Scene 7

(KIRA rushes to VALERIE’s door and knocks twice. She is shaking with anxiety. VALERIE opens the door.)

VALERIE
Hey! Come on in.

(KIRA knocks on the door a third time.)

Kira, right? What’s wrong? Sit down, breathe. Tell me what happened.

KIRA
Okay. Okay. (A deep breath.) Okay. I was, I was in Algebra II and—I was in Algebra II and Ms. Burn called on me to do problem 3a from the homework on the board, which was fine because I did the homework and the answer was x equals 12.7.

VALERIE
Okay, go on.

KIRA
So I was about to write the problem out two more times like normal, but Ms. Burn was just like, “You can sit down now.” I kept going but then she said, “Kira, you’ve already answered the problem and other people need the marker.” Then she grabbed my hand and she took the marker, she took it and everyone could see she thought I’d made a mistake and it was humiliating. But if she had let me write it two more times then it would have been complete and right but it’s still wrong, I need to fix it, I need—

VALERIE
Hey, hey, hey. Breathe. Can you do that for me?

#4a: “Scene 7 Interlude (Focus Theme)”

FOCUS ON ME
THIS MOMENT, THAT’S ALL
TRY TO STAY CALM
AND TELL ME WHAT’S WRONG

Why did you need to write it three times? Was that the assignment?

KIRA
No… it’s just how I’ve always done it. I don’t know how everyone else can feel fine only writing things once. I have to do it three times or else it’s wrong. It’s… it’s like that with everything.
VALERIE
So you have recurring thoughts or urges that make you feel like you need to do things three times.

KIRA
I mean, I never thought about it like that… but yeah.

VALERIE
Kira, have you ever considered seeing a mental health professional, like a psychiatrist?

KIRA
No! No, no—wait, so what are you trying to say?

(VALERIE scribbles on an index card and hands it to KIRA.)

VALERIE
This is the phone number for Dr. Mary Handler. If you tell her about these rules that you have, she could help you figure out what’s going on.

KIRA
“What’s going on”…?

VALERIE
She can tell you if they’re symptoms of OCD or another mental illness and if they–

#4: “That’s Not Me”

KIRA
Mental illness? Like those

PEOPLE IN HOSPITALS
DRESSED IN WHITE GOWNS
AND BARS ON THE WINDOWS AND DOORS
THEIR MINDS ARE DISABLED,
THEIR THOUGHTS BROKEN DOWN
UNTIL THEY CAN’T THINK ANYMORE

THEY ARE HELPLESS
THEY’D WANDER THE STREETS
IF NOBODY PUT THEM AWAY
I’M NOT HELPLESS
I’M FINE, I DON’T NEED
MY FEELINGS PUT ON DISPLAY
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME

VALERIE
Kira, you’re capable, not helpless. You’re a freshman in Algebra II. And many people with these conditions are actually—

KIRA
FAR FROM REALITY
TRAPPED IN THEIR HEADS
A VOICE WHISPERS DANGEROUS WORDS
IF THOSE THOUGHTS GET SET FREE
WHO MIGHT END UP DEAD?
THEY’RE DANGEROUS, PEOPLE GET HURT

THEY ARE HELPLESS
SO WE PUT THEM AWAY
WE KNOW THAT THEY CANNOT BE TRUSTED
‘CAUSE THEY’RE HELPLESS
AND BLINDLY OBEY
MALEVOLENT THOUGHTS THAT CORRUPT THEM

THEY ARE HELPLESS
BUT I’M NOT LIKE THEM
THOSE THINGS, THINGS, THINGS THAT I DO
DON’T MEAN I’M HELPLESS
OR SHOULD BE CONDEMNED
IS THAT WHAT I AM TO YOU?

VALERIE
Kira, no—

KIRA
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME

BECAUSE HOW COULD IT BE?
IF THAT WAS ME  
I’D NEVER SEE A COLLEGE PARTY  
WOULDN’T HAVE FRIENDS  
COULDN’T HAVE A FAMILY  
I’D BE ALONE IN THE END  
I’D BE WEIGHED DOWN BY MEDS IN A HOSPITAL BED  
AND I WOULDN’T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE  
I WOULDN’T REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE  
I WOULDN’T REMEMBER  
THINGS COULD NEVER GET BETTER  
SPENDING DAYS WRITING LETTERS  
THAT NEVER GET SENT  
THAT NEVER GET  
THAT NEVER…  

VALERIE  

Kira, you’re not going to a hospital. You’re not helpless. In fact, you remind me of someone I know. She’s a hardworking woman with a master’s in education psychology, a loving girlfriend, and a job that makes her happy. And you know what? She’s never let her mental illness get in the way of any of that. You, like her, are not dangerous, or less of a person. And you’re not alone.

DIFFERENT AS FINGERPRINTS  
NO TWO LIVES ARE THE SAME  
ONE CASE DOES NOT REPRESENT ALL  
YOU ARE NOT DEFINED BY THIS  
THIS IMAGE YOU’VE MADE  
I KNOW WHAT I ASK ISN’T SMALL  

VALERIE  

BUT FOCUS ON THIS  
THIS MOMENT, THIS PLACE,  
TRUST THAT YOU DON’T HAVE  
TO BE AFRAID  
I UNDERSTAND  
IT’S SCARY TO FACE  
YOU ARE NOT HELPLESS  
WE’LL FIND A WAY  

KIRA  

I TRUST YOU…  
YOU’VE HELPED ME…  
BUT I ADMIT  
I’M AFRAID  
YOU SAY THAT  
SHE’LL HELP ME  
AND PROMISE YOU  
WON’T SEND ME AWAY  

VALERIE/KIRA  

YOU’RE/I’M NOT HELPLESS  
WE’RE NOT HELPLESS
VALERIE
TRUST ME…

KIRA
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME
THAT’S NOT ME

VALERIE
Can you come in next week?

KIRA
...Okay. (Beat.) Okay. Okay.

VALERIE
How about Tuesday at two?

KIRA
...Yeah. (Beat.) Yeah. Yeah. Tuesday. At two. (Beat.) Thank you.

(KIRA exits.)

Tuesday, at two. Tuesday, at two…