence.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

Ah, there's the limousine!

The girls hesitate for a moment, but when Morgan and Sienna see the limo, they get too excited to question the strange Art Director. They head straight for the limo, Kelsie following closely behind.

INT. ARTHOUSE HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan walk into an extravagant hotel lobby, their mouths open in awe. A hotel employee greets them.

ALICE

Our special guests have arrived!  
Welcome to America!

MORGAN

Thank you!

Sienna looks at Kelsie who looks worried. Sienna shrugs.

ALICE

Follow me, I'll show you to your room. We've reserved the penthouse suite for you.

Alice presses the button for the elevator.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alice smiles brightly, talking and talking, but the girls are not listening.

KELSIE

(whispering)  
Guys, what is going on?!

MORGAN

(whispering)  
Just go with it, look at how cool this place is!

SIENNA

(whispering)  
It's already night and I don't know where Alex is. I'll just pretend to be the Sienna Francis is looking for tonight, then we can explain everything and find Alex tomorrow before the real Sienna ever comes. It'll be fine.

Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan have trouble keeping up as Alice leads them down the long hallway. She stops abruptly at the end of the hall.

ALICE

Here we are! This is your room key. If you need anything at all just press 1 on the phone. Enjoy your stay!

With that, Alice turns and walks back toward the elevator, somehow even faster than before.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

When the girls open the door, they find an ultra king size bed, an incredible view of the sparkling lights of New York City and a closet full of pajamas, robes, shoes, beautiful dresses, etc. They kick off their shoes and immediately start jumping on the bed together.

MORGAN

This is awesome.

Sienna stops jumping and flops on her back on the bed. She furrows her brows, thinking hard.

SIENNA

When we dropped Alex off, there was so much purple. Purple flags and banners and sweatshirts everywhere, but when we were walking and at that place with Francis, everything was blue.

Morgan and Kelsie stop jumping to lay on either side of Sienna.

MORGAN

So what?

SIENNA

So, what if we're at the wrong place?

KELSIE

We're definitely doing something wrong.

MORGAN

How can you even say that? We're at a fancy hotel with pretty clothes and free food and nice people. And all Sienna has to do is pretend to be an artist!

SIENNA

This isn't for the hotel or clothes, it's to save my brother.

The three are silent for a few moments. Finally, Sienna sits up.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

We'll talk to Francis tomorrow. Maybe he can help us find Alex.

KELSIE

Good idea.

MORGAN

Okay, but tonight I'm having fun.

Morgan picks up a menu and presses 1 on the phone.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Hi, can I have an extra cheesy  
pizza, a cheesecake, three warm  
chocolate chip cookies and three  
Shirley Temples?

Sienna and Kelsie burst into laughter.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WALLACH ART GALLERY - DAY

Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan walk into the museum, this time  
they're wearing beautiful custom dresses.

SIENNA

Okay guys, let's find Fran --

Before she can finish her sentence, Sienna is being pulled by  
the very man she was looking for.

FRANCIS

The cameras are here and ready.

SIENNA

Francis, wait, I think there's been  
a mistake.

FRANCIS

Don't worry about making a mistake,  
we have an Italian interpreter on  
standby in case you need help.

SIENNA

No, I mean I think you're confused  
about me.

FRANCIS

Sienna, this is Rhonda Sun, New  
York City's favorite news anchor.

RHONDA

Oh Francis, you flatter me. Hello  
Sienna, I hope you're enjoying your  
time in America.



SIENNA

I've always lived in America --

RHONDA

How sweet, she already feels at home!

NEWS PRODUCER

Alright Rhonda, we're live in one minute.

RHONDA

Perfect. Sienna, just act natural and answer honestly. People are going to be so impressed by your artistic talent and cute little smile that they'll love you no matter what.

Sienna looks around for Kelsie and Morgan. She sees them waiting behind a rope, looking nervous.

NEWS PRODUCER

In five, four, three, two --

RHONDA

Good morning New York City! I'm Rhonda Sun and I'm your number one news source for big news in the big apple. Today I'm joined by a very special guest. Sienna Cuzzolino is a seven-year-old art prodigy from the village of Scanno in Italy. She's joining us for her television debut. So Sienna, how do you feel when people compare you to Monet or Picasso?

SIENNA

Um, bad?

RHONDA

Of course, because you are eager to pave your own way.

SIENNA

I guess so.

RHONDA

I must know, your family has been adamant about keeping you out of the public eye. Why did you decide to come on television, and why through Columbia University?

(MORE)

RHONDA (CONT'D)

Is this perhaps a dream school for you?

SIENNA

I... wait, did you say Columbia University?

Sienna finally confirms she is at the wrong school. She begins to panic, and takes the microphone from Rhonda's hand.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

Alex, if you're watching this please come get me and my friends!

Rhonda is dumbstruck for a moment, but regains her composure thanks to the news producer's flailing arms signaling her to take the microphone back. She gently reclaims the mic.

RHONDA

Well folks, I'm not sure what Sienna is talking about, but she's an art prodigy. Her thoughts need not be explained, only admired. For channel 7 news, I'm Rhonda Sun. Keep shining New York.

NEWS PRODUCER

And cut! Pack it up everyone.

Francis rushes to the news producer.

FRANCIS

Pack it up?! What do you mean, this was meant to be a ten minute interview, you spoke for two!

NEWS PRODUCER

Listen, I can't let our ratings plummet for some kid. In live tv, if things are getting weird we cut, that's how it is. Maybe you should have prepped your prodigy a little better.

Francis stands there while the news crew quickly packs up and leaves, his eye twitching with anger. Slowly, he turns to face Sienna who has been joined by Kelsie and Morgan.

FRANCIS

You... Who are you?

SIENNA

I tried to tell you, I'm not from Italy and I'm not an artist.

MORGAN

It's true, her trees look like giraffes.

Francis' face turns red and he clenches his fists and jaw.

FRANCIS

Because of you brats, I'm going to be the laughing stock of Columbia University, and my family! And the promotion... everything is ruined!

KELSIE

We're really sorry if we got you in trouble. We just want to go home.

FRANCIS

Home? Home?! I'm calling the police, this is identity theft.

Morgan, Sienna and Kelsie all get stiff, and their faces become pale.

MORGAN

I don't want to go to jail!

FRANCIS

Too bad!

As he takes his phone out, Sienna takes Kelsie and Morgan by the hand and pulls them out the door into the city. Francis puts his phone back into his pocket without making a call.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I better never see those monstrous children again.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Alex and Rachel are sitting on a blanket in the park reading. They both look very happy. Alex's phone rings.

ALEX

Hello?

MOTHER (O.S.)

Alex! Have you seen the news?

ALEX

What? No, I'm at the park.

MOTHER (O.S.)

It's Sienna!

Alex's smile drops.

ALEX  
What happened?

MOTHER (O.S.)  
She's in New York! My phone is blowing up, she was on a news segment for Columbia University's art gallery, they think she's some Italian art prodigy.

Alex's expression grows angry.

ALEX  
I've hardly been gone two weeks and you and dad can't even pay attention to her enough to keep her safe at home?

MOTHER (O.S.)  
She told us she was going to a sleepover!

ALEX  
Unbelievable. I'll find her.

Alex hangs up, clearly rattled. Rachel puts her hand on his shoulder.

RACHEL  
What's wrong?

ALEX  
My little sister came to New York to find me, but ended up at Columbia's art gallery somehow. I'm sorry, I have to go there right now.

RACHEL  
Wait, that's insane.

ALEX  
That's Sienna. You don't have to come.

RACHEL  
No, I will, let's go.

Alex and Rachel grab their blanket and take off running towards the Columbia University Wallach Art Gallery.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WALLACH ART GALLERY - DAY

Alex and Rachel burst through the doors and practically fall upon the receptionist desk at the museum.

ALEX

The girl that was on tv here, where is she?

RECEPTIONIST

Sir, I'm going to need to see some identification.

ALEX

That girl is my sister, I need to get her home safely.

RECEPTIONIST

The Italian art prodigy?

ALEX

No, she's just a regular seven-year-old from Maryland.

FRANCIS

I'll handle them Betsy. Ma'am, sir, follow me.

Francis leads Alex and Rachel into the art exhibit. He stops in front of a beautiful painting.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

You know who painted this?

ALEX

Uh --

FRANCIS

Sienna Cuzzolino. And you know who did not paint it... YOUR SISTER!

Alex steps back, shocked by Francis' outburst.

ALEX

Listen sir, I'm sorry for any trouble my little sister created. I just want to get her home, so could you please just tell me where she is?

FRANCIS

No.

Rachel takes a threatening step towards Francis.

RACHEL  
Are you serious?

FRANCIS  
I really can't. She and her minions  
ran out the door when I discovered  
they're criminals.

ALEX  
Criminals? Are you kidding me?

FRANCIS  
She ruined my life!

ALEX AND RACHEL  
(in unison)  
SHE'S SEVEN!

FRANCIS  
I can't help you. Now leave before  
I call security.

Alex and Rachel turn and start running towards the exit.

ALEX  
I'll search this area --

RACHEL  
I'll call the police and stay at  
NYU in case they go there.

Alex pauses for a moment, letting out a heavy sigh.

ALEX  
God, I hope they're safe.

With that, Alex darts out the door to begin his search.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY

MONTAGE - ALEX SEARCHING

-- Alex running into a pizza shop with Sienna's picture on  
his phone

-- Alex in Central Park asking people

-- Alex in Times Square asking people

-- Alex at the Brooklyn Bridge asking people

BACK TO NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

Alex sits on a curb and puts his head in his hands. He texts Rachel.

ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Alex's words appear:

"Any sign of them?"

Rachel's words appear:

"no, I'm sorry"

BACK TO ALEX

Who blankly looks at his phone for a few moments, but his gaze makes it clear his mind is elsewhere.

FLASHBACK - OCEAN CITY MARYLAND BEACH

18-year-old Alex and seven-year-old Sienna are jumping over waves, their parents lounging in chairs in the background.

ALEX

Okay, one more wave then it's time to go.

SIENNA

Go where?

ALEX

Home.

SIENNA

Wrong.

ALEX

Wrong?

SIENNA

We need something sweet. A day is never complete without something sweet.

ALEX

Where did you learn that?

SIENNA

I made it up with Morgan and Kelsie.

Alex light-heartedly rolls his eyes, as he and Sienna jump one last wave.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Alex suddenly shoves his phone in his pocket and jumps off the curb, taking off running.

EXT. IN FRONT OF LEVAIN BAKERY - NIGHT

Sienna, Morgan and Kelsie sit on the curb in front of Levain Bakery. A sign that says "Best Cookie In New York" glows in the window behind them. They are still in their customized dresses, but a bit dirtier and much more tired compared to when they first put them on. Morgan's head rests on Kelsie's shoulder and they sniffle, which along with their red eyes, suggests they've been crying. Sienna puts her head in her hands. Suddenly, she hears a familiar voice.

ALEX

Hey, Si.

Sienna's head snaps up, and she rubs her eyes. Kelsie and Morgan brighten up as well. Alex takes a seat next to Sienna. He releases a huge sigh, then laughs in disbelief.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I should have started at the cookie shops.

SIENNA

ALEX!

Sienna jumps into Alex's arms before settling down on the curb next to him again.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

We couldn't even buy any, we don't have money.

ALEX

What happened? I saw you on the news!

SIENNA

We got to New York and tried to go to your college but we accidentally went to the wrong college then Francis this guy with a scary mustache --



ALEX

Yeah, I met him.

SIENNA

He thought I was an art prodigy from Italy and I didn't even know what that meant! But I needed to save you so I was just going to lie for one night and he gave us a limousine that took us to this really nice hotel where Alice walked so fast and we jumped on this huge bed and ate three funnel cakes and watched the lights sparkle and --

ALEX

Hey, take a breath.

Sienna breathes with Alex.

SIENNA

Once I realized we were at the wrong school I tried to ask Francis for help but he said we were criminals and the police were going to take us to jail. So we ran from him and we were going to use Morgan's phone to find you or call for help but it died and none of us have any phone numbers memorized. So, we came here.

ALEX

Why did you need to save me?

SIENNA

Because I know you're working hard all the time and I don't want you to get boring and be like mom and dad and stop playing with me.

Alex looks into Sienna's eyes that are starting to get teary.

ALEX

Aw, Si. Yeah, I'm working hard, but I'm also meeting new people and learning new things. College is fun.

SIENNA

But you don't even call me.

Alex is taken aback by this.

ALEX

You're right, I should have called. I just didn't want you guys to worry about me. Honestly, I've kind of had some trouble adjusting to the city life. There aren't many baseball fields around here, you know?

Alex laughs weakly, looking at his hands in his lap.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I thought if I called and told you, it'd seem like I wasn't doing a good job of being at college. You always believe in me and I always want to be a big brother you look up to. I guess I was just kind of embarrassed.

Sienna is quiet for a moment, and seems to be thinking very hard.

SIENNA

Alex, you're my favorite person in the world. I'll always look up to you.

Alex looks at the ground, trying to hide his huge smile.

SIENNA (CONT'D)

I know I said I wanted to come to save you, but I think it was more to save me. I just miss you a lot. I was scared you were forgetting about me.

ALEX

Are you crazy? I think about you everyday! When I pass the dining hall with pizza, your favorite, or when I see people walking their dogs because you always ask to pet them. I miss you too.

SIENNA

Let's just promise to always be honest.

ALEX

About how we feel and who we are.

The siblings smile at each other.

ALEX (CONT'D)

I've only been gone a week, but it seems like you're ten years older.

SIENNA

I did just explore New York City.

ALEX

Yeah, but I bet you wouldn't have been so brave if you didn't have your friends with you.

Sienna proudly looks over at Kelsie and Morgan.

SIENNA

Yeah. They're really good friends.

Alex laughs as he stands up.

ALEX

Come on castaways, let's get some cookies and go home.

MORGAN

YES COOKIES!

They go into the cookie shop, the girls bouncing with excitement, amusing Alex.

EXT. ALEX'S DORM - DAY

Sienna, Alex, Morgan, Kelsie and Rachel stand on the sidewalk in front of Alex's dorm, waiting for their parents to arrive.

SIENNA

Do you think they'll be mad?

ALEX

They'd kind of have a right to be.

SIENNA

(groaning)

Just let me live here. I'll go to college.

ALEX

Now you're really acting crazy.

Sienna and Alex's parents pull up to the curb and jump out practically before the car even comes to a full stop. In a flash, they've engulfed Sienna in a hug.

MOTHER

We were so worried! When we saw you  
on the news my heart stopped!

FATHER

I'm sorry we haven't been paying  
attention and making time to be  
with you. Things are going to  
change.

Sienna is pleasantly surprised and feels safe as she relaxes  
in her parents' arms. Alex smiles, satisfied by the scene.  
When they release her, Sienna turns to Alex.

SIENNA

Okay, fine, I'll stay home for a  
few more years.

ALEX

Good.

MOTHER

Okay kids, before we go back to  
Maryland I think we need to  
apologize to some people. Sienna,  
explain everything in the car.

Kelsie and Morgan pile into the car, Sienna pauses before  
getting in. She turns back to wave.

SIENNA

Bye Rachel, please take care of my  
brother.

Rachel smiles and waves, as Alex gently pushes Sienna into  
the car. He turns to Rachel and shrugs with a smile, then  
gets in the car himself.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WALLACH ART GALLERY - DAY

Sienna, Alex, their parents, Kelsie and Morgan walk into the  
museum. They go to the reception desk.

MOTHER

Hello, I was wondering if I could  
speak to whoever is in charge here?

SIENNA

We need Francis.

RECEPTIONIST

Okay, one moment.

When the receptionist gets up to leave, Sienna, Kelsie and Morgan instinctively take a step backwards. Their backs run into Alex's legs and hands as he urges them to step forward.

ALEX

You all lied, time to take  
responsibility.

Francis emerges, looking dapper as ever. When his eyes meet the girls, his face becomes dark.

FRANCIS

I said I never wanted to see you  
brats again!

Everyone is stunned by Francis' harsh words.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

I'll still call the police and have  
you arrested.

FATHER

Sir, they're seven years old.

FRANCIS

I don't care, they ruined my life!

MOTHER

From what I've heard, this has just  
been one huge misunderstanding.

FRANCIS

Of course you don't understand the  
gravity of this situation, you're  
just commonfolk.

ALEX

Hey, no one calls my mom that!

MORGAN

(whispering)

What does that mean?

SIENNA

(whispering back)

I don't know.

FRANCIS

Whatever. I can't stand the sight  
of you idiots any longer, get out  
before I call --

A new voice is heard, as a woman in a beautiful floral dress comes from around a corner.

DEAN RADY

Oh Francis, I truly wish you didn't say such mean words.

Francis gets pale as he turns to face his boss.

FRANCIS

Dean Rady! What are you doing here?

DEAN RADY

After the whole Channel 7 debacle, I felt a check in was due. Why is it I never knew we were being visited by an Italian art prodigy?

FRANCIS

Well, Dean Rady, I thought if I organized such a spectacular opportunity our gallery would finally get some positive press, and more importantly, you'd finally give me that promot --

Francis cuts himself off, realizing he's said more than he should.

DEAN RADY

Francis, you're a grown man, yet you seem to take no shame in lying.

FRANCIS

It's the only way to get what you deserve in a place like this.

DEAN RADY

I supposed in some sense you're right. You've earned a demotion. Go wait in my office.

FRANCIS

It was their fault the interview was ruined!

Everyone is silent, Francis begins to storm off then whips around to face Sienna.

FRANCIS (CONT'D)

This isn't the last you've seen of me, Sienna.

Alex steps in front of Sienna.

ALEX

Yeah, it definitely is.

Francis turns to walk away, and Dean Rady calls over her shoulder.

DEAN RADY

Oh, and Francis, we'll be featuring your brother's new exhibition next week!

A shrill scream of frustration is heard from Francis off screen.

DEAN RADY (CONT'D)

Siblings are a gift, but like a plant, you must nurture the relationship for it to grow strong and healthy. Now, girls. I'm so sorry about everything you've been through.

SIENNA

Actually Dean Rady, we were here to apologize. We should have been more honest, but things happened so quickly and when we tried to fix them it was too late.

DEAN RADY

Let this be a lesson for us all then. Even if you aren't an art prodigy, you're a very bright kid, Sienna. Maybe I'll see you again in a few years.

With that, Dean Rady turns and walks away. Alex ruffles Sienna's hair. Sienna, Alex, Kelsie, Morgan, Mother and Father each head out of the gallery, to the car.

INT. SIENNA'S ROOM - DAY

It's been a week since Sienna's big adventure. There is an NYU pennant hanging above Sienna's bed that wasn't there before. She gets up and slowly makes her way out of her room, still in her pajamas.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Alex is on Facetime when Sienna walks in.

FATHER

The sleepy-head is up.

ALEX  
Good morning Si.

SIENNA  
Morning.

ALEX  
So anyway, there was a news segment on this morning about the actual Italian art prodigy, Sienna. Apparently she pushed her flight back because she had the flu, and Francis never bothered to read any emails alerting him of that. She did an interview for Channel 7 with Dean Rady, and said her favorite thing about New York is the Pizza.

SIENNA  
Huh, maybe we're not so different after all.

Sienna, her parents and Alex laugh together.

FADE OUT