

EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The school's nearly-deserted hallway is bright and sunny. Jaz walks away from the camera, a tuft of ponytail bobbing behind them. They're carrying a textbook and loose paper.

NARRATOR (V.O)

This is Jaz. Jaz is a typical high-school student. They do their schoolwork, commit mild and funny vandalism, and say no to drugs.

STEPHEN (pronounced Ste-fen), a boy with a rock band shirt, suddenly appears, accidentally bumping into Jaz and knocking them to the ground.

NARRATOR (V.O)

This is Stephen. He is a jock.

STEPHEN

Oh, sorry, Jaz. Here, lemme help you.

Stephen and Jaz collect Jaz's papers. Their hands meet over the fallen textbook, and Stephen looks up into Jaz's eyes.

NARRATOR (V.O)

They are destined for love.

Stephen leans in slowly, as if for a kiss. Jaz blinks and scoops the textbook away, oblivious to Stephen's actions.

NARRATOR (V.O)

No, wait. Jaz, what are you doing?

JAZ

Thanks, Stephen! I need to get to algebra now, see you soon!

Jaz hurries off. Stephen looks after them longingly.

NARRATOR (V.O)

That wasn't supposed to happen. Oh, let's try again--maybe later she'll have figured things out, hm?

INT. ALGEBRA CLASS - DAY

Jaz is diligently sketching over their schoolwork. The teacher drones on in the background about numbers.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Ah, here we go. This is Lidia, Jaz's best friend. She's not like other girls; she's quirky!

Lidia in the desk behind them taps them with a pencil.

LIDIA

Hey, how're you doing? You look weird.

JAZ

Oh, I'm fine. But... did Stephen seem weird to you earlier?

LIDIA

No, *but* if I need to fight anyone--

JAZ

I can handle it, Lids. Besides, I probably imagined it, you know me.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Well, that's odd. Lidia seems to know something I don't, which is impossible, because I'm the Narrator! This isn't right...

The Narrator shuffles paper. The school bell rings. Jaz, distracted, stuffs their sketch into their hoodie pocket and stretches their hand--but reaches too far and takes Stephen's backpack.

NARRATOR (V.O) (CONT'D)

Ah. Now we're on the right track.

STEPHEN

Hey, Jaz, you took the--

But Jaz is gone before Stephen finishes.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

... wrong backpack.

LIDIA

Hey, man. You like Jaz?

STEPHEN

Yeah.

LIDIA

Okay, uh, it's not my place to say,

but be careful. Remember, consent is a basic human right.

STEPHEN

Well, duh.

NARRATOR (V.O)

It's good that Stephen isn't some dumb human. He's the perfect fit for Jaz, don't you think?

Stephen looks at the bag almost dejectedly. He stands up and looks around rather helplessly, then puts on a determined face.

STEPHEN

I should get this back to them.

NARRATOR (V.O)

See? *Someone's* sticking to the script here!

EXT. HALLWAY - DAY

Stephen swivels around to watch all the students. The hallway is much more packed than before, but amidst it all, he spots Jaz at their locker.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Be smooth, Steph...

STEPHEN

(flirtatiously)

I believe this is yours?

JAZ

Oh my God, yeah. Sorry!

They switch backpacks. Stephen scratches the back of his head.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Now, Stephen! Now's your chance!

STEPHEN

So... do you wanna maybe--

JAZ

I'd love to stay and talk, but I need to take an English test right now.

STEPHEN

Didn't you score a ninety-eight on that?

JAZ

Exactly! I need to ace it. Later!

Jaz runs down the hall. Stephen makes the same longing face.

NARRATOR (V.O)

Oh, this is chaos. I'll try one more time, but it had better work!

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The gym class is playing football. Jaz and Stephen both run for the flying pigskin, but stumble into each other, until Stephen is on top of Jaz, hands above their shoulders.

STEPHEN

Um, hi.

JAZ

Can you move? The game isn't over.

STEPHEN

Oh, duh, yeah.

Stephen moves off of them and Jaz runs back into the game. Stephen does the same longing face, then narrows his eyes.

STEPHEN

Why are they rejecting me? Is this friendzoning?

NARRATOR (V.O)

It shouldn't be! The script says you two end up together. That's why all these meet-cutes keep happening!

STEPHEN

It seems like the universe or some higher power wants us together. There must be some reason for this, that isn't them not reciprocating my feelings!

NARRATOR (V.O)

I mean, if they didn't, they wouldn't owe you that explanation anyway, but in my story, they obviously do, so.

Stephen jogs up to Jaz, who is trying to play football. He squares up and looks them in the eye.

STEPHEN

Do you like me?

JAZ

What? Dude, I'm trying to get a good grade here. So are you.

STEPHEN

It's just, it seems like today is conspiring for us to get together, so why can't you see it?

JAZ

I'm aromantic. Don't like-like anyone.

Stephen and the Narrator both pause. Stephen looks like a crashed Windows screen.

NARRATOR (V.O)

(sighing)

Of course.

STEPHEN

But... do you wanna date?

JAZ

It's the twenty-third.

Stephen starts to say something, but Jaz is having fun.

JAZ (CONT'D)

That's all you're getting.

STEPHEN

... I'm okay with that.

The camera pans out as they resume their football game.

NARRATOR (V.O)

And they lived platonically ever after, I guess.

The screen goes to black, but you can hear paper shuffling.

NARRATOR (V.O) (CONT'D)

I should just leave this job to Hallmark.