

FALLEN IDOL

By Kelly Meadows

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CHARACTERS

(4 Females, 2 Males, 2 Either, Extras possible)

RAYNA	A high school student and a devotee of pop icon Leif Hawker.
SHIRA	Her friend
GARRETT	Also in their crowd
JONAS	Student, a rather unpleasant sort
BRITANYA	His girlfriend
MRS. KELLY	A teacher, and also a fan of Leif
PRINCIPAL	(m or f), Someone who creates ironclad rules in lieu of having to think.
MR. or MS. CHARLES	(m or f), Detention Monitor,

Extra “students” may be used in certain scenes, but are not required.

DIRECTOR’S NOTES

This play offers the opportunity for some recorded music to be played before the show, during scene changes, to underscore dramatic parts of the scripts, and in the last scene. If desired, perhaps a student musician could supply some original music for these scenes.

Note: Leif Hawker is a fictional creation of the author, who intends no similarity with any celebrities, living or dead.

SET

Most of the action here takes place at a high school or nearby. Settings include a “student hangout,” classroom, office, and an outdoors area off the school grounds. Sets can be as simple or elaborate as desired. A few tables, chairs, and desks can be quickly rearranged to portray the various scene changes; some scenes can be played on a bare stage.

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SCENE 1

On the school grounds, this could be a snack area, quadrangle, etc. Sitting on the floor or on some sort of structure, and dressed in a trendy-yet-depressing alternative music outfit, are GARRET, RAYNA, and SHIRA. THEY're holding a CD, looking at it almost religiously. Their costumes and hair should be different enough to set them apart from other students, as in these are people who go out of their way to appear differently and are most likely marginalized by other students because THEY take their "scene" too seriously. THEY're all pretty bummed out as the scene opens; GARRETT sits between the OTHER TWO.

RAYNA: Oh... my...

SHIRA: I can't believe my world has just come to an end.

GARRETT: Fifteen stories.

RAYNA: I heard it was fourteen.

SHIRA: I heard it was thirteen, but that's unlucky, so they just called it fourteen.

GARRETT: It can't be any more unlucky.

RAYNA: I don't wanna... go to class today.

GARRETT: I never pay attention in class anyway. Might as well get credit for sitting there.

SHIRA: *(coddling her CD and reciting lyrics)*

It doesn't always have to be about me

But maybe sometimes it should

After all the love I gave you

Why can't you treat me good.

RAYNA: I feel that way sometimes.

GARRETT: Me too.

RAYNA: *(angry at the world)* How could you, Garrett, you're a guy?

GARRETT: *(not understanding why SHE struck out at him.)* Oh, like girls are always so right and guys are always so wrong. It's a guy singing the song about a girl.

RAYNA: *(getting angry in defense)* Girls don't do what guys do.

SHIRA: *(not in the mood, as SHE'd rather be depressed than angry.)*
Don't fight. *(waves the CD)* He wouldn't like it.

(THEY BOTH calm down at her behest.)

Fallen Idol – Page 4

RAYNA: At least we can say we were fans before. Now that he's gone, everyone's going to run out and buy stuff about it. We're the ones that cared the most.

(Enter JONAS and BRITANYA, talking about the same topic. JONAS is a bully that nobody likes, BRITANYA is his girlfriend, who by virtue of being around him has become less pleasant over time.)

BRITANYA: You think it was drugs?

JONAS: *(loud enough that HE can be overheard)* I'm not sure. Drugs, drinking, whatever those *(emphasizes the word "losers" to indicate the THREE already on stage)* losers do.

BRITANYA: Probably thought he could fly. *(also trying to dig at them)* And now all his poor poor fans are left with no one to worship.

JONAS: *(HE knows the other THREE are hurt by the singer's death)* Probably heard his own music and decided to jump out a window. Fourteen floors.

BRITANYA: Thirteen, really. It's unlucky, so they call thirteen fourteen.

JONAS: That's silly. Why not call twelve eleven? Why not call bad music good?

RAYNA: *(seriously upset)* Hey, cut it out!

BRITANYA: Aww, did your poor little sweetie fall off a big bwick building? It's really stupid music anyway.

RAYNA: Like that stuff you listen to was so great.

JONAS and BRITANYA: *(singing, mocking)*

It doesn't always have to be about me

But maybe sometimes it should

GARRETT: *(rather than be hurt, HE gets angry)* All right, enough. You don't have to care. *(quietly threatening)* But you do have to be quiet, Jonas.

JONAS: Ooooh... defending the girls. Like you'll ever get a date.

GARRETT: Look what you're stuck with.

BRITANYA: *(wants to see JONAS fight GARRETT)* Jonas, are you going to let him get away with that?

JONAS: He's such a wuss-face, not even worth the fight.

GARRETT: Maybe not, but you'll get one if you want it. *(GARRETT jumps up, ready for a brawl)*

SHIRA: *(jumps up as well, hoping to stop this)* Garrett, not now.

JONAS: Whatsa matter, you afraid I'm going to sock the daylights out of him?

GARRETT: I would love for you to try!

Fallen Idol – Page 5

(GARRETT hands his CD to SHIRA, HE and JONAS get ready to come to blows. An instructor, Mrs. KELLY, enters, on her way to a class... SHE's got books or other school supplies with her.)

MRS. KELLY: *(doesn't like what SHE sees)* Woah, doesn't someone have class to go to?

RAYNA: *(referring to JONAS)* He started it!

KELLY: Do you know how many times I've heard that in my career? *(mocking)* He started it! *(proudly)* Well, I get to finish it.

RAYNA: I wonder how many times I've heard *that* in my career. *(a bit too sassy)* Fine, finish it.

KELLY: Excuse me, Rayna, but where did that mouth come from?

BRITANYA: *(trying to prove to KELLY that SHE's better than everyone else here)* Her favorite rock star just took a dive off a thirteen or fourteen story building in a desperate attempt to improve his flagging record sales. Needless to say, tempers are flaring on skid row.

KELLY: Is it your usual way to make fun of people who are in pain, Britanya?

BRITANYA: *(SHE's caught, so outright denial is her best weapon)* I wasn't making fun of anyone.

KELLY: *(understands what's really going on, and annoyed with BRITANYA)* That was a yes or no question.

SHIRA: *(not taking any guff, being sarcastically sweet)* I'll answer for her. It's yes.

KELLY: No one was asking you, Shira. *(Looks to BRITANYA)*

BRITANYA: *(lying, obviously)* No, it's not.

KELLY: Then why, now, are you behaving in a manner so unlike your usual thoughtful and caring self? Get to class before I find something else for you all to do that you're not going to like.

BRITANYA: Fine. But I wasn't doing anything.

SHIRA: We should be so lucky.

(Tempers flare again, JONAS and GARRETT exchange angry glares, but KELLY gives EVERYONE a look to knock it off.)

GARRETT: *(to KELLY)* You better put the whole staff on notice. Leif Hawker was a pretty big deal.

KELLY: I love Leif Hawker! *(quietly)* Just don't tell anybody.

GARRETT: *(depressed)* He's dead.

KELLY: *(understands how THEY feel)* I heard. I'm sorry.

RAYNA: Hey Britanya, why not make fun of the teacher and her taste in music?

BRITANYA: Shut up.

Fallen Idol – Page 6

RAYNA: Leif Hawker was my whole world. I hardly need to see you two laughing at us when it's destroyed.

BRITANYA: Excuse me, but you need a bigger world.

JONAS: A new planet, perhaps.

KELLY: Get to class! Now!

(THEY ALL leave except for RAYNA, who pulls out an iPod or something like that.)

And you Rayna?

RAYNA: I have a free hour.

KELLY: *(sees that RAYNA is overwhelmed by this and genuinely concerned)* Are you going to be ok?

RAYNA: *(not sure)* I don't know. Sure. No. Whatev. Don't you have a class?

KELLY: Free hour. I used to spend it smoking, but I quit.

RAYNA: Wait a minute... you like Leif Hawker?

KELLY: Yep. It's a secret. I don't want the kids here thinking I'm cool.

RAYNA: They don't think I'm cool. Hey, look. *(SHE pulls something out)* I have this.

KELLY: *(excited)* An autograph! Get out! ☺

RAYNA: I got it at the concert. A whole bunch of us tried. It was an exercise in suffocation. But I got it.

KELLY: That must mean a lot to you.

RAYNA: It's everything, now. I keep it with me just to have him nearby.

KELLY: Well, I understand. *(acting a bit like a teacher/counselor)* You need to figure out why he means so much to you, though. I don't want to see your schoolwork suffer over this.

RAYNA: Like I'm going to get into any of the boys here.

KELLY: Garrett?

RAYNA: Either he's too wimpy or he's too mean. I want something in between.

KELLY: Sounds like a song.

RAYNA: Yep, it does. Look, I don't mean to be rude, but I need to be alone.

KELLY: That's okay. If you need to talk, you can come see me. I'm going to go to the teachers lounge and not smoke.

RAYNA: Thanks.

(KELLY exits, RAYNA withdraws into herself, starts to listen to music, and is overtaken by grief.)

SCENE 2

After school, GARRETT and SHIRA are sitting outside.

GARRETT: *(talking to Leif's CD)* Wow. It's hard to believe. The last CD you'll ever make. You only did three.

SHIRA: Yeah, it's not a lot to listen to. Like I put on all the music, and in a couple hours I'm done.

GARRETT: But what a couple hours it is. Where's Rayna?

SHIRA: *(disappointed and annoyed)* She wants to be alone.

JONAS: *(enters with BRITANYA, having overheard the conversation)* She wants to be alone. *(mimicking)* I want to be alone! You got a lucky break earlier, Garrett, but... it looks like school's out.

SHIRA: Go away, Jonas.

GARRETT: What she said.

JONAS: You wish I would. You trash me and my girlfriend, and then you have the teach come break it up. In my book, that means the conversation isn't over, it's just interrupted.

SHIRA: She's beneath insult.

BRITANYA: I'm not above fighting you, Shira. And your loser CD collection. You people are nothing but the loser music you listen to. But, since he's dead, I guess you are too.

JONAS: Smart girl, huh?

GARRETT: Jonas, you don't wanna fight me.

JONAS: I think, Garrett, it's you who don't want to fight me.

GARRETT: You think you can beat me, but you can't. I have a lot of anger in me, and ninety percent of it? Aimed at you.

JONAS: Why, because your pretty boy jumped off a thirteen story building?

BRITANYA: Fourteen!

JONAS: It's the same story either way. *(laughs, then says to BRITANYA)* But it is thirteen. Don't go making stuff up.

BRITANYA: *(A bit taken aback, but agrees)* Okay.

GARRETT: My mom signed me up for karate when I was 7 years old. Lucky for you we've only fought with words until now.

JONAS: I've had people tell me that story before, and I won the fight.

(JONAS approaches him, GARRETT gets up to move away.)

BRITANYA: *(encouraging JONAS)* Come on Jonas, you've got my honor to avenge!

SHIRA: That won't take long.

GARRETT: Let's go, Shira. I don't like the way things look. Or smell.

Fallen Idol – Page 8

(HE guides SHIRA away, and THEY BOTH exit, quickly.)

JONAS: Not so fast! Not till I beat you to a pulp. *(follows them off, then comes back for BRITANYA)* Come on. Don't chicken out now.

(SHE still hesitates.)

Move it!

SCENE 3

In the PRINCIPAL's office. PRINCIPAL is behind a desk, while SHIRA, GARRETT, JONAS, and BRITANYA are seated uncomfortably next to each other on the other side. The PRINCIPAL is a by-the-book administrator trying to keep parents quiet, so s/he's mainly got a "rules first, students second" attitude. The FOUR STUDENTS keep eyeing each other trying to avoid taking responsibility for their part on the fracas. THEY ALL look like THEY've been in a fight.

PRINCIPAL: *(very impersonal at this point, worried more about policy than the actual people HE's talking to.)* Now, you know at Northdale High we have a no-tolerance policy. *[feel free to change "Northdale" to the producing school if desired.]*

GARRETT: I have one too. I won't tolerate someone trying to beat me up...

SHIRA: Simply because he doesn't like the music we like.

GARRETT: Leif Hawker died.

PRINCIPAL: That's not my problem.

SHIRA: You better make it your problem! Leif Hawker was "it" for half the student body. You should know that, since we're your job.

PRINCIPAL: You've got a mouth on you.

GARRETT: Shira's just saying that you should stay in tune with your students.

PRINCIPAL: *(walking around the seated STUDENTS so as to radiate freedom of movement and authority)* I'm in plenty of tune. I'm in tune like a newly strung lute. *(plays the "air lute" for a moment.)* And as I was saying, we have a no tolerance policy for fighting in school.

GARRETT: It wasn't during school.

BRITANYA: She started it.

PRINCIPAL: That wouldn't be the first lie you told me.

BRITANYA: Wow.

Fallen Idol – Page 9

PRINCIPAL: (*getting more personal, tired of having to deal with JONAS, in particular*) Oh come on. You two constantly misbehave and then act all “who me?” when you’re caught. Do you really think you’re the first student like you that I’ve run across? And you were a good girl until you started dating Jonas.

(*EVERYONE is surprised PRINCIPAL knows this*)

See? I am in tune. (*again, plays the “air lute.”*) It’s because of people like you that we have the no tolerance policy. And since it *started* during school, at least from what I can see... it’s a perfect opportunity to put ‘no tolerance’ into action.

SHIRA: Didn’t we suspend a six year old for taking an aspirin in the no-drug policy? It’s too easy for you. “Hey, a fight. Let’s suspend everyone.” Or should we just stand there and get beat up.

PRINCIPAL: Shira, what’s up with you today?

SHIRA: Leif Hawker. You don’t seem to understand, nor want to.

PRINCIPAL: Nonetheless... it’s detention every day for two weeks. Any further incidents will be dealt with by suspension.

GARRETT: How is keeping the bad kids out of school punishing them? They don’t want to go anyway.

PRINCIPAL: It’s a disciplinary measure we’re forced to take, on occasion.

GARRETT: It’s just easier.

PRINCIPAL: Jonas, you’ve been very quiet.

JONAS: I have nothing to say.

PRINCIPAL: Did you really start a fight over a CD?

JONAS: (*about GARRETT*) He’s so stupid.

PRINCIPAL: If stupid was a crime, you’d be doing life. (*more insistent*) Did you really start a fight over a CD?

JONAS: He insulted Britanya. And me. They both did. They act like they’re so much better than we are.

PRINCIPAL: People might stop acting like they’re better than you if you’d stop giving them so many reasons to do it. With the state of music today, I don’t know why anyone would want to form a clique around it. If you can’t stand each other, crank up the iPod and shut up. Agreed?

(*NO ONE answers.*)

I said... agreed?

SHIRA: Fine with me.

GARRETT: I’m for it.

JONAS: (*never wanting to let this drop*) For now, okay.

Fallen Idol – Page 10

BRITANYA: This is so stupid.

PRINCIPAL: No iPods or cell phones in detention. Detention has a no tolerance policy on enjoyment. If there's a fire, I'll inform you of an exit strategy after the other students have been accommodated to safety.

SCENE 4

GARRETT, SHIRA, RAYNA, at school, back where *THEY* were in Scene 1.

GARRETT: I can't believe I got two weeks detention for defending myself. Jonas has always been a troublemaker, and he always manages to get someone else blamed. He could steal something and when everything was said and done your mother would blame you for "leaving it out."

SHIRA: I got detention for "being involved."

GARRETT: I hear that six year old with the aspirin went on to hard drugs. He switched to Tylenol, now he's out of school for a month. But his headache is gone.

SHIRA: We're all going to be in the same room. So we can "work things out." Three cheers for *The Breakfast Club*.

GARRETT: Maybe we can educate Jonas to the beauty that was Leif Hawker. (*thinks*) That's really what we need to do. Convert the uninitiated. Open their minds.

SHIRA: What for? He's dead!

GARRETT: (*points to his heart*) Not in here. Never in here.

RAYNA: They still don't know why he did it, do they? I've been reading all the articles. And all the stupid comments. People say Leif deserved it because he was a rock star on drugs. They don't even know.

SHIRA: I can't believe he did it to himself. I thought the music was his way to work through the pain. Instead, it made things worse.

RAYNA: (*has a great idea!*) I'm going to organize a vigil. I'm gonna get all the kids and we're gonna light candles and play his music.

GARRETT: I like that. Maybe in a park somewhere.

RAYNA: Maybe here in the quad or something. If there's a lot of us, no one will fight it. It'll help us say goodbye.

SHIRA: (*SHE doesn't want to carry her mourning to the extreme*) Wow, you're really taking this hard.

RAYNA: Aren't we all?

SHIRA: I don't know. Getting into a fight with Britanya kind of changed my perspective. It's not like my dad died or anything.

Fallen Idol – Page 11

RAYNA: (*stunned*) I can't believe you.

GARRETT: Well, I do enjoy being bummed out. That was the point of the music. Listening to him being bummed out and getting bummed out on your own. It was like bum-out transference. His hurt was worse than mine, and he took it on his shoulders. Now, it's the ultimate being bummed out.

SHIRA: I don't wanna flunk out over being bummed out.

RAYNA: Do you want to do this vigil or not? I'll do it by myself up in my room, if I need to.

(*The OTHERS react to her with surprise.*)

I'm not crazy. So what if I wrote him letters? I met him once, you know. He gave me a hug. It was the best night of my life.

GARRETT: You seriously need a date.

RAYNA: (*getting freaked out*) Why is everyone turning on me?

SHIRA: I got two weeks of detention defending Leif Hawker. Don't crawl up in my grill over turning on you.

RAYNA: (*SHE looks in her bag and notices her ticket is missing, so SHE frantically moves a few papers and books aside looking for it...*)
Where is it?

GARRETT: (*HE doesn't know what SHE's looking for*) Where is what?

RAYNA: Never mind. Where is it? (*SHE looks deeper in the bag.*)

SHIRA: What is it?

GARRETT: (*not understanding all this*) "Never mind," "where is it."

Look, we're all sorry he's gone. I don't think he'd want us to go all bonkers over it. I'm sure they'll find some unreleased tracks. We'll have a party.

SHIRA: Unreleased tracks usually suck. That's why they're unreleased.

RAYNA: Where is it??? (*SHE runs off*)

SHIRA: What was that about?

GARRETT: I don't know. She better be careful, she's probably breaking a no-tolerance policy.

SHIRA: You know what I have no tolerance for? Nineteenth century English literature. Why don't they ban that?

(*GARRETT laughs a bit*)

Wow, what's wrong with me? I feel a good mood coming on.

(*blackout*)

SCENE 5

RAYNA and MRS. KELLY. *RAYNA is quite distraught, MRS. KELLY is trying to figure out why. One way to start the scene is Mrs. KELLY is quietly working on something and RAYNA barges in, or SHE practically accosts Mrs. KELLY in a hall.*

RAYNA: *(angry and panicked)* Someone took it!

KELLY: Took it? Took what?

RAYNA: My ticket. My autographed ticket. *(incensed, accusing, as if this is obvious.)* You're the only one I showed it to. I kept it hidden because I didn't want them to know I had it with me. Now there's nothing left. *(scandalized!)* You're my teacher!

KELLY: *(trying to stay "teacher-like"... i.e. calm in the storm)* Rayna, I didn't take your ticket. I liked his music but I'd never take anything that important to someone.

RAYNA: You think I'm crazy, don't you?

KELLY: I think you're overreacting. There's a difference between being into somebody and being obsessed.

RAYNA: *(losing it)* I'm not obsessed.

KELLY: You need to calm down.

RAYNA: You need to stop stealing stuff!

KELLY: Rayna, Rayna hold on! When have I had the time to go through your pack and fish stuff out?

RAYNA: *(as if that matters)* I don't know.

KELLY: When has the bag been out of your possession?

RAYNA: I don't just leave it places. At this school? I don't know why learning has to be so painful. Why can't we just learn without stupid kids?

KELLY: You need to think. Maybe you misplaced it.

RAYNA: You're trying to divert. It's like when the murderer helps look for the killer. Don't look at me like I'm crazy. If someone was your whole life and then he died you'd be a little beside yourself too.

KELLY: If it was my husband, perhaps. Or a family member. Some rock stars, they live fast and die young. It's too bad. All that good music that we lose because they don't live to write it. There's nothing heroic about suicide.

RAYNA: Leif Hawker will always be heroic! And you better give me that back. *(exit)*

KELLY: *(thinking out loud)* Okay, Rayna, I know I'm not supposed to say this, but you're crazy.

SCENE 6

In detention, are JONAS, GARRETT, BRITANYA, SHIRA. Plus the detention monitor, MR./MS. CHARLES. Monitor can be either male or female, but will be referred to as Mr. in the script.

BRITANYA: *(heaves a big sigh, and says with too much inbred superiority)* Come on, Mr. Charles, are you going to make me sit next to her? This is detention, not torture.

CHARLES: It's up to you what it is. I could either punish you or teach you. This way, I do both, so my good side and my bad side are happy at the same time. *(to BRITANYA, with fake creepiness, to keep her in line)* You don't want to make my bad side mad. *(CHARLES starts doing some paperwork but the audience can see HE is also paying close attention to what's going on in the room.)*

SHIRA: *(reciting lyrics as a coping mechanism, and to irritate BRITANYA)*

You tell me that you love me, but I don't think love feels like this.

You tell me that you hate me but you can't keep yourself away.

I asked you to define all these words you say so arbitrary

I didn't ask you to rewrite the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

BRITANYA: That's what you get so bent out of shape about? I can't believe you like that stuff.

SHIRA: I can't believe it matters to you what I like.

BRITANYA: Singing about the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* creeps me out.

SHIRA: If it bothers you, so much the better for me. I prefer to see you unhappy.

BRITANYA: Then you'll certainly enjoy the next two weeks, because I don't plan to cheer up. And you'd better not spend it reciting Leif Hawker lyrics. I need to keep my food down.

SHIRA: He spoke to a generation. My generation.

BRITANYA: You know what he needs? *Re-generation*. I doubt that's coming.

SHIRA: It does go to show you that popularity doesn't mean much. At this rate, I'll outlive you by 100 years.

BRITANYA: Fine, but no one will like you.

SHIRA: No one likes you either. They're just afraid to disagree because Jonas will beat up their boyfriend. Who died and left you queen?

BRITANYA: I think we know who died.

JONAS: *(to GARRETT as if CHARLES can't hear.)* You just wait, big guy. There will be a time when this school can't defend you.

(GARRETT is quiet.)

Fallen Idol – Page 14

I'll find you. Behind a building, on the way home, out with your girlfriend. On the thirteenth floor. This isn't over. It won't be over till I win.

(GARRETT jumps up.)

CHARLES: Garrett! Hold your temper.

GARRETT: Did you hear what he said? How come I'm always the bad boy for defending myself? How many rockets must I endure before it's okay to fight back?

CHARLES: You invite it. You wear clothes that set you apart. You got the look on your face. Then you get upset when-

GARRETT: *(highly stressed)* So you're saying it's okay to attack me because I'm different? Fine, I'll wait until five guys jump me and I'm in the hospital and then we'll sue you and make a lot of money. I'll be rich, with a gilded wheelchair. Jonas, what have I done to you, ever? Ever? Can you answer that?

JONAS: You exist.

GARRETT: You're sick. You're both sick.

JONAS: You're sick too. In your little world with your stupid music and your stupid friends.

CHARLES: Jonas, why do you feel the need to sit in judgment? Who set you up as the person who gets to judge whose music and whose friends are stupid?

SHIRA: Yeah, really.

JONAS: We all did.

SHIRA: *There's a convocation I missed.*

CHARLES: I didn't. Garret didn't. Shira didn't. And Britanya doesn't have any authority now that she's dating you. So it's at least four against one.

BRITANYA: No, I'll sit in judgment. *(looks over at SHIRA with a pitying smile)* I don't like her.

CHARLES: Get up.

BRITANYA: What?

CHARLES: Get up. You won't sit in judgment. You'll stand. Until you learn not to judge.

JONAS: Ha! That's cool.

CHARLES: You too.

JONAS: That's *not* cool.

CHARLES: I know.

(SHIRA starts to laugh... so does GARRETT.)

Okay, maybe it is.

Fallen Idol – Page 15

JONAS: You better not tell anyone.

SHIRA: Who am I to judge?

GARRETT: (*blowing up, and jumping out of his seat*) Is this some kind of biology experiment, Mr. Charles? Put a bunch of snakes in a room with a bunch of rats and see who bites who?

CHARLES: Well, if you can hold your temper around this group—

GARRETT: Why is everything about me and my temper? He's so much worse than I am.

CHARLES: Well, he's standing and you're...

(*Motioning for GARRETT to sit back down, which HE does.*)

...sitting. So far you win. We can move to pushups if you want. Or you can all be civil.

GARRETT: How many do you want?

SCENE 7

GARRETT, RAYNA, SHIRA at their usual hangout.

SHIRA: They are going to make us sit there until we like those people.

GARRETT: I just wish they'd leave us alone. But if they don't, we still get in trouble.

(*HE gets angry, the OTHER TWO give him a look suggesting HE calm down... HE's aggravated at them and gets a bit sarcastic.*)

Fine, I'll try to keep my temper. It's not worth expending the energy on them when I could use it for English Lit homework. (*takes out a book, as if HE's going to use it*)

SHIRA: Britanya is such a hot mess. She's the hottest mess I know.

The poster child for entitlement. (*shrugs*) At least I'll be caught up on homework.

RAYNA: I'm Facebooking for a vigil. I started a group. I want to do it before people forget.

SHIRA: I'm in trouble at school and now I'm in trouble at home because I'm in trouble at school. I haven't been this much trouble in my whole life, combined. I won't even mention Leif Hawker at home. It's like the devil or something.

GARRETT: He was just a singer.

RAYNA: He was more than that.

Fallen Idol – Page 16

SHIRA: Not really. He was just a singer. Now he's more. Now people are tattooing his name on their shoulders. We used to think we were the three that cared the most.

RAYNA: (*notices something in SHIRA's book*) Shira, what's that book mark?

SHIRA: I don't know. It's a book mark.

RAYNA: No it isn't...! (*aghast*) It's my ticket! You took it? You took it! I blamed Mrs. Kelly!

GARRETT: To her face? You're an "F" waiting to happen.

SHIRA: I don't know what you're talking about.

RAYNA: (*reaches over and pulls it back*) Shira, I thought you were my friend.

SHIRA: I *am* your friend.

RAYNA: Where did this come from?

SHIRA: Maybe I have one too!

RAYNA: This one's mine. (*looks at it*) It's my seat number. And my name. I crunched my way through five thousand people to get this. I risked my life, literally. I can't believe you took it.

SHIRA: So? I miss him too! I loved him. I loved his music. You act like you're the only one. I saw it in your bag. I just wanted to have it for awhile. I was going to give it back. But I knew if I asked you wouldn't let me borrow it.

RAYNA: (*what a bunch of hooley!*) Oh, yeah I believe that.

SHIRA: (*SHE knows her story isn't working*) I was!

RAYNA: Why is everyone lying to me? (*checks it over*) It's smudged. You ruined it.

SHIRA: Just when I thought I couldn't be in any more trouble. It is not!

RAYNA: It is too. Right here.

SHIRA: That's hardly anything. Why don't you go to the girls room and undo that knot you got your panties in?

RAYNA: You did it and you're acting like I'm the one with the problem! You steal something and then say *I'm* the one with the problem for being upset about it.

GARRETT: It's like Jonas!

RAYNA: First she steals, then she lies.

GARRETT: You could get a bundle for that on e-bay.

RAYNA: Garrett!

GARRETT: (*trying to talk some sense into her*) It's a piece of paper.

RAYNA: And Leif Hawker touched it.

GARRETT: (*had enough of this*) Why don't you go roll around on the arena floor and you can get his toe gunk on your sweater?

RAYNA: (*had enough as well but differently, and says tragically*) I don't think we can be friends any more.

Fallen Idol – Page 17

SHIRA: *(more trying to save her reputation than being sincere)* I'm sorry, Rayna. I wasn't thinking. I was being selfish.

RAYNA: This goes way beyond sorry, and way beyond selfish. Way past that. I'll try to remember the good times. *(SHE gets her things and goes)*

SHIRA: Rayna, don't-

(By now RAYNA is gone.)

Oh, never mind.

GARRETT: What got into you? That was like swiping a baby out of a grocery cart.

SHIRA: *(letting loose)* I'm tired of her. She's hogging all the pain. Like she's so much better than we are because she hurts more. I saw that and I just didn't want her to have it. Cause I'm sick of it. That's the only way I can explain it. *(calling offstage)* Get a grip on your life, Rayna! *(more to herself)* He's just a singer!

GARRETT: You're jealous of that ticket! It's just a ticket.

SHIRA: I couldn't see the show. My parents wouldn't let me go. They said he was too loud and controversial. I begged and pleaded and threatened an eating disorder. By the time they changed their mind it was sold out. She went without me and got it signed. And never told me. So I didn't want her to have it.

GARRETT: Are we friends because we like each other, or because we like Leif? I'd hate for all this to die along with him.

SHIRA: She's carrying this too far. I can only be miserable over a pop culture mishap for so long. Right now our "friendship" would be better without him.

SCENE 8

Back in detention, lights come up on a conversation in progress.

CHARLES: So how do you feel about this now?

SHIRA: She's ruining it for us.

GARRETT: She's taking all the fun out of the misery.

SHIRA: It matters so much to her that it doesn't matter to me anymore.

BRITANYA: Well the music was awful.

SHIRA: No one asked you to judge. I don't judge your music.

BRITANYA: You judge it by refusing to listen to it.

SHIRA: You know what? I hate your music. But I don't hate *you* because you listen to it. You started that. And Jonas.

GARRETT: Bingo.

Fallen Idol – Page 18

CHARLES: Now we're getting somewhere.

JONAS: This is really stupid.

GARRETT: What isn't stupid to you?

JONAS: Shut up, okay? Shut up.

CHARLES: *(the staff isn't afraid to tell JONAS what they think, because THEY're tired of dealing with his behavior)* No, that's really a good question. *(very professorial)* Those of us who have followed your high school career know that all your social relationships are based on finding things stupid and fighting about it.

SHIRA: So you date Britanya because she hates Leif Hawker? What if she changes her mind? You'll dump her.

GARRETT: Lucky her.

CHARLES: We're waiting!

JONAS: We have two hours. We can wait. You can't hold me off forever, Garrett.

GARRETT: You need to stop being so obsessed with me. You're like Eminem with Mariah Carey.

JONAS: I am not obsessed with you!

GARRETT: You are too. You follow me around causing trouble for me. I get the point, you don't like me. You know what? I'm okay with that. If someone like you *did* like me, I'd have to ask myself what was wrong with me. I've tried to ignore you but you keep coming back like a cold that's treated with insufficient antibiotics. What do I have to do to cure you of this obsession?

CHARLES: Just for today, leave Garrett alone.

JONAS: You're the ones who stuck me in jail here with him.

SHIRA: I'd say we sit here till something nice comes out of his mouth, but we'd be here all day. I think it's time we all come together. And I have the perfect song for it.

BRITANYA: Oh no I can't stand it already.

SHIRA: I haven't even put it on.

BRITANYA: I'm getting ready.

SHIRA: It's three minutes! If you can sit through a 46-minute biology lecture, you can certainly sit through three minutes of alternative rock. I'll listen to *your* favorite song if you listen to mine. It beats homework.

BRITANYA: *(thinks it over)* Well, okay.

JONAS: Stop it, Brit, you're giving in.

BRITANYA: I'm trying to be nice.

JONAS: I told you not to associate with them.

GARRETT: *(in disbelief)* You *told* her?

JONAS: Yeah, I did.

SHIRA: Worse, she listened. *(to CHARLES)* Can I turn this on?

Fallen Idol – Page 19

CHARLES: (*thinks*) There's that no tolerance policy... (*thinks again*) Oh, go ahead. I can guarantee you I won't like either of them. But if it will keep you from killing each other for six more minutes, I'm all for it.

SHIRA: Cool! (*SHE's so excited!*) You are all going to love this! Closed minds... prepare to open!

(*As the scene blacks out, some punky pop music can play over the scene change...*)

SCENE 9

The PRINCIPAL has called CHARLES into his/her office (or other location).

PRINCIPAL: You do realize, Mr. Charles, that we have a no tolerance policy regarding music and detention.

CHARLES: I was trying to bridge a gap between Shira and Britanya. (*proud*) And I did. (*gets no response*) Thanks to me. (*still no response*) Thanks to me creatively allowing music in detention as a problem-solving tool.

PRINCIPAL: You do realize we have a no tolerance policy regarding music and detention.

CHARLES: Jonas is almost a lost cause, but I might be able to break through given the right soundtrack.

PRINCIPAL: (*as if this is the only thing that matters*) In any event, you do realize we have a no tolerance policy regarding music and detention.

CHARLES: Are you really the principal here? You just implement no tolerance policies so you don't have to think.

PRINCIPAL: The parents prefer it. Our rules apply equally to everyone no matter their income level, demographic, or ethnicity.

CHARLES: Do you think we were having a dance party? Drugs? Booze! (*going over the top*) Oooo detention is out of control!

PRINCIPAL: Detention is not supposed to be a good time, or people would be breaking rules all day long to stay late.

CHARLES: If Shira and Britanya can be friends, I'll have accomplished a lot more than a no tolerance policy.

PRINCIPAL: We may have to institute further punishment.

CHARLES: Hey, do you ever think that I want to go home early for once? Sure it's all about the students, but I have a life too. If they have detention, I have detention.

PRINCIPAL: I really don't like the way you're addressing your superior.

Fallen Idol – Page 20

CHARLES: You're in no way superior to me!

PRINCIPAL: That was uncalled for.

CHARLES: I'm losing my tolerance for you and your no tolerance policies.

PRINCIPAL: Do you want to return here to work next semester?

CHARLES: For the kids, yes. For you, no. You're intolerable. One of these days, one of our students is going to have to make a decision on their own. Without me, or you, and without their parents to guide them along. Will we have given them the tools to do that?

PRINCIPAL: Needless to say, Shira and Britanya have violated a no tolerance policy with your approval. Therefore there will be an additional week of detention for all of you, no talking.

(CHARLES starts to leave.)

Did you hear me? I said no talking!

(CHARLES shrugs.)

I expect a response.

(CHARLES points to mouth, shakes head. Exits.)

I wish I could give my staff detention.

SCENE 10

SHIRA and BRITANYA have discovered THEY like each other after all and are hanging out at "the spot."

SHIRA: Wow... who knew that we could ever be friends.

BRITANYA: Jonas wouldn't let me talk to anyone. It's silly to have cliques based on your taste in music, when you think about it.

SHIRA: Yep. We should have cliques based on really important stuff. Fashion, shoes, movies...

BRITANYA: Boys...

SHIRA: I'm really sick of detention, but apparently we're getting an extra week of it for turning up the tunes

BRITANYA: Yep. Another no tolerance policy.

(RAYNA enters on her way to a class or something.)

RAYNA: *(upset at seeing them together)* What's this all about?

Fallen Idol – Page 21

SHIRA: It's cool. We're cool with each other. Really. Come hang out.
(*joking*) I've lured her over to the dark side!

RAYNA: You're my friend, Shira. I can't believe this.

SHIRA: There's like two thousand students here. I can have more than one friend. Britanya's not as creepy as we thought.

BRITANYA: Thanks! Maybe.

RAYNA: What are you doing in detention? Talking about me?

SHIRA: Well... sometimes. Rayna, I'm worried about you. You've taken this too hard.

RAYNA: No, *you* haven't taken this hard enough. And now you've betrayed me. Again. You have to pick. It's her or me.

SHIRA: So it's another no-tolerance policy. This time from you. I'm not allowed to have friends unless you approve. You know I hate to be like this, but it's much nicer to say hello to someone than have to avoid them and worry they're talking behind your back.

RAYNA: Yes, it is. But, now that I know that's what's happening, I'll be on my way. Don't bother hanging out with me any more. (*to BRITANYA*) And be careful, because she steals, too.

SHIRA: Rayna!

RAYNA: You heard me. You've obviously moved on.

SHIRA: Well, eventually... it's just a CD after all. It's not like my dad died.

(*RAYNA has had enough and just leaves.*)

BRITANYA: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to break up your friendship.

SHIRA: She's just going through stuff. I hear when Elvis died people got all weird. And Michael Jackson.

BRITANYA: I guess we all lose someone. Family or celebrity. The difference is if I fell off a 14 story building my favorite singers wouldn't know the difference. (*laughs a bit*) I think my parents would have a cow.

(*JONAS enters.*)

JONAS: Wait a minute, didn't we agree that you wouldn't hang out with them?

BRITANYA: *You* agreed. I didn't have any say in it.

JONAS: (*authoritative*) I thought after detention we had a discussion and-

BRITANYA: You laid down the law. We didn't agree to it.

JONAS: (*again, borderline abusive*) That was agreement enough.

Fallen Idol – Page 22

SHIRA: If you guys need to talk I can like... do some history homework.
(*frightened, pulling out a book*) I really hope someone invades Prussia before it's too late.

BRITANYA: Nope. Jonas, *you're* history. And the good news? No homework involved! I don't even have to do yours anymore!

JONAS: (*angry, and shocked*) You're not breaking up with me.

BRITANYA: You order me around too much. (*mocking him*) "Do this, do that, don't talk to him, don't talk to her." I never get a chance to make up my own mind.

JONAS: It's because I know what's best for us!

BRITANYA: I do too. It's breaking up. You want a girl without a brain. I just found mine, at the bottom of my book bag. Under some old gum. (*SHE pretends to dust off her brain and put it back in her head.*) It's kind of dusty, but it seems to work again.

JONAS: It's this Garrett thing, isn't it? (*accusing*) You like him better than me.

BRITANYA: That was never true.

JONAS: Fine. Just go hang out with the losers and burnouts.

SHIRA: Funny. We said that about you before.

BRITANYA: Looks like I can't win either way. Well... I need to try a new clique of burnouts for now, Jonas. Thanks for the memories.

JONAS: (*making it all about him, as that's about all HE knows how to do.*) What about me? You don't care about how I feel at all. You never did!

BRITANYA: (*this isn't easy for her to say, but SHE has to get it out*) It's always about how you feel. But you're right—I don't care. So "how you feel" doesn't really enter into my decision. I've had enough... of you. No tolerance.

(*HE doesn't know what to say, so SHE throws him a bone with a fake smile.*)

You can say hi to me in the halls if you want.

JONAS: (*angry but not sure how to express it*) This isn't over! (*exits*)

BRITANYA: (*quietly*) Yeah it is.

SHIRA: I'm sorry, Brit. I'm really sorry.

BRITANYA: It's been hard. It would be really really good, but then it would be really really bad. See... the way he treats all of you...? It's the same way he would treat me. Just not where you could see it. It's not like he was nice to some people and mean to the rest.

SHIRA: Wow... detention's going to be really interesting from now on.

SCENE 11

RAYNA approaches MRS. KELLY in an office [or hallway, other location, etc., but somewhere private.]

RAYNA: *(SHE's a bit sheepish)* Mrs.... Kelly?

KELLY: *(trying to make light of things)* I didn't do it!

RAYNA: *(smiles a bit)* I know. Shira took it. She was just... I don't know if we're friends any more.

KELLY: I'm sorry.

RAYNA: I wanted to apologize to you. I hate apologizing. It means I did something wrong. But I shouldn't have gone all ditzo on you...

KELLY: You had circumstantial evidence. It's natural to jump to conclusions, but it can lead to some hurt feelings.

RAYNA: It was so important to me. Now everyone thinks I'm crazy.

KELLY: You do need to keep a grasp on reality. If your grades start slipping and your friends start to bolt, you at least need to look at yourself and see if it's something *you're* doing.

RAYNA: I'm just being who I am.

KELLY: My point still stands. If you're losing your grades and your friends, then you need to see if you want to keep being that person. If yes, then be prepared to accept the consequences.

RAYNA: I... uh... I have like a couple hundred people on Facebook who say they'll come to a vigil in the quadrangle.

KELLY: What will you do?

RAYNA: I don't know. Play some music. Light a candle or two. Or two hundred. Set the school on fire, perhaps. I've never done a vigil.

KELLY: I hope it goes well.

RAYNA: I need a faculty sponsor. Or they won't let me do it. We can't just come up here on a Friday night and start doing stuff. I thought since you liked him too, maybe you'd get something out of it.

KELLY: I'd be happy to! We teachers don't have a social life you know. We just exist from 7 to 3, then we grade papers and think up new tortures for the students for the next day, and then we cease to exist until first hour. It's one step away from being a vampire.

RAYNA: It would mean a lot to all of us...

KELLY: I'll do it on one condition...

RAYNA: I hate conditions.

KELLY: That's the point. The condition is that you let this go after that. Go back to being who you were.

RAYNA: I wasn't always depressed and miserable. First we just pretended to be mopey to go along with the music. *(disappointed with herself)* Then it stuck.

Fallen Idol – Page 24

KELLY: (*upbeat!*) Then it's time to move on. Pick a new celebrity. A happy one. Beyonce. Britney! (*this isn't getting a good reaction*) Abba!

RAYNA: Yuck!

KELLY: Mary J. Blige? She's middle of the road. Not too happy, not too sad. Or Beethoven. He's already dead. No surprises. Well, the trombones in the fifth symphony, that'll set your ears back a bit... but-

RAYNA: Okay okay, I get the point.

KELLY: You get ready to vigil, and I'll fight it out with the principal.

RAYNA: Does he have to know?

KELLY: He works here too. On occasion.

(*MRS. KELLY starts to exit, RAYNA calls back to her.*)

RAYNA: Hey.. uh... thank you!

SCENE 12

GARRETT is alone at the usual spot, JONAS approaches.

JONAS: What are you waiting for?

GARRETT: Go away. You don't interest me. (*whispers loudly*) Obsession!

JONAS: Thanks to you I lost my girlfriend.

GARRETT: I'm not going to fight you, if that's what you want. It would be redundant.

JONAS: You need to stay out of my business.

GARRETT: I was just being myself. So was Shira. And so were you. With all that realistic information available, Britanya chose to be friends with us and dump you.

JONAS: Well then, I guess you'll need to pay for being yourself.

GARRETT: (*seething inside but trying not to let it show*) You're giving me far too much practice at controlling my apparently short temper. (*over it*) What is wrong with you? When's the last time you were ever nice to somebody? Did you just try it once and it hurt?

JONAS: What do you care? You don't deserve it!

GARRETT: I just thought I'd ask. You must have treated Britanya well on occasion, or she liked something about the way you look. I don't know. I don't see it. She thought we were losers until she got to know us. And she thought you weren't until she got to know you.

JONAS: (*with disgust*) Leif Hawker. I'm glad he's dead.

GARRETT: What'd he ever do to you?

Fallen Idol – Page 25

JONAS: He's made my life miserable. It's all I ever hear about. Maybe you can beat me in a fight, but you're not any better than me!

GARRETT: That's what this is about? You're worried that I think I'm better than you?

JONAS: You're not better than me.

GARRETT: Well, let's see. You have no friends, a negative attitude, and you're always threatening people. My alt-rock induced misery is chosen. I can quit any time I like.

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