

SO BELOW

screenplay by  
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INT. TECHNOLOGY HALLWAY RAMP

The audience sees the technology hallway from a girl's point of view.

This girl is AMELIA. She walks with her head down, trying not to call attention to herself. She wears glasses and dresses plainly.

The shot fades in and out of blurriness, and we can hear her heart beat speeding up.

AMELIA (V.O.)

I don't know when it started, but when it gets bad, my throat feels like it's closing, I can feel my heart sink into my stomach, and I just wish the earth would swallow me up. I hate these hallways. This is my personal hell.

Amelia continues to walk down the hallway, and we still see from her point of view.

INT. ST. MARTIN'S ROOM - ANXIETY

Amelia walks into her homeroom and there are about 50 kids. Amelia tries to squish through everyone to get to her seat. It becomes clear Amelia is having trouble breathing.

INT. ST. MARTIN'S ROOM - REALITY

Amelia is sitting at her desk in the back of her homeroom.

There are about 12 kids scattered around the room.

Amelia puts her head down on the desk.

Mr. St Martin takes attendance.

The bell rings.

INT. MR. O'TOOLE'S OFFICE-ANXIETY

Amelia sits in Mr. O'Toole's office, looking down at her hands.

Mr. O'Toole is looking at his computer.

He swings his chair around so he's facing her.

MR. O'TOOLE

So, the deadline for BU is coming up.

All of a sudden Mr. O'Toole splits into multiple versions of himself.

MR. O'TOOLE 2

You still have most of the Common App to fill out.

MR. O'TOOLE 3

You probably won't get in though.

MR. O'TOOLE 4

I honestly don't know why you're even bothering to apply.

All of the O'Tooles start talking at once. Amelia starts to hyperventilate.

MR. O'TOOLE 3

You have no talent and nothing going for you.

MR. O'TOOLE 4 (CONT'D)

No one has faith in you, you can't get in to college.

MR. O'TOOLE 2

You are going nowhere and there's no point in applying to schools.

Amelia is on the verge of tears.

INT. MR. O'TOOLE'S OFFICE - REALITY

There is now only one Mr. O'Toole.

MR. O'TOOLE

... I have your recommendation written, and your other teachers have submitted theirs as well, so no worries there.

AMELIA

(sheepishly)

Thank you.

MR. O'TOOLE

I noticed you still had a few things to fill out on the Common App to fill out, so if you have any questions, feel free to ask, but you seem like you're on track.

Amelia nods.

MR. O'TOOLE (CONT'D)

And your transcripts have been sent, so that's all set. Do you have any major concerns?

Amelia shakes her head

AMELIA

N-

(clears her throat)

Nope, I think I'm all set, thanks.

Amelia stands up and swings her backpack over her shoulder.

She quickly walks out of guidance, waving slightly to Mrs. McCann on her way out.

INT. MRS. MURRAY'S CLASS - ANXIETY

Amelia sits in Mrs. Murray's class with her head down.

MURRAY

Can someone tell me the difference between rhetorical device A and rhetorical device B?

The entire class is silent.

AMELIA (V / O)

Please don't call on me, please don't call on me, please, please, please.

MURRAY

Amelia, go for it.

Amelia is frozen, she clearly does not know the answer.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Come on! It is not that hard, if  
you can't answer this question, I  
don't even know why you're in  
this class.

The entire class is staring at Amelia, on the verge of tears.

INT. ENGLISH ROOM - REALITY

MURRAY

Amelia, go for it.

Amelia looks up at Mrs. Murray, pleading, she is frozen in  
her seat. She can't answer.

Mrs. Murray understands, she looks around the room.

He nods to a boy sitting near the front. This is MAX.

He is dressed nicely, very clean-cut and preppy.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Max, take it away.

Max looks over at Amelia, and smiles at her. She blushes and  
looks down.

MAX

The difference is...

INT. MRS. MURRAY'S ROOM - REALITY

Mrs. Murray is handing back papers. Amelia is staring at Max.

Bell rings.

The class files out of the room.

Mrs. Murray stops Amelia as she is leaving.

MURRAY

Hey, Amelia, is everything okay?

Amelia nods.

AMELIA

Yeah, I-I'm sorry, I don't know what happened.

MURRAY

Don't apologize, I just want to know you're okay.

AMELIA

Yeah, thank you, I'm fine.

Amelia hurries out of the room.

EXT. AMELIA'S HOUSE

Establishing shot.

INT. AMELIA'S KITCHEN TABLE

Amelia and her parents are sitting at the kitchen table, eating silently.

AMELIA'S DAD

So I checked X2 today, and you have an 82 in English, what's going on with that.

Amelia's mother looks concerned.

AMELIA

It's nothing, I was just struggling with grammar a little, it's no big deal.

AMELIA'S DAD

Well you should be going after school to get extra help.

AMELIA

I don't need to I figured it out.

AMELIA'S DAD

Your grade doesn't reflect that.

AMELIA

I'm sorry.

AMELIA'S DAD

Your mom and I just wish you would put more effort in.

AMELIA

I do! I work so hard! I just happen to have an 82 in English, which by the way is not a bad grade!

AMELIA'S MOM

Do not talk to him that way.

AMELIA

Sorry, I'm just sick of you guys putting all this insane pressure on me. I'm in AP classes, I have art club, tech crew, and NHS tutoring. I work hard.

AMELIA'S MOM

That's why we've been taking it easy on you, but I'm not so sure we should be, because it seems like you're slipping, Amelia.

AMELIA

Well I'm not.

Amelia is on the verge of tears.

AMELIA'S DAD

We're not going to talk to you if you're going to act like this, why don't you go take a breather.

Amelia stands up from the table and stomps to her room, very upset.

INT. AMELIA'S ROOM

Amelia is laying on her bed, staring at the ceiling. She decides to pick up her laptop from her nightstand and opens up her facebook page.

Amelia scrolls through her page and notices that Max, the boy from her English class, is on her suggested list to friend request.

She clicks on his page and stares at his face. She puts the cursor on the "friend request" button. Amelia is about to click on it, but gets scared and closes her laptop.

Amelia falls back on her bed and stares at the ceiling.

INT. AMELIA'S ROOM THE NEXT MORNING

Amelia's phone alarm goes off.

Amelia rolls out of bed and turns her alarm off.

She walks over to her drawers and pulls out athletic clothes.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE AMELIA'S HOUSE THE NEXT MORNING

Amelia is wearing athletic clothes.

She puts in her headphones and starts running down the street.

AMELIA (V/O)

I like to run in the morning.  
It's a good way to clear my head  
before I have to go to school. It  
doesn't bother me when I'm  
running. I can just focus on me.

Amelia continues to run, until she starts to get tired.

She sits down on a rock to catch her breath.

She stands back up and runs back to her house.

INT. MATH WING AMELIA'S LOCKER-ANXIETY

Amelia is standing at her locker, getting her books for the next class.

She shuts her locker door and turns her head to see a group of boys in a scuffle a few lockers down.

Amelia is trembling, she looks very nervous.

More and more boys join in and they get closer to Amelia until she get shoved into her locker and her books fall on the floor.

INT. MATH WING AMELIA'S LOCKER - REALITY

Amelia turns her head and it's just a couple boys roughhousing with one another.

She shuts her locker door and walks to her next class.

INT. CAFETERIA - ANXIETY

Amelia sits at the edge of the lunch table.

There is a group of girls sitting near her, but it is obvious that Amelia is not with them.

Girl 1 elbows her friend and nods towards Amelia

GIRL 1

Why doesn't she talk to people.

GIRL 2

I dunno, she's weird.

GIRL 3

She's not even weird, she's rude,  
it's like she thinks she's better  
than us or something.

The girls all start talking about Amelia at once, slowly moving closer to Amelia.

INT. CAFETERIA - REALITY

GIRL 1

So I texted him and was like, if  
you just wanna study sure, but  
other than that... I don't know,  
it's just weird cuz he's not even  
in my class.

She looks over at Amelia.

GIRL 1 (CONT'D)

Amelia, isn't Chris L in your  
calc class?

Amelia nods her head.

GIRL 1 (CONT'D)

What are you guys learning right  
now? I have this thing, and well  
do you think you could help me? I  
just have a lot of questions...

INT. BATHROOM STALL

Amelia sits in the bathroom stall eating her lunch. Alone.

INT. WHITTENHALL'S CLASSROOM

Amelia walks into her history class.

She sits down.

Max comes into the classroom and sits down at the desk next to Amelia.

MAX

Hey.

Amelia smiles at him.

AMELIA

Hey.

MAX

Whittenhall is assigning our partners for the project today.

Amelia nods.

AMELIA

Can't wait.

Mr. Whittenhall walks into class. Amelia and Max face the teacher and take out their notebooks.

WHITTENHALL

Alright, I know you guys are anxious to get your partners for the term project, so I'm just going to hand out the rubric and I attached the partners on the last page.

Whittenhall walks around passing out the packet with the project rubric and partner list.

Students have varying reactions to their partners.

Amelia looks at the last page in her packet. She surveys down the list with her index finger.

Amelia and Max are partners.

Max smiles at Amelia. She smiles back.

INT. AMELIA'S ROOM

Amelia sits on her bed, scrolling through Facebook on her laptop. Listening to music on her phone.

She hears a ping. A friend request from Max pops up on her feed.

Amelia pushes the laptop off of her lap. She thinks for a bit, considering her next move.

Slowly, she pulls the laptop back onto her lap and clicks "accept".

She smiles hesitantly.

She picks up her phone and plays an upbeat song.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE AMELIA'S HOUSE THE NEXT MORNING

Amelia runs down the street, listening to her music.

INT. MR. WHITTENHALL'S ROOM - REALITY

The students are sitting in a circle with notes on their desk. They are working on a Socratic seminar.

MAX

So yeah, I just think the way that they talked about the African colonies like shows... or like it like represents the whole situation of imperialism.

Bell rings.

WHITTENHALL

Okay great discussion guys, homework tonight is the textbook reading.

The class files out. Amelia stops at Whittenhall's desk.

AMELIA

Here's my paragraph, the second part is due...?

WHITTENHALL

Friday.

Amelia starts to leave.

WHITTENHALL (CONT'D)

Amelia!

Amelia turns around. Whittenhall is reading her paragraph.

WHITTENHALL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

These are great points, I wish  
you'd share them with the class.  
They could use 'em.

Amelia smiles.

AMELIA

Thanks.

A beat.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

But I couldn't. Sorry.

Amelia walks out.

INT. CAFETERIA-REALITY

Amelia sits at her usual place at lunch, at the edge of the  
table alone.

Max walks over to her, smiling.

MAX

Hey.

Amelia looks up, surprised that Max wants to talk to her.

AMELIA

Oh... Hi!

MAX

So, I was thinking, we could meet  
at the library after school to  
work on the project.

AMELIA

Of course! I-I mean yeah, it's  
cool.

She smiles at Max.

MAX

Can I sit down?

AMELIA

Oh, yeah. Of course!

Max sits down across from Amelia.

Amelia is flustered, she doesn't know what to say.

The two eat in silence for a beat.

Amelia points at Max's crackers.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

Are those the cheese kind? I love those.

MAX

Yeah, so does my brother, I prefer the peanut butter though. Do you want them?

AMELIA

Oh, no, no thanks, I'm good.

Amelia returns to her food.

A beat.

MAX

So, why did you hand in a paragraph to Mr. Whittenhall after the discussion?

Amelia freezes.

MAX (CONT'D)

We didn't have anything due right?

Amelia stays quiet. She is freaking out.

Max is just maintaining what he believes to be a casual conversation.

MAX (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Is it because you didn't talk in the discussion? How'd you know you weren't gonna?

Amelia starts to hear every horrible thing she has thus far imagined people saying about her.

MR. O'TOOLE (V.O.)  
You'll never get into college.

MURRAY (V.O.)  
You shouldn't even be in my class.

AMELIA'S DAD (V.O.)  
We're just wish you would put in the effort.

AMELIA'S MOM (V.O.)  
You're slipping Amelia!

GIRL 1 (V.O.)  
You're so weird.

AMELIA (V.O.)  
He doesn't want to talk to you, he thinks your weird, just like everybody else.

AMELIA (CONT'D)  
Umm, I have to go.

Amelia quickly stands up and darts out of the cafeteria, not even bothering to bring her lunch with her.

INT. ENGLISH WING

Amelia runs to the English wing, visibly upset.

She gets to Mrs. Murray's room and slowly, hesitantly, knocks on the door.

INT. MRS. MURRAY'S CLASS

Amelia is sitting in a chair, upset. She is having an anxiety attack. She is trying to catch her breath.

Mrs. Murray sits opposite from her with her hand on her shoulder.

MURRAY  
It's okay.

AMELIA

No, it's not, I can't even have lunch with someone. There's something wrong with me.

MURRAY

There is nothing wrong with you. Lots of people are shy.

AMELIA

It's not that I'm shy, it's that any interaction or the smallest like negative thing in my life and I shut down. I can't handle it.

Mrs. Murray sits quietly.

A beat.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

I feel like everyone hates me, and they all think I'm weird or something. I'm not gonna get into college, I can't talk to anyone, and my own parents think I'm a failure.

AMELIA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Then, when someone finally wants to be my friend I freak out. I hate myself.

MURRAY

Do not talk like that, people do not hate you, you are absolutely going to get into college. I don't want you to ever say you hate yourself again. Understand?

Amelia nods.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm going to call guidance and have you dismissed, you need to go home.

Amelia thinks for a minute and nods.

AMELIA

Okay

Mrs. Murray nods, and picks up the phone.

INT. LIBRARY

Amelia is walking up the library stairs with her backpack on.

She stops at the top of the stairs.

Amelia sees Max in one of the study room. He is waiting for her to work on the project.

Amelia watches Max for a while.

She realizes she can't do it. Amelia turns around and goes back down the stairs. She walks out of the library.

END.