

[illegible]

1

Acknowledgement and Introduction

The work in this anthology of plays and poetry was written during a creative writing residency with **Lake Erie Ink: a writing space for youth** at **John Adams High School** in Cleveland, Ohio. This residency was supported by a grant from the **Thomas H. White Foundation**.

Over the course of several months, John Adams students wrote independently and collaboratively to create their own poems, stories and plays.

Thank you to the Thomas H. White Foundation for their support.

We would also like to thank Charles Ellenbogen, for his dedication and commitment to bringing creative writing opportunities to his students.

**Thomas H. White
Foundation** 



Table of Contents

Acknowledgement and Introduction	2
Table of Contents	3
Poetry	4
Deshawn Hereford	5
Makayla Turner	6
Anonymous	7
Breanna Brown	7
Anonymous	8
Miracle Williams & Jasany McIntyre	9
Angelita Ford	12
Da'Shyla Walker	14
Aniya Walker	15
Paris Jones	16
Paris Jones	16
Tamyia Whittsette	17
Plays	18
Into the Darkness by Aliyah H.	19
Almost Loved by Jayla S.	21
Hounded by Johnnie P.	31
The Leap by Joshua J.	32
NO WAY BACK By My'Chai S.	44
The Fall of the Rise by Tamia P.	48
Violet Rage by Tayauni S	53

Poetry

Deshawn Hereford

1/21/2026

Who am I in front of the camera?

Pretty, kind, dependable, understanding

Who am I behind the camera?

Kind, softspoken, angry, depressed

Me being the way that I am has a whole lost list of reasons, and sometimes that can change a person and the way a person views life that they feel like they need to hide, kind of like being in the closet or hiding your true self and what or whom you're attracted to. Life has secrets, and so do we.

Makayla Turner

The Past and the Present

Past		Present
I'm very rebellious, always going against the orders I'm given. A sinner, A girl who'll always pick her way instead of going to the narrow road.		I'm also a person who obeys, who is deep down afraid of what happens if I do the opposite, however I know one thing, Something very important to remember.
Fear is given from the enemy, no weapon against me shall prosper.		
I've been an outcast, a girl who's been threatened to go to juvie many times, a girl who'd pray for a better place, a change of scenery or feeling, I didn't want to hold onto the guilt of mistakes I didn't cause to happen and with it all? I dreamt of freedom...What is freedom?		Freedom is like being on cloud 9, always full of happiness, enjoying life despite the pain or who tries to destroy who you are, being able to actually breathe and be satisfied with the outcome, it's the power to act, think, speak.
Yet, there'll be days when the waters will be troubled.		
I'm always going to struggle, life isn't simply dependent on the path you take.		I can't do things my way any longer simply because it's too much to bear.
But if I give God this chance, if I let him redeem me.		If I trust him, if I take his hand knowing he won't forsake me.
Then I'll have no choice but to put my faith simply in him and believe. Jehovah, I put it in your hands, you saved me before, I know you'll do it again. All it takes is a leap to walk across that water, And in the midst of the storm, he'll say Peace— be still.		

Anonymous

We tell each other's story

A baby girl with skin bright as the moon was born

A baby girl with skin as golden as the sun was born
Both born world of anger and frustration

Breanna Brown

They call me...

The nonchalant show stopper

The loner

The one that doesn't care, but if I care, then will it get me hurt?

Will it make it seem like I care too much?

They say it's an act when I'm not acting, it's real

This is me

I can care sometimes, but not too little, if I put on an act, how will it affect me?

Will it affect my actions? Will I ever feel like I can love somebody without looking stupid?

I can only see what the future awaits

Anonymous

Telling me stories I never told

But beneath the shame, a heartbeat thrums,

A quiet drum that slowly hums:

“I am more than what was taken from me,

I am a soul that still wants to be free.”

So I scrub, I ache, I cry, I burn,

And little by little, I start to learn:

The night is heavy, but I am weightier still,

And one day, these hands will choose their will.

Miracle Williams & Jasany McIntyre

The Difference Between the Light and the Dark

I am a black woman

Yet when you see me,
you don't see me as black

Jasany
When you see me that's
All you see

Color does not define me

Jasany
But when I'm in a store,
You watch me with steady
eyes

And when I am in a store,
I make sure to keep hands
out of my pockets
so I won't be racially profiled

Yet we are both targeted by the white man

Defined by my skin, held at gunpoint
because I forgot to move slowly

Jasany
All I said was "hi", why'd you
Grab your gun?

Why are we seen as the same,
but different, too black for the white kids

Jasany

Too dark for the black kids

Not dark enough
for the black kids

But I am still a woman

Code Switch

Making sure I put on a face
So I don't get prosecuted
By my own race for not being
Black enough

Jasany
And I make sure to dial down
My authenticity so I am not
Too Black

Too loud,
Too reckless,
Too ghetto

Jasany
I am not loud just because
I am black

I am not reckless
even though I am black

I am not the
Stereotype

No, I don't speak like
A hoodrat
Not enunciating my words
I am not uneducated

Jasany
No, I don't walk around
Wanting violence everywhere
I go
I am not violent

We both struggle the same
Ways, but in different lights

They claim they hate us,
Yet take everything from us

Jasany
Take our slang, take our hearts

Take our dignity, take our pride

Jasany
Take our words, I am silent

Take our words so we can't speak

Jasany
Take our food, our culture

Take our clothes, our style

Jasany
Take who we are

Mooch off us

But most important of all
Take our lives, take our breath.

Angelita Ford

Prey

Lying on my bed under the red glimmer of my LED lights
Texting on an app with people who I thought were my friends
Talking about life, which I knew little about, I was only 13
Going to church regularly and praise dancing
Suddenly, I get a message "Hey beautiful, how are you?" I go to their account
He looks familiar, I've seen him in one of the group chats I was in
Light-skinned, braces, black curly hair, he was my type
So I texted back "I'm good hbu?"
We talked for a minute, then he asked me, "What u look like?"
Then another one, "What state u frm?"
With only the sound of my window fan, a cold chill ran down my back
So I slid under my purple and black cover, my mom got me and replied back
"[photo] I'm from Ohio, hbu?" He never replied to the hbu's.
We talked more that night.
The next night we were talking more than before, "You're so mature for your age," he said
I've never heard that before. It made me feel seen, it felt nice
With the nights going on, he started to ask if I wanted to meet up
"Where?" I said.
"Anywhere you choose."
"Ok, then let's go to the Shaker Library. I'll be there at 2:30."
"Ok," he said.
I was at the library for maybe 2 hours
He never showed, so i went home
"Why would you just stand me up knowing I was going to be there? I can't believe you!" I sent him in a fit of rage
"I'm sorry I had car trouble, so I couldn't make it," he replied.
"I hate you," I replied back.
Not knowing the trouble that'll come back to me

“So you hate me? You don't understand what I go through every day. No one has my back, not even you!”

I was taken back by what he said, scared of what he was going to do, I felt I had to calm him so I tried/

“No u want me dead i got u.”

Next thing I know, I'm trying to talk a grown man out of committing a sin

One of the only things that would send you straight to hell

I didn't want him to go to hell, so I kept trying harder

It was draining; he was pulling the light from my soul, a weight he dropped on my shoulders

Until one day, he was saying the usual “I hate me,” “I need help,” “I” “I” “I” I was tired of it

“So why not get it? Get the help you need and stop using a 13-year-old to vent.”

He stopped texting me for a while, then he said ok

But then I heard from a friend that he did commit it and that he was in the hospital, and said it was MY fault

I felt bad... but relieved all at the same time

That was the world that I lived in

And many still do at that age, not knowing better, thinking it was love when it was lust, temptation, grooming, and being treated as Prey

There is no stopping it

Predators will always find a way through.

Da'Shyla Walker

These Tattoos

Okay, so like, I have tattoos, right? They're not just random tattoos, nope. Each one tells a story, super bright, about my life every single day.

First, there's my uncle, he's not here. His birthday number, etched on my skin. It helps me feel him always near, a quiet hug from deep within.

Then there's this one, with my best friend, we got it together, like forever. It means our bond will never end. Through all the no contact stuff, whatever.

And this one, it's from the bible's end, it just means something to have, and it's like me praying over myself and everyone else.

My other uncle, his name is here too, another story that shines so bright, He's watching over me, my family, his family that he has made, guiding us through.

Yeah, these tattoos, they're a big part of me.

Aniya Walker

A Loop We Can't Escape From

Dear America,

Now, you may not know who I am, but for now, I am a human being who stands here to tell the truth and only the truth. We are stuck in a loop, and not only that but one of the worst loops in humankind, and we've created that loop ourselves. We, the people of America have trapped ourselves in a historical loop, constantly causing suffering to not only ourselves but also others.

We've had over 12 major wars, but what I believe is worse than that is the fact that the Civil Wars we've faced have been the bloodiest we've ever had. The fact that the wars against our own allies living in the same country as we do is the bloodiest type of war America has had. So, this is my proof that we're still living in this loop because America is facing the same issues now with ICE agents killing and deporting anyone that fits their description instead of actual illegal immigrants.

So, I stand here as one of the Americans suffering alongside you to pass down some advice. To those who believe that a different color is a sin or a crime, try to put yourself in their shoes and experience the hardships they go through as well. Those who believe that women shouldn't have the same rights as men should realize that the only reason they're currently here in this world is because of the women who chose to give birth to life.

We as a country should strive towards equality, especially in times like this, since we're currently facing multiple issues within our own white house. As my last piece of advice to the people of America, remember our duty as citizens as part of a democracy, and remember the duty bestowed to us in the Declaration of Independence.

Signed,

Aniya (A senior taking time out of my lessons to teach you one)

Paris Jones

The Laughter

The akeker
The Hahaer
I laugh like there's no tomorrow.
The laughter that feels your ears
Might leave you swell
With a story to tell
The laughter that lingers
From miles
And miles away
The laughter—
who is
The laughter?
She is me.

Paris Jones

The Yellow House

Today i think about the little yellow house
The yellow house that holds a lock in a box
The lock to my heart
The lock that leaves destiny
Destiny to me and my family
It all plays a big part
I don't know where to start
Once i grew older its all seemed to crumble apart

Tamyia Whittsette

My Kind Heart

I am Tamyia
I am loving, giving, and caring
I tend to pour into people more than they pour
Into me
I love being able to help and guide people
I love seeing joy on people's faces
Even though I might put others before myself
I cannot blame others for my kind heart
Evil spirits don't walk with me
Wrongful presences don't deceive me
Wicked actions won't affect my gentle touch
But only joy and excitement will triumph
Without a care in the world.

Plays

Into the Darkness by Aliyah H.

- Enter Katherine, plopping down onto her bed with her favorite Harry Potter book (the prisoner of Azkaban) clutching a bowl of popcorn, the book, and her phone, using her arms and her chest/abdomen to hold it up. -

Katherine, speaking on the phone with her best friend Sophie: Girl! Oh my god, guess what Chad just posted on instagram!

Sophie: Oh my gosh, what?!

Sophie says in a squeaky, yet concerned voice.

Katherine: He just posted him and Alyssa at the basketball game! And she had his jersey number on! I think they're dating or something.

Sophie: Oh my god, are you freaking kidding me?! I can't believe her! After all we've been through, this is what she does to me?

Katherine: Dude I couldn't believe it either, I just *HAD* to tell you.

Sophie: I'm gonna go call Alyssa right now, I need to give her a piece of my mind!

Katherine: Ooooo, (Katherine coos)
Okay girl! Call me later with all the details! *chuckles*

(Sophie swiftly hangs up the phone, determined and upset with a grunt)

(Sophie, in a fit of rage, angrily dials Alyssa to ask her about her and chad, but abruptly stops)

-CRASH!-

Sophie: What was that sound?!

(Sophie nervously jumps out of bed, landing lightly on her feet)

Sophie: I guess I should check it out..

(Sophie lightly walks out of her bedroom door, down the stairs, and into the darkness that is her living room)

Sophie: Hello?! Is there anyone there?!

- Through the darkness, Sophie sees a figure moving quickly towards her and in an instant the figure swings a metal pipe at her, which she dodges reflexively-

Almost Loved by Jayla S.

Genre—Drama/Romance

Characters

- LENA – Gives more than she should, hopes quietly
- ETHAN – Emotionally dependent, unaware of the damage
- MAYA – Best friend, honest and protective
- AVA – The girl Ethan truly wants

SETTING

Modern day. Minimal props.

Locations: bedroom, school hallway, park, school event, empty classroom

ACT I – ATTACHMENT

Scene 1: Lena's Bedroom

(Lights up. LENA sits on her bed, phone in hand. She stares at it without typing.)

LENA:

I've been staring at this screen for five minutes. (She says anxiously while shaking her leg)

I know exactly what I want to say...

I just don't know how much of myself I'm allowed to show.

(She types, deletes.)

LENA:

What if I text too fast?

What if I wait too long?

It's stupid that something so small

feels like it could change everything.

(Phone buzzes. She smiles, then immediately stops.)

LENA:

I hate that my mood depends on him.

I hate that I pretend it doesn't.

(She lies back on the bed.)

LENA:

He tells me things he doesn't tell anyone else.

That has to mean something.

People don't open up for no reason.

(Pause.)

LENA:

At least... that's what I keep telling myself.

(Lights fade.)

Scene 2: School Hallway

(ETHAN and LENA walk slowly. Lockers slam in the background.)

ETHAN:

Do you ever feel like everyone expects you to have everything figured out?

LENA:

All the time.

ETHAN:

When I talk to you, I don't feel like that.

I can just be honest.

LENA:

I like that you trust me.

ETHAN:

I don't trust people easily.

(Pause.)

ETHAN:

You're different.

(LENA looks at him, hopeful.)

LENA:

Different how?

ETHAN:

You stay.

Even when things get messy.

(Beat.)

ETHAN:

Promise you won't leave.

(Long pause.)

LENA:

I won't.

(ETHAN nods, satisfied. He walks away.)

(LENA stands there longer than she should.)

ACT II – WARNING SIGNS

Scene 1: Park Bench with Maya

(MAYA and LENA sit. Silence before MAYA speaks.)

MAYA:

You've been quiet all day.

LENA:

I'm just tired.

MAYA:

You're always "just tired" when this is about him.

(Pause.)

MAYA:

Do you like him?

LENA:

That's not fair.

MAYA:

Answer the question.

(Silence.)

LENA:

I care about him.

MAYA:

That's not an answer either.

LENA:

Yes.

I like him.

(MAYA exhales.)

MAYA:

Does he like you back?

LENA:

He needs me.

MAYA:

That's not love.

LENA:

What if it turns into love?

MAYA:

What if it never does?

(Long pause.)

MAYA:

I watch you drop everything when he texts.

I watch you wait for replies.

I watch you explain his behavior like it's your job.

LENA:

If I stop being there, he won't need me.

MAYA:

And if he only wants you when he's hurting,

That's not fair to you.

(LENA looks down.)

Scene 2: Late-Night Phone Call

(Lights shift. LENA on bed. ETHAN's voice is heard.)

ETHAN:

I don't know what's wrong with me.

LENA:

Nothing's wrong with you.

ETHAN:

I feel empty all the time.

LENA:

You're overwhelmed.

ETHAN:

You always know what to say.

LENA:

I just listen.

ETHAN:

That's why I need you.

(Pause.)

LENA:

Need... or want?

ETHAN:

What's the difference?

(LENA doesn't answer.)

ACT III – REALITY

Scene 1: School Event

(Music. AVA enters with ETHAN. LENA watches.)

LENA (quiet):

He's never looked at me like that.

(AVA laughs. ETHAN smiles freely.)

LENA:

That laugh...

I've never made him laugh like that.

(AVA touches ETHAN's arm. He leans in.)

(LENA turns away.)

LENA:

I think I always knew.

I just hoped I was wrong.

(Lights fade.)

ACT IV – CONFESSION

Scene 1: Empty Classroom

(LENA and ETHAN stand apart.)

LENA:

I need to be honest with you.

ETHAN:

You're scaring me.

LENA:

I've been scared for a while.

(Pause.)

LENA:

I love you.

(Long silence.)

ETHAN:

Lena...

I care about you so much.

LENA:

But not like that.

ETHAN:

No.

(Pause.)

LENA:

I needed to hear it.

Not guess.

Not hope.

ETHAN:

I never meant to hurt you.

LENA:

I know.

But you let me stay when I should've walked away.

(ETHAN looks down.)

ACT V – ACCEPTANCE

Final Scene

(MAYA enters.)

MAYA:

You told him.

LENA:

Yeah.

MAYA:

Are you okay?

LENA:

Not really.

But I will be.

(Pause.)

LENA:

I loved him honestly.

That has to mean something.

MAYA:

It means you're human.

LENA:

Next time,

I want someone who chooses me

without me having to prove I'm worth it.

(Lights fade.)

Hounded by Johnnie P.

Scene 1:

Bjay: (walking to the store in the cold, when all of a sudden he heard this loud bark from a dog)

(Bjay starts running from the dog while calling his sister to open the door)

Bjay:HELLO! Bruh come open the door this dog chasing me

Kelsey: LMAOOO boy bye

Bjay: stop playing I'm on my way, open the door!

Kelsey: ok boy you better hurry up

(the dog catches up to Bjay and bite him in the butt)

Bjay: ahhhhhh the dog got my ahh take me to the hospital

(kelsey walk out side to see Bjay bleeding and screaming)

Kelsey: OMGG yo bootyyyy

Bjay: where is my mom i need to go the hospital

Kelsey: boy she at work, go get in the shower u a be okay

(kelsey and Bjay start fighting outside and the neighbor called the police)

Kelsey: here come the police dummy

Bjay :I'm about to leave

(bjay slapped kelsey again then ran off)

The Leap by Joshua J.

Characters

Jeremy White, Mr. Grant, Mr. Han/The recruiter, Blake, Collin

Setting

Story begins in Mr. Grant's office, within the Inkwell Press's main company building in the middle of New York, set in the 60's

Scene 1

In Mr. Grant's Office.

(Mr. Grant looks down at his watch, the light from the lamp above his table reflects off its shiny surface. He watches as the hand ticks away, before looking up with an almost exhausted sigh.)

Mr. Grant: "Alright Kid i'll give you 10, what did you want to talk about?"

(Jeremy steps forward, his expression a mix of nervousness and determination, as he sets a stack of papers on Mr. Grant's desk).

Jeremy: "I know it's late, and I'm sure a man such as yourself has a million other places you'd rather be right now so I'll try not to take up too much of your time, but it's in your best interest to hear me out."

(As if to emphasize his point, he spreads out the stack of papers revealing the front page of several newspapers across various different dates)

Jeremy: "These are several articles that we've released over the course of a month, Months! And yet, none of the stories I've personally worked on have seen the spotlight, instead I'm stuck working on finance and mild local community news. While a Journalist like Blake is running our frontpage."

(Jeremy catches himself as he can feel his tone rising as he goes on, he takes a breath to recompose as he tries figure out how he wants to finish this little speech)

Jeremy: "I really don't mean to come off as arrogant or that i don't trust your judgment, but i really think you should consider my work, at least compare the tw-"

Mr. Grant: "What do you think our philosophy is here?"

Jeremy: "I'm sorry?"

Mr. Grant: "It's on the wall, I'm sure you've seen it, I came up with it myself when I first created this company about 15 years back."

(He smiles as if recalling the fondest memory, before looking back into Jeremy's eyes)

Mr. Grant: "When our Competition thinks they've struck gold, we strike diamonds. Now what do you think that means? I'll tell you, it means we don't harp off the work of others, when our competition uncover a shiny new story to thrower on their frontpage, we never follow up on that news, if it's big we might cover it for a week or two, a side panel here and there, but the goal is always to look for something bigger."

Jeremy: "But if a story's hot why not follow up on it? Improve on where it might need improving so it looks better for us."

Mr. Grant: "But it's not the consumer's first time hearing it, kid, here take this story for example."

(Mr. Grant takes one of the newspaper articles off his desk and holds in loosely in his hands, quickly flipping through the pages and sections until he lands on Jeremy's part)

Mr Grant: "See i remember this story you went over, it was about two weeks ago right?"

Jeremy: "Yes Sir, I went over the Man on fire incident that everyone was talking about at the time"

Mr. Grant: "But that story was already covered by another business, you waited for the talk around it to peak before you dipped your own hand in the cookie jar, and that's the issue. You're waiting."

Jeremy: "Waiting"

Mr. Grant: "You're waiting for the stories to be made for you, and from there all you have to do is add in some extra insight, it's safe sure, but it's lazy, you write like you're afraid to fail."

(Mr. Grant lightly tosses the paper back on his desk, as he takes another deep breath)

Mr. Grant: "Listen, I'll be the first person to tell you that you've got a knack for this kind of work, but if you really want to be successful, it's all mental. Imagine if you start the flame rather than just add to its fire, I want you to think about that, take it to heart, and bring a new story in on Monday like always. But, when you do, I want to see something unique, special, remember nothing's guaranteed here."

(Jeremy stands still for a moment, silent as a church mouse, letting the ticking of the clock on the wall fill the silence.)

Jeremy: "....Yes, sir."

(He slowly gathers the papers in his hands, he looks up and opens his mouth like he's got something to say but Mr. Grant quickly cuts him off)

Mr. Grant: "Your Ten Minutes are up. But, now you've got a weekend, use it."

(Lights Dim, end of Scene 1)

Scene 2

(Newsroom. Typewriters clack rhythmically. Cigarette smoke lingers in the air. Blake is leaned back in his chair with his feet up on a desk. Collin is hunched over his typewriter, glasses sliding down his nose. Jeremy walks in, distracted.)

Blake: (without looking up) "Careful, folks. The prodigy walks among us."

Collin: "You survive the lion's den?"

Jeremy: "Depends on your definition of survive."

Blake: (grinning) "Grant chew you out?"

Jeremy: "He said I write like I'm afraid to fail."

Blake: (laughs) "Well, are you?"

Jeremy: "I'm careful."

Blake: "That's what people say when they mean scared."

Collin: "Easy, Blake."

Blake: "No, no. I'm serious. You want the front page? You gotta swing for it. Can't bunt your way into history."

Jeremy: "You make it sound simple."

Blake: "It's not simple. It's risky. That's the point."

Collin: (quietly) "Risk doesn't always mean reckless."

Jeremy: "What's that supposed to mean?"

Collin: "Means there's a difference between chasing headlines and chasing truth."

Blake: "Truth doesn't matter if no one reads it."

Collin: "And noise doesn't matter if it says nothing."

(Tension. Jeremy rubs his temples.)

Jeremy: "Grant wants something new by Monday. Something no one else has."

Blake: "Then stop tailing the pack. Go where no one's looking."

Collin: "Just make sure wherever you go, you can back it up."

(A secretary walks over.)

Secretary: "Jeremy? There's a man downstairs asking for you. Says it's important."

Jeremy: "Who?"

Secretary: "Mr. Han."

(Blake raises an eyebrow.)

Blake: "Sounds expensive."

Scene 3

(Evening. Streetlights flicker on. Mr. Han stands in a tailored coat, polished shoes shining. He smiles warmly as Jeremy approaches.)

Mr. Han: "Jeremy. I was hoping you'd come down."

Jeremy: "You have five minutes."

Mr. Han: "I'll only need three."

(He offers a cigarette. Jeremy declines.)

Mr. Han: "I represent The Herald Tribune. You're familiar?"

Jeremy: "Everyone is."

Mr. Han: "Good. Then you know we value talent. Especially young talent that's being... underutilized."

Jeremy: "You've been reading our paper."

Mr. Han: "I read everything. And your work? Sharp. Insightful. You have instincts. But you bury them beneath caution."

Jeremy: "That seems to be the consensus."

Mr. Han: "Ah, but who said that was a bad thing? At The Herald, you wouldn't have to fight for space. You'd have a guaranteed front-page feature every week. Your name in bold. Your stories seen."

Jeremy: "Guaranteed!?"

Mr. Han: "Contractually."

(Jeremy's composure wavers.)

Jeremy: "And what's the catch?"

Mr. Han: "No catch. We simply expect consistency. Deliver quality, keep your reputation clean, and the spotlight stays on."

Jeremy: "So I play it safe."

Mr. Han: "You play it smart."

Jeremy: "There's a difference."

Mr. Han: "Is there? Security isn't cowardice, Jeremy. It's strategy."

(He steps closer.)

Mr. Han: "You can spend years waiting for Mr. Grant to 'discover' you... or you can step into certainty now."

(A beat.)

Mr. Han: "Think it over. But don't wait too long. Opportunities dislike hesitation."

(Mr. Han exits. Jeremy remains.)

Scene 4

(Only Collin remains. Jeremy enters slowly.)

Collin: "You look like you've seen a ghost."

Jeremy: "I saw a contract."

Collin: "Ah."

Jeremy: "Front page every week. Guaranteed."

Collin: "That's... big."

Jeremy: "It's safe."

Collin: "Safe isn't a dirty word."

Jeremy: "Grant says I'm afraid to fail."

Collin: "Are you?"

Jeremy: (after a pause) "Yes."

Collin: "Good."

Jeremy: "Good?"

Collin: "Look, I've been in this business a long time, and I've seen all kinds of journalists, trust me when I tell you the ones who take the most risks, are the quickest to end up in another line of work. The ones who don't fear failure usually don't have anything meaningful to risk."

Jeremy: "So what would you do, are you saying I should take the deal?"

Collin: "I can't answer that. Or rather, I shouldn't, you're looking for me to give you answers you can only find yourself. But what I can tell you, is when I gotta think about something like you do right now, I go to Central park."

Jeremy: "At night? Why?"

Collin: (Smiles Lightly) "Ain't nothing to do out there at that time of night but think, and look at the scenery"

Jeremy: "Yeah, that and getting robbed"

Collin: "That's a risk isn't it?"

Jeremy: "Very funny. I'll see you around."

(Jeremy exits, Lights dim.)

Scene 5

– Central Park, Late Sunday Night

(A dim wash of blue light. Central Park. A lone bench beneath a flickering lamppost. The distant hum of New York traffic blends with the chirp of crickets. Jeremy sits hunched forward, jacket draped over his shoulders, Mr. Han's business card turning over and over in his hands.)

Jeremy: "Guaranteed."

(He scoffs softly.)

Jeremy: "Front page every week. Name in bold. No more waiting. No more side columns about grocery prices and ribbon cuttings."

(He leans back, staring at the skyline.)

Jeremy: "No more wondering if I'm good enough".

(A payphone stands nearby. It suddenly rings sharply, cutting through the quiet. Jeremy jumps slightly. He hesitates, then stands and answers.)

Jeremy: "Hello?"

Mother: (warm Southern accent, gentle but firm) "Jeremy? Baby, that you?"

Jeremy: (softens instantly) "Mama? It's late."

Mother: "It's earlier here. You sound tired."

Jeremy: "It's been a long weekend."

Mother: "You eating alright?"

Jeremy: (half-smiles) "Yes, ma'am."

Mother: "You prayin' alright?"

Jeremy: "Mama—"

Mother: "I'm serious."

(He exhales.)

Jeremy: "I don't know what I'm doing."

Mother: "Well that makes two of us most days. What's wrong?"

Jeremy: "I got an offer. From a bigger paper. They want me on the front page every week. Guaranteed."

Mother: "Guaranteed?"

Jeremy: "That's what they say."

Mother: "And what's the other choice?"

Jeremy: "Stay where I am. No promises. I turn in a story Monday and hope it's enough."

Mother: "Hope?"

Jeremy: "It's not stable, Mama. Nothing there is safe. I could spend years and never see my name up top."

Mother: "Mm."

(A beat.)

Mother: "You remember when you were ten and wanted to jump off that old dock into Miller's Pond?"

Jeremy: "Mama, I almost broke my leg."

Mother: "You stood there for near twenty minutes. Shakin'. Said the water might be too shallow."

Jeremy: "It was shallow."

Mother: "And what'd you do?"

Jeremy: "I jumped anyway."

Mother: "Why?"

Jeremy: "Because if I didn't, Ben Turner was gonna call me chicken for the rest of my life."

Mother: (laughs softly) "No. That ain't why."

(Jeremy pauses.)

Jeremy: "...Because I wanted to know if I could."

Mother: "There it is."

(She grows more serious.)

Mother: "Jeremy, I didn't raise you to chase what's easy. I raised you to chase what's true. When you left for New York, you said you didn't want to just write stories. You wanted to find 'em. You wanted to be the one folks followed."

Jeremy: "I do".

Mother: "Then why you talkin' like you're lookin' for permission to hide?"

(Silence. The wind rustles the trees.)

Jeremy: "It's not hiding. It's security."

Mother: "Security's fine. But not if it costs you your courage."

Jeremy: "What if I fail?"

Mother: "Then you fail. And you get back up. Same way you climbed outta that pond, limp in' and grinnin'."

(Jeremy laughs despite himself.)

Mother: "Baby, don't you let fear dress itself up as wisdom. They ain't the same thing."

(A long pause.)

Jeremy: "Grant says nothing's guaranteed there."

Mother: "Good."

Jeremy: "Good?"

Mother: "Means you'll have to earn it."

Jeremy: "And if I don't?"

Mother: "Then at least you'll know you tried, that's all any of us can do anyhow, right?."

(Jeremy looks down at Mr. Han's card in his hand. Slowly, deliberately, he folds it in half.)

Jeremy: "I think... I think I know what I have to do".

Mother: "I figured you did. You just needed to hear your own voice say it."

Jeremy: "Thanks, Mama."

Mother: "Make me proud, Jeremy."

Jeremy: "I will."

Mother: "You already do."

(Click. The line goes dead. Jeremy stands still for a moment. Then he tears the business card clean in two and drops it into a nearby trash bin.)

Jeremy: "No guarantees."

(He looks out at the city skyline, a quiet fire in his eyes.)

Jeremy: "Now that the hard part's done I guess I should get to work."

(Lights fade as he exits toward the glow of the city.)

Scene 6

Monday Morning, Mr. Grant's office)

(Mr. Grant reviews paperwork. Jeremy enters, holding a single folder.)

Mr. Grant: "Morning. Well?"

Jeremy: "I've got something."

Mr. Grant: "Let's hear it."

Jeremy: "There's been quiet talk about unsafe conditions in the subway tunnels. Workers getting sick. Corners being cut. No one's covered it because there's no explosion, no fire. Just whispers."

Mr. Grant: "You have proof?"

Jeremy: "Interviews. Documents. I spent the weekend down there."

Mr. Grant: (leans back) "That's dangerous territory."

Jeremy: "It is."

Mr. Grant: "And if it falls apart?"

Jeremy: "Then it's on me."

(Silence.)

Mr. Grant: "And Mr. Han?"

(Jeremy stiffens.)

Jeremy: "You knew."

Mr. Grant: "He's been circling for years."

Jeremy: "He offered me certainty."

Mr. Grant: "I'm sure he did."

Jeremy: "But certainty means I wait for stories handed to me. I don't start them."

Mr. Grant: "So?"

Jeremy: "So I'm staying. Not because it's safe. But because it isn't."

(A long pause. Then Mr. Grant smiles faintly.)

Mr. Grant: "When our competition thinks they've struck gold..."

Jeremy: "...we strike diamonds."

Mr. Grant: "Front page. Monday edition."

Jeremy: "Nothing's guaranteed, right?"

Mr. Grant: "Nothing ever is."

Scene 6

(The Newsroom.)

(Blake holds up the fresh paper.)

Blake: "Well I'll be damned."

Collin: "He did it."

Blake: (to Jeremy) "Subway scandal? That's bold."

Jeremy: "It's risky."

Blake: "Yeah. It is."

(He offers his hand. Jeremy shakes it.)

Blake: "Welcome to the front page."

(Mr. Han watches from across the street, unseen by the others. He folds a copy of The Inkwell Press, nods slightly, and walks away.)

Final Scene

(Jeremy stands center stage, paper in hand. The newsroom buzzes behind him.)

Jeremy: "You can wait for the fire to start... or you can strike the match."

(Lights fade as the sound of printing presses roars to life.)

End.

NO WAY BACK By My'Chai S.

Characters:

Zack - 18 years old (junior in high school)

Bobby - 17 years old (junior in high school)

They have been friends since they were in 1st grade. They did everything with each other and on a summer day Zack had his mom's car and he wanted to go as a 2 man in the middle of july.

Scene 1 (zack and bobby are on the phone)

Zack - (call Bobby and ask him what the moves are) What's the move brudda im trying to find a move.

Bobby - (call Zack he answer) I got these 2 twins. They said they wanted to see us and watch movies but they live all the way on the west side.

Zack - Bet, come get me im going to be ready in 15, let me know when you are outside.

Bobby - Ok ill be there in 20 im going to the store to grab some plants for my mom that was the only way she would let us use the car she loves those plants

Zack - Bet, take your time, finna shower real quick.

Bobby - (25 min later) I'm outside

Zack - (gets in the car) Where are we going to my boi?

Bobby - We need gas before we get there (goes to gas station).

Zack - I got 15. How much do you got?

Bobby- i got 20

Zack - how much do we need?

Bobby - We need 50 but that should get us there but we cant leave the car running

Zack - Damnn they far. You know somebody who can give us a couple mo dollars?

Bobby - My aunt still owes me some birthday money but she works late shift so we have have to wait till she is off

Zack - Bet, let's just get this gas and be there.

Scene 2

(get there)

Bobby - (Call them and tell them that they're outside) we outside

(come get the door and let us in)

Zack - Wassup with yall (they say hey)

Bobby - what movie we watching

(they say something off netflix)

Zack - say less (start cuddling with her)

Scene 3

(wake up to the door slamming and its their parents coming home)

(both jumps up)

Bobby - what was that?

Zack- I think that's their mom waking them up!

Bobby - (wakes them up) bro i think your mom is here we need to leave now!

Zack- we need to run in the basement

(runs in the basement)

Bobby - I think we going to be here all night bro

Zack- Okay im calling aunt so we can get gas because we all out

(breaks to window and gets out)

(got in car and left)

Scene 4

Bobby - Bro, they are following in the car behind us you know who it is?

Zack- I just hit a left. They are still on us. Let's go to your house because it is on the other side of town.

(gets there)

Booby- Bro, we are not goin there again, I learned my lesson.

The Fall of the Rise

by Tamia P.

Scene 1

(Duchess Juliana Rango boards the boat with duke Roberts Rango)

Duke Roberts: (walks to the captain's room) I'm assuming you will get me and my wife there safely yes?

Captain Leorio: of course you're in good hands duke

(along the journey from the Atlantic ocean to the Pacific something huge arises on the radar . a storm, but captain Leorio pays it no mind, he believes he is the greatest of great captains so he charges the storm)

Duchess Julianna: did you feel that (her body shakes in fear) i think it's a storm (*scarily*)

Duke: we are in good hands (he plants a kiss on her forehead) after all we are being led by the king's son. I'm sure he has many years of practice (*he assures*)

(the boat shakes with an uneasy swift)

Duke: I'm going to check on the captain, hm? *he says more as a statement than a question*

(as the duke stands he looks out of the window on the ship, a wake, a massive one maybe two or three thousand feet high wave. Duke Roberts has no time to react he makes the leap for his wife but before his arms could even feel her one last time, the ship goes under taking the life of Duchess Julianna and Duke Roberts)

Scene 2

(Lady Nefitilia and Lady Rohan paced back and forth in the Rango household. They anxiously wait at the door for one of the king's men. It's been two weeks since they've last spoken or seen their parents)

King's Man: Lady Nefitilia , Lady Rohan (he bows and he takes off his hat) your parents have been lost at sea-

(Lady nefitilia interrupts the man)

Nefitilia: Lost at sea, I dont- what- find them, GO AND FIND OUR PARENTS (*her voice takes and rises quickly)

(Rohan cuts her sister off as she just did the man)

Rohan : they are dead... aren't they (she asked the man who is startled at the girls reaction)

King's Man: Yes- yes they are.

Nefitilia: WHO WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THIs (she collapse)

(lady rohan remains calm her face full of ponder)

Rohan: You said only two deaths does this mean the captain of the ship is still alive

King's Man: He is in bad condition but he is alive (the man turns and leaves, as he dose Nefitilia begins to wail)

Nefitilia: (screaming through tears) I want him dead, I want that man who killed our parents DEAD, I want him dead Rohan..

(Rohan was known for being calmer than Nefitilia was, she was the older sister she had more responsibilities)

Rohan: calm down Nefitilia... revenge won't solve any thing you have to live on for mama and pap-

(Nefitilia interrupts)

Nefitilia: you dare speak to me about living on?! It has already been hard for me to breathe. You don't understand Rohan, you've always been perfect, always had everyone wrapped around your finger. I had NO ONE except for mama.. A-and papa... now they'r-

Rohan: Nefitillia i-

(Nefitilla runs for her room)

(weeks later nefitilia finally comes out of her room to speak to her big sister rohan. The only places nefitilia went is the home library and powderroom)

Rohan: Nefitillia (she hugs Nefitilia tightly, though not receiving the same effort back)

Nefitillia: I have something to tell you , sister.. Sit

(as they both sit nefitilia pulls out a newspaper form the library)

Nefitilia: (she points at a article titled “The king’s son hurt in boating accident”) don't you see Rohan THE PRINCE was the reason our parents are dead

(Rohan face remains unwavered)

Nefitilia: Y-YOU knew about this? How dare you, you have traded on your family and for what the sake of this wretched kingdom? (she screams through teary eyes)

Rohan: NEFITILIA HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WE ARE THE KINGDOM YOU ARE THE DUKES AND DUCHESS DAUGHTER YOU ARE THE KINGDOM

(silence)

Nefitilia: (monotome) i will seek revenge sister...even if that means treason `

Rohan remains quite only shock was written across her face i mean yes nefitilia was always the more irrational one but not like this

Rohan: Then what? (hiding her anger) So you leave you kill the prince THEN what Nefitilia? See, and you wonder why mom never trusted you with the palace. YOU DONT THINK!

Nefitilia: ME? I don't think? FOR THE FIRST TIME IM THINKING PAST TOMORROW THATS WHY I HAVE TO-

(rohan interrupts)

(a knock at the door its a night from the castle)

Knight: there is a ball ot the royal castle for the prince's recovery

Rohan: Then we will be sure to attend

Nefitilia : So they throw a party for a recovery, but cant even mourn our parents' death! I will kill the king's son i will avenge MY FATHER

Rohan: Your father? You act as if you are the only one facing this! Stop Nefitilia how can you be selfish.. For days and i mean DAYS I've let you sulk a sit and wallow in self pity but for heavens sakes Nefitilia I AM HURTING TOO

(the room falls quiet in a way the house hasn't know since the death of the duke and duchess the hallways were still quiet only no they were filled with the memorable laughter of the fallen parents)

Scene 3

(the day of the ball at the royal castle has arrived)

Rohan: Nefitilia...(knocks on Nefitilia's bedroom door) how are you

(Nefitital doesn't open the door)

Nefitilia: maybe...maybe you were right, revenge solves nothing

Rohan:(taken aback Rohan pauses and stumbles over her words) I-i..y-yes sister i hope we can move forward from this as...a family

(nefitilia doesn't respond)

Rohan: I-i still don't think you should attend the ball

Nefitilia: I agree im still feeling a bit under the weather

Rohan (with a smile on her face) I'm so happy I got you back sister.. (she leaves to go finish getting ready)

Violet Rage by Tayauni S

Characters:

Raven Blackwood (Quiet Emo Kid that wants his band to be successful)
Ms. Griffin (Teacher that despises Raven, doesn't like him practicing in class)
Rue Hawthorne (smart, Straight A Student, wants to prove herself)
Nyx Thornwick (cool, rebellious troublemaker)
Samara Shadowfall (quiet girl in the back of the class)
Ms.Blackwood(Raven's Mom, doesn't believe the band will work)

Setting: High School, separate room for Band Practice
Name of Band: Velvet Voltage (VV)

Scene 1:

(At the beginning of the day, time is slowed and class is just starting. *Raven* sitting there. It is anticlimactic.)

Raven: (Thinking while fiddling with a pen) **I'm so bored! We need to practice our songs more. Ugh, when is this class over with?!**

Ms. Griffin: UHM, Raven do you know the answer? (Emphasizing the last part of the sentence in a condescending tone.)

Raven: (Brought back out of his head, awkwardly shocked) Uh, I-, don't?.....know the answer.

Ms. Griffin: I see, so you don't care about this class then? (Her face crumpled into a serious frown.)

Raven: I do! (voice cracking slightly) I just- wasn't paying attention...(looking around awkwardly)

Ms. Griffin: (Takes a big sigh out) You'll be serving detention if your behavior continues, yeah? (crosses her arms tightly)

Raven: I'm sorry....(looks down sadly)

Ms. Griffin: (Pauses for a couple seconds)....OK, so can anybody ELSE answer this question? (looking around)

Raven tuned the rest of the class time out, absently looking at the board with a fake interest in whatever Ms.Griffin was teaching.

Lunch Time Scene 2

(Raven sat down at his table, joining the rest of his friends Rue, Nyx and Samara.)

Samara: (half-eating homemade chicken fajitas) Hi, Raven!

Raven: Hey, Mara...(looks deflated)

Rue: You look...sad, something happened? (looks slightly worried)

Nyx: Yeah, is it about your mom again? (shares the same expression as Rue)

Raven: No,I almost got a detention in Griffin's class...(pressing lips together)

Rue and Nyx: REALLY?

Samara: Geez, that sounds rough....

Raven: Yeah I wasn't paying attention, she asked me a question, I didn't even know what we were talking about...(twirling hair on finger while head is tilted)

Nyx: That's probably the worst....(face palmed)

Samara: Yeah, that sucks....

Rue: I swear she always seems bitter or grumpy about something. (furrows eyebrows while shaking head.)

Raven: You make a point, she does seem.....irritable. (Shakes head in agreement)

Nyx: Speaking of.....our new song "Irritation"! I'm done writing my part for the chorus!

Rue: Oh, cool! Can't wait to see it, I'm actually excited about this song!

Samara: Yeah, I'm still struggling to make my part...(wipes hands on napkin)

Raven: Why...?

Samara: My mom is always trigger happy to hear me sing, she tries to listen to me while coming up with lyrics...that makes me anxious...I can't focus. (puts head down a little, looks dejected.)

Nyx: Aw, I'm so sorry Mara...maybe you could listen to music while coming up with lyrics? (smiles genuinely)

Raven: That seems like a good idea. Usually sometimes I go through art blocks. Music helps.

Samara: ...thanks guys...hopefully I can create something! (circles hands aggressively)
End of Scene.

Scene 3

In Raven's Basement

Clutter scattered everywhere

Rue fixing microphone, Nyx twirling drumsticks, Samara taking out her guitar, Raven doing vocal warmups.

Raven: Are we all set? (looking behind him)

Rue: Think so...Nyx?

Nyx: Uh...yeah! My hands are a little sore though. (rubs palms of hands uncomfortably)

Samara: I'm ready, just take it easy today, yeah?

Nyx: Yeah, not happening! That's not in my nature, Mara! (shrugs arrogantly)

Raven: (laughs) Ok suit yourself, Nyx! I'm ready! Let's get to it! (snaps finger)

Velvet Voltage plays one of their older songs called "Black-Heart" ; it's one of their only songs that got finalized.

----After the Practice----

Samara: Hey, guys before we go! I have exciting news! (one of the only times the band has seen Samara THIS excited.)

Raven: What is it? I know it's goooooood! (says 'good with a very animated tone and happy facial expression.)

Nyx: Yeah, this is a rare occurrence for you, Mara! (rubs chin in very interested way)

Rue: Agreed. This has GOT to be good!

Samara: This contest called "BandJam" has posted an opportunity to showcase new teen bands! The requirements go as follows: a song at least 1 and a half minutes long and a band video introduction.

Nyx: REALLY? OMG! This is SICK! (starts jumping excitedly)

Rue: WOW....this is INSANE! We might have a big opportunity with this! (starts hugging Nyx)

Raven: OMG! THIS IS MY DREAM COME TRUE I CAN'T BELIEVE ITTTTT!!! (starts whooping like a police car siren.)

Rue: WOW! This is really excitinggggg! (jumping excitedly)

Samara: This is surreal. I don't have words...(cupping cheeks firmly)

The Band Velvet Voltage begins cheering loudly, screaming and hugging each other aggressively in the light of their new found opportunity.

End of Scene.

Scene 4

A tense confession has brought everyone down as a group.

Raven: (biting nails aggressively) UGH! I can't believe this....

Rue: What even happened? How did you lose it?! (starts pacing back and forth, away from the group)

Raven: I don't know....I SWEAR I had it, then it just....disappeared.

Nyx: It's ok, Ven! We'll figure this out somehow....

Samara: I can't believe this....

This morning while rushing for the bus, Raven lost his computer. He found out when searching for it to complete his work assignments.

He just told the group during free period.

Raven: I'M SO SORRY GUYS.....I know this has to be THE worst timing! (slams head on desk)

Samara: No, don't feel guilty Ven! I don't want to make you feel even worse...(slumps body)

Nyx: (BIGGEST SIGH EVER)

Raven: (puts head down) worst plot twist ever....

As the dread settles over the group, the realization hits them that they not only have to start over but now they have to worry about the competition.

Nyx: We have to have both videos submitted by the end of the weekits Tuesday...(face of pure panic washes over their face.)

Samara: What are we gonna do...(hair falls in her face from being slumped over)

Raven: Wait, I think I know what to do! It may come with.....consequences...(looks around at the group.)

Rue: I don't like the sound of this...(eyes darting around)

Nyx: Consequences are my given name! I wanna hear it! (puts ear out comically)

Raven: So we can create a new song but we have to use class time AND our own time if we wanna get this in on time!

Samara: I mean we don't have a lot of optionsso I guess this is the only wayI'm just nervous I-I don't want everyone staring at me...(puts hands together to soothe her anxiety)

Rue: It's okay...Mara. Are you sure you wanna go through with this plan? (rubs her backs slowly)

Nyx: Yeah, as much as I'm fine with getting in trouble and showing off my undeniable skills at school, if you are uncomfortable with this plan we can figure out a new one.

Raven: (looks compassionately at Samara)

Samara: No...we can't create a WHOLE new plan because of me...(shakes head bashfully)

Rue: Are you sure? (frowning sadly)

Samara: Yeah...(shakes head slowly)

BELL RINGS

Raven: Okay, everyone needs to get started as soon as possible! Rue I know you're the goody two shoes of our group so I apologize in advance, but this is an EMERGENCY situation!

Rue: Okay- but if I serve any detentions, you owe me one! (points finger in the air)

Raven: I'll be prepared! (nods agreeingly)

Raven: Samara I know you are anxious...and if you need private time, I'll gladly invite you over so we can work it out together, okay? (raises eyebrows, directly looking at Samara with a half-smile.)

Samara: Ok...I'll do what I can!

Nyx: OKAY! So let's get started! Will everyone report their progress by the end of the day as soon as we have an idea of what we are doing? (sweeps over everyone)

Raven: Sounds like a plan!

Scene 5

As the day continues the whole group is under pressure.

Raven comes up with lyrics, tearing out pages with every incomplete thought and writer's block. Eventually, he manages to scrap something he is proud of. He sends the copy to the rest of the group via school library laptop to follow along with.

Nyx proudly practices drumming in the corner of all their classes. Getting a consistent rhythm, making a beat which encompasses the band's aesthetic.

Rue begins sorting through the tech equipment for the group to test out new sounds such as synthesis, microphone volume and compression, and background vocals for the song.

Samara hides in the music room with her guitar figuring out what key points she wants to add on to make the guitar stand out.

She eventually finds one.

(Shows them individually working very hard separately)

----End of the Day----

Scene 6:

Raven: Ok, so what has everyone come up with! (folds hands, breaths out exhaustedly)

Nyx: I came up with a solid beat! Something that fits us and the lyrics you sent!

Raven: Ok, once everyone gets to my house we'll work with the beat first!

Rue: I've double checked our equipment, I've added some new effects we could use! I'll collaborate with Nyx to see what we can do!

Samara: I've put together a sweet guitar melody! (smiles sweetly)

Raven: Good for you guys! I'll oversee Nyx and Rue's collaborative efforts! (smiles brightly)

I'm so proud of you Mara! I know whatever you created will be MAGICAL as always! (gives a side hug to Samara.) (Samara smiles a little)

Raven: OH, forgot to askdid anyone get detention?

Nyx: I did....was disrupting the class. (shrugs nonchalantly)

Raven: How long is it?

Nyx: Twenty minutesso I'll be late...(frowns a bit)

Raven: Ok! Hang in there Nyx! (pats shoulder)

Raven: Anyone else? (scans the room)

Rue: Not exactly a detention, but a warning! If I am not focused they might give me one....

Raven: I'm sorry, Rue....I'll promise to make it up to you! (while talking goes up to her puts hands on shoulders)

Rue: *nods*

*Everyone except Nyx arrives at Raven's House in a timely fashion.
Nyx arrives 40 minutes later.*

Scene 7

Nyx: I'M HERE! (running to the basement)

Raven: OK, our key to making this whole thing easier...

(Unintentionally, Raven seems to ignore Nyx's enthusiasm. Grabbing the computer that housed the newly composed beat out of their hands.)

Samara: Hey, Nyx! How was detention?

Nyx: Um....it sucked! If you already couldn't tell, Ms. Griffin assigned me the detention....

She REALLY hates me, I don't really care...

Samara: Yeah she can be...a jerk...

Rue: I seem to be too perfect in her eyes to mess up for some reason.....(shrugs)

Nyx: Yeah if she is causing you problems she DEFINITELY is a jerk.

Raven: As much as I would like to agree we have a song to make! (has headphones half on listening to the track Nyx made.)

Samara/Rue/Nyx: (gets back into focus mode)

*As the band continues to figure out logistics and how to make the 'perfect song' a woman comes down to the basement.
Everyone was frozen in place.*

Ms.Blackwood: Uhm! Raven, did you get permission to invite all your friends into my basement? (hands on hips, lips curled into a scornful frown)

Raven: (a hopeful smile that was just plastered on his face, downturned into a perturbed frown with narrowed eyes) Uh....I remember asking you....

Ms.Blackwood: Hm? When? (raised eyebrow)

Raven: When I came back home, before they came here. I asked if my friends could come over to practice. You said "Mhm". I thought you agreed.

Ms.Blackwood: Well if this group amounted to anything. I would be more than happy to have them over every single day! But you got detention, don't have any other ambitions! And you make noise in my basement! What do you expect me to be proud of, or enthusiastic about? (glares at Raven)

Raven: I'm sorry....I tried to explain-

Ms.Blackwood: Yeah but you never do what you are SUPPOSED to do! (thrashes hands around aggressively)

*Everyone looks down.
Raven is on the verge of tears.*

Ms.Blackwood: All of your little friends can get out! (points finger towards door leading upstairs)

Everyone immediately picks their stuff up and practically follows each other like ducks.

Raven: Mom! Why do you have to do this?! (tears welling up, threatening to fall)

Ms.Blackwood: WHY? Because of you! This little band of yours is nothing but a pipe dream, it will never work! You keep disturbing my peace, letting your friends invade my house, and using up all my electricity bill! If this ACTUALLY made money I would be more than understanding but it's not...

*Raven couldn't let his mom sit here and babble. He couldn't let his mom discredit all their hard work,
He couldn't sit here and let his mom look down on him and discourage them. With the stress of the competition and lost computer bubbling in, Raven starts going off in rage.*

Raven: You've never given us the time of day to prove anything! (waving arms frustratedly) When was the last time you listened to a song we made? Or watch us practice? Or hear me or Rue sing? You have never taken us seriously as a group, so why start caring now?! (eyes bulging with rage)

Ms. Blackwood: (truly caught on Raven's reaction before responding) Raven, how can anyone take you seriously? You keep promising that the band will get exposure! You keep promising that you'll bring home good news! The only news you've brung is that you've gotten detentions, broke your laptop that I BOUGHT and this fantasy dream of yours! You keep up this cheerful attitude that everything is gonna be alright! (air quotes "everything will be alright" while rolling eyes) Look around! We live in a crap neighborhood, I don't make six figures, I also live paycheck to paycheck! (scoffs irritatingly) Be realistic, Raven! You need to start considering colleges, and even better a job! So you can help me out! You gave up all your extracurriculars and plans for college

for this Band stuffIt's normal for me to be concerned if this path isn't working out!
(stiff posture)

Raven: Mom...look I know. We don't live in a castle and have diamonds- but- I know this band could work! I wouldn't be so persistent, If I thought it wouldn't work! (lifts shoulders up in a "I give up" pose) I'm trying my best here!. I'm trying to make it work! See we have this BandJam opportunity and THIS could be the one opportunity we need to get ourselves out there! We just- need to put in the work....and due to....ME...that just became ten times harder! (slumps to the floor with hands in face, crying)

Looks sympathetic towards Raven.

Ms. Blackwood: (takes long breath out, grabbing bridge of nose in mental exhaustion)
Look! You have two options! If this band means SO much to you, then do the Band thing or whatever! But if this turns out to be another fluke, I'm not allowing this band to continue. THAT IS FINAL!

Raven wanted to argue but even he was getting pessimistic about the future of this band. BandJam might be the LAST opportunity to gain some sort of notoriety or fame from this passion of music. This may be the last straw!

Raven: Ok! (puts hands up) Fine! If this doesn't work out I'll disband the group and figure something else out.....

Ms.Blackwood: (shocked) (a bit of silence before answering) O-ok! Last chance! I'm serious!

With the threat of his band ending, Raven had to make sure this counted.

Scene 8

Sometime Later

Raven has let the group know of his Mom's ultimatum.

Raven: Are we all set?

Everyone Nods.

*The Band Starts recording their new song "Violet Rage"
After they are done, they hit the "End Record Button"*

Nyx: *That was sick! I hope they like it! (excited smile)*

Raven: Yeah I agree! (nods)

Rue: I hope it was good enough! (tapping feet nervously)

Samara: Don't worry it was awesome! (gives Rue a comforting hug)

Raven: Ok lets get the camera set up to record our video!

Velvet Voltage records their Band Introductory that is just as loud and chaotic as they are. A combo of laughs, cool vibes and raw teen energy.

2 Weeks Later Living Room of Raven's House

Raven: OMG! Guys I got the email!

Samara: REALLY! (Hurries over to Raven's new computer.)

Rue: OMG! (whole body shaking)

Nyx: Click on it!

As they read the email, their blood is pumping, their hearts beating out of their chests and clinging onto the hope of good news!

Raven: WE WON!

Rue and Nyx: YES! YES! (cheering while grabbing each other)

Samara: (sobbing emotionally with a smile on her face)

Raven: (starts re-reading just for confirmation and then starts shouting)

*The whole group sounded like their own mini-concert and cacophony of cheers, loud whoops and stomping feet creating a powerful melody within the group.
Then a knock at the door.*

Ms Blackwood: Who is it?

Man's Voice: I'm an associate at BandJam Productions. I would like to do an exclusive Interview with Velvet Voltage!

This caught Ms. Blackwood off guard but she opened the door....