



Preface

As I wrote this play, with the incredible help of a few special friends, I was greatly inspired by chemistry. The entire basis of the story, and each idea is grounded in chemistry, or the lack thereof. There are quite a few parts that repeat throughout the script, and that is intentional.

This story does include some mature language, and a few moments of describing violence, and death.

Each character's traits and characteristics are based off an element from the periodic table. The list beneath this outlines the character and corresponding element.

Characters are referred to as their symbol,
For example, if Ali takes a deep breath, it would be written as "*AL takes a deep breath.*"

When a > symbol is used at the end of a line it is a signal to continue to the next line from that character.

When a character is cut off it may include words in (brackets) which is to indicate what the character was going to continue saying.

Thank you so much for putting your time towards reading this, and I hope you enjoy the experience of reading it, as much as I enjoyed the journey of writing it.

Characters

Ali – AL – Aluminum – most common metal on earth.

Indy – IN – Indium – softest metal that isn't an alkali metal – may cause irritation.

Rebecca – AG – Silver – used in special applications.

Gemma – AU – Gold – metal used for bond wires.

Chloe – CL – Chlorine – Poisonous and can lead to airway constriction.

THE MELTING POINT.

by Bella Nybo

Pre-show music fades into ambience music.

A girl walks in. She walks center stage and puts her things on the table in front of her. It's dark other than the some cycs in the back, and the light from her computer when she opens it. After a moment of her writing on her laptop the lights come up on her. Her eyes catch on to the audience as she is surprised for a moment.

Scene 1 ---- > ab initio

- *Starting from the beginning. The phrase is most often used in the context of quantum or theoretical chemistry calculations where molecular modeling is carried out based on physical laws and the fundamental properties of atoms.*

After taking it all in.

AL. I think there comes a time in everyone's life,
At around maybe 16 or 17
when they begin to realize that not everything
is how they imagined it would be.

AL sits down and starts to type on her computer.

AL. I can only speak from my experience, but as teenagers,
I think we often assume we know exactly how things are.
How things work, how people should act, and exactly what
they are thinking.

Like how an old chemistry classroom can become a literary oasis when writing an essay, purely because I know that no one else will find me. (*a girl enters*)

We think that the neighbor on the corner will always have a dead, brown lawn from the summer heat.

Our chemistry teacher will always make sure we are wearing safety goggles,

Or we develop a habit of always sitting at the same lunch table with the same friends.

And yet, like all things, that changes, and often we aren't ready for that bucket of cold water to wake us up from the whimsy of childhood.

The neighbor puts a 'for sale' sign in the front yard,

And the new people who move in get the sprinkler system fixed. The first sign things are changing.

We graduate high school, and no longer have safety goggles to go through the world with.

And suddenly that table of friends you used to assume would always be sitting there,

Is no longer,

There.

And without even giving you a warning, they evaporate.

Up and out like they were never your friends in the first place.

And you find yourself dancing a line between being popular and being cast out. Playing a character on both sides, like if only everyone liked you so that no one would throw you away.

You get stuck in a limbo, in a dance, to fight against yourself in fear of being burned.

Beat.

Things change.

"Of course, they do," you are probably thinking.

Well, that brings me to my next point.

The melting point.

I think there comes a time in everyone's life,
At around maybe 16 or 17
when they begin to realize that not everything
is how they imagined it would be.
And it is at this melting point, when everything starts to burn,
That you stop and consider what lead up to this moment,
And realize there have been hints all along,
You were just too caught up in life to notice.
For some, that could come in the form of a bad breakup,
A college rejection letter,
Or your friend's ditching you,
The death of a loved one.

It begins to feel like things around you are undefined, like an
ice cream melting slowly, ever so slowly, to the point you
haven't even noticed, until the chocolate is sticky between
your fingers.

You realize life has been melting away between your very
hands.

That's the melting point.

AL turns to the audience.

Since last year I've been feeling like my melting point is just
ahead of me. The heat rising. Everything feeling wrong. Like
things in my life don't fit together. My friends, their friends,
what I think, say, believe. It's like everything's all blurry, always
covered in a misty haze.

When I think too much about it, I feel like I'm suffocating.
Choked by the looming feeling of melting, and the
consequential burn.

I should put the signs together. Get a cork board and some
yarn and piece these things into a simple equation.

I know that I should, but...

I am still too caught up in life.

Scene 2 ---- > conductivity

(While she was talking, a second girl creeped up behind her slowly, a camera around her neck. When she reaches AL. She puts her hands on her shoulders to scare her.)

IN. Boo!

AL lets out a noise of surprise. IN is laughing

Sorry, I knew I would find you here in a... dusty old classroom.

AL. This corner of the school is so quiet, I'd be wasting it's potential if I didn't work in here.

IN. I get it. I get it. Nothing encourages work like the hum *(she sweeps her fingers on the table)* of long forgotten Bunsen burners.

(Beat.)

I have yearbook, so I am out *(in finger quotes)* taking pictures.

AL. *(laughing)* I am shocked Mrs. McGeehan still lets you leave the classroom.

IN. *(While sitting on table)* Honestly, so am I. You'd think after four absences a week, and detentions when I'm here, she'd learn her lesson. *(laughing)* Oh well, more fun for me. *(beat)* So, *(She reaches over the computer to peek at the screen, but AL slams the laptop closed)* what are we working on.

AL. Final paper for English. I know Mr. Stevenson expects a lot, so I'm hoping he'll be impressed.

IN. I'm sure it's incredible. Here I'll give it a little proofread.

IN reaches for AL's computer, AL pulls it back sharply.

AL. It is not good, I don't need anyone to tell me that.

IN turns away, pouts and freezes. AL turns to the audience.

AL. *(pointing to IN)* my best friend, Indy. She stayed bonded to my side even after the friends 'evaporating.' But she's changed a lot in the past year.

Skipping school, failing classes. Who can blame her though.

IN. (*unfreeze*) What's the topic?

AL. He said it could be on anything so long as it's interesting.

(*Beat.*)

(*Laughing slightly*) We are studying silver in Chemistry, so I was thinking what if I wrote about the similarities between Rebecca Silver, and actual silver.

IN. Which are?

AL. Both are valued for decorative beauty, and both are good at spreading things fast.

IN. (*laughing*) I would read that. But I failed Science twice in a row, and would not even be able to define conductivity, so I might not understand some of it.

(*Beat. She is eyeing the computer.*)

Can I please read what you have now?

She reaches to start pulling the computer open, but AL puts her hand on top of the lid, glaring at IN. They hold eye contact for a minute, before IN gives up and crosses her legs where she sits on top of the table.

IN. Fine.

(There is a moment of silence. IN fiddles with the camera around her neck, eventually taking it off and setting it beside her. Ali drums her fingers on the table.)

AL. It's the measurement of how quickly a current is carried through a material.

IN. Huh?

AL. Conductivity.

IN. Oh.

(Beat.)

And is silver conductive?

AL. Yeah. Transfers heat and electricity well.

IN. How well?

AL. On a scale from 0-100, silver is *(shrugging)* 100.

Think of it like this, if lead's conductivity is things passed through word of mouth, silver conducts things like *(pause to think)* texting to a group chat.

IN. Huh. That's another similarity. Becca could turn yesterday's weather into the hottest gossip around, her conductivity is definitely 100.

(AL's phone dings.)

(Spotlight up on another girl standing USC. The spot is from above which makes it hard to see, but she clutches a towel around herself, with bathing suit straps visible on her shoulders. She is clutching a blue hoodie that is charred and burnt.)

AL picks up her phone, and IN plucks it out of her hands. The lights go down upstage.)

IN. Well, from my experience, a good essay only needs three things.

AL. *(Reaching for the phone)* Didn't you get a C in English last— *(she gets interrupted by IN.)*

IN. Number one: good punctuation. *(Holding phone out of reach. AL gives up after a few seconds)* You were the best in our class when we were learning about commas and apostrophes.

AL. In grade 6?

IN. Grade six, shmade shmix. What I'm saying is that you've got that box checked.

Number two: a quote. That's what Ms. Aberdeen said last year, and you're constantly quoting (*pausing to think*) Marie Curie, and... Mendeleev, and...

AL. (*interrupting before IN thinks of more names*) I've been taught these things since I got into high school, I think I know how to add a quote.

IN. Yes, but the third part is the most important.

AL. Take it away then.

IN. You'll want to write this down.

AL. I'm sure.

IN. The third part, which is sure to get you an A plus, plus, is a Star Wars reference.

AL. Indy, I don't think-

IN. No, because if you think about it, Star Wars clearly exhibits parallels and duality. Illustrating evil, and then it's opposite, of the jedi. So, in an essay you can link it back to Star Wars to explore the opposing sides of an argument. A double-edged sword, the two sides of one coin. Or things that are so similar that when compared they're like mirrored reflections. Like Becca and her minions to a group of snakes. Similar in the way they use venom to... kill, different because snakes aren't pack animals.

(Beat. AL looks at IN fondly. IN continues to contemplate her thoughts.)

AL. (*to the audience*) There she is. The witty, intelligent Indy from last year. (*More somber*) Before her own melting point.

IN. Anyway, just an idea. (*Beat.*) I hope you were taking notes.

AL. (*joking*) Sure did, Jane Austin. You should compile your thoughts into a textbook.

IN. In your dreams Ali-Beans. You know that I have no idea what I just said.

AL. Come on – don't you think it's time- (*to move on?*)

(AL gets cut off when her phone dings again. Beat.)

AL. Can I have my phone back please?

IN. I'm not the one who needs to write an essay.

AL. I'll write the essay after I check my phone.

IN. (*glancing at the notification*) It's just a snapchat.
(*AL stares at IN again.*)

IN. Fine, but only if I get to read what you've got so far.

AL. Oh my god, okay. Here.

(*AL opens the laptop and gives it to IN to read. IN grabs it and passes back AL's phone.*)

(*IN starts to read the essay and AL answers a snapchat. She takes selfies as IN reads over the first few lines.*)

IN. 'I think there comes a time in everyone's life, at around maybe 16 or 17, when they begin to realize that not everything is how they imagined it would be.' That's a good line Ali, jeez.
(*She goes back to reading.*)

AL's phone dings again.

AL. (*Laughing*) That's funny, I just got a text about Rebecca Silver, an article? Speak of the (*beat.*) devil.

(*Lights go back up on usc girl on the word Devil.*)

AG. 16-year-old, Rebecca Silver, daughter to millionaire, Scott Silver, determined missing, after end of year beach party goes up in flames.

AL. Holy shit.

IN. What?

(*AL hands phone to IN.*)

(*Music comes up softly as IN reads on her phone.*)

Music goes back down lower when Ag starts to speak.)

AG. End-of-year parties have always been considered tradition for these students.

IN. (*reading off phone*) But this year will be one to mourn.

AL. (*reading from computer*) Recorded by students on iPhone cameras, this year's beach bonfire got out of hand,

IN. And consumed nearby students in flames. (*Not reading from article*) This was last night!

AG. Broken lighters, and spilled bottles of booze. One too many cotton t-shirts abandoned in favor of a late-night dip in the ocean. A jerry can half-filled with gasoline brought to speed up the fire, and left to close to people who wanted to have a little extra fun.

IN. (*From article*) As we write this, 54 of the 55 students in attendance have been accounted for, and all burned victims have been helped.

AL. The only student, confirmed to have been there but not yet found, is 16-year-old,

All. Rebecca Silver.

AL. Daughter of businessman, Scott Silver, who is yet to make a statement.

IN. Videos investigated have included Silver's Bluejay's hoodie in the piles of clothes burnt to threads.

AL. And her Leather Versace flip flops were found among the charred remnants.

IN. There is an ongoing search by the Canadian Coast Guard to find.

AL & IN. This missing girl.

Scene 3 ---- > reactivity

AG. The melting point. A moment when we begin to realize that not everything is how we imagined it would be.

When I go to parties, I often think it will be the exact same as the one before. This time I hoped it would be anything other than last year.

Some boys asking me to get a drink with them. A game of truth or dare played too close the fire. Some wannabes trying to hang out with us, and then getting hurt when we push them away.

I didn't even want to go; but at least I knew it wouldn't be anything like last year's beach bonfire.

Beat.

And yet, it was.

Happening exactly how it had before.

Except this time, I was the girl in the fire.

IN. (choked up) It's just like last year. The same headlines. The same evidence. But they don't mention Sofie once. How could no one mention last year? (*softly*) I don't know why they still let the end of year party happen. Not after everything.

AL. At least (*pause.*) Becca got what she deserved, her and the minions. That's gotta give you a little bit of peace.

IN. But they didn't. The minions are reportedly fine, and Becca didn't deserve *this*.

AL. you don't really think Bec was innocent, do you?

IN. I'm just saying, we both know she wasn't the genius behind it. Gemma and Chloe masterminded all of it, and they're walking free, probably without a burn to their barbie bodies.

AL. Why are you defending Becca saying she didn't have anything to do with Sofie? How could you possibly be on their side?

IN. There aren't sides to this, its real life, and I never said she didn't have anything to do with it. Also, you're the one who wanted to be in their little group not me.

AL. Well I realized I didn't want to be caught up in their group, didn't I?

IN. Oh yes, (*sarcastically*) you were completely relieved when they ditched you!

AL. I don't want to talk about this. You don't get to be mad at me because of what I did in the past.

IN. And yet you have always held that against Bec.

AL. How can you even compare us? I'd never hurt anyone like she has. And again, I didn't think you two were friends.

IN. Yeah, you're right, we aren't. (*After a moment of AL staring. Louder*) We aren't!

AL. Yet, now, you're trying to be all buddy-buddy with her. After last years party I would never imagine being friends with them.

IN. And what about before that. It's not like they suddenly turned into terrible people. Why don't you admit how much you wanted to be friends with them before?

AL. Why haven't *you* learned from *my* mistakes of hanging out with them?

IN. Bec and I came to an understanding, and I no longer put the blame on her.

(Silence as the two girls sit with what they just yelled back and forth. They take a breath)

AL. I'm sorry Indy, I know how hard this must be for you, and I didn't mean to make it worse.

IN. It's okay. It's a lot to take in.

(Pause.)

Do you not have *any* nice memories of Becca? I remember her being sweet when you two first met, I only saw that side of her briefly when she apologized, but I thought you'd recognize it most out of anyone. Yeah, she was far from a saint, but I don't want to remember her like that.

(Silence.)

AL. She *was* nice, you're right. I honestly don't know what happened to her this year. She was so kindest when I first met her. I guess people can change a lot in two years.

I was in one of the hallways, scared. Alone. I didn't know a single person here. Just as I thought I was about to drown in the sea of sweaty teenagers, Becca reached out a hand and pulled me from the riptide.

She said,

AG. My names Rebecca, but all my friends call me Bec. Where are you from? I've never seen you here before.

AL. I didn't even know what to say. I guess I could't even wrap my head around someone actually wanting to talk to me.

AG. Not much of a talker, are you? That's okay, I was shy too, I get it.

AL. She looped her arm through mine and lead us through the crowd. The first thing I noticed was the way the kids parted for her to pass, maybe not even consciously, but they parted anyways. Like she was an angel among humans. She told me about this place. *(Looking around the dusty room)*

AG. Now, I know this school can be scary at times, so I'll show you where I go when everything's just a bit too much. No one ever comes in, you could hide in there all day during a school wide search, and no one would ever be able to find you.

I only show it to my friends.

AL. From that day on I understood why the crowds parted for Becca. She had an air around her that commanded respect.

Some people wished for one night with her, others wished they could be her, I just wanted to be her friend.

IN. You showed me this room when I couldn't handle the first day at school without Sofie.

AL. I knew you needed it, more than I had that first day.

(pause)

IN. Do you think Becca will get more justice than Sofie did?

AL. I wish I could say yes. Maybe if her dad has anything to say about it, but even he might be powerless when it comes to this investigation.

(Beat.)

I want to help. For Becca and for Sofie.

IN. But where do we even start?

AL. We already have suspects. *(IN looks confused)* Chloe and Gemma? We know they were involved last year, who knows what they could have done.

IN. Sure, but I won't be getting my hopes up. A missing girl about to graduate obviously isn't the VPD's strong suit, they still haven't... still haven't found...

AL. They still haven't found Sofie.

Scene 4 ---- > Surface Tension

(School bell rings. The two girls look up surprised.)

AL. We learned last year that we can't leave these things in the hands of others. I'll find out what happened to her, okay
Ind?

(IN nods silently.)

IN. I need to get to Math.

AL. I've got a spare this block, I think I'll head to the library. I'll text you if I find anything out, okay?

IN. I'll keep my ringer on.

(IN exits. AL notices she left her camera on the table. She calls out to her, but she's already gone. AL puts the camera in her bag.)

AL. Since last year's party, Becca, Gemma and Chloe have barely looked in my direction, and I've been fine with that, really.

When they first started ignored me, yeah, I kind of... crumbled? My summer was taken up with a feeling of betrayal and self-loathing, feeling like I was unworthy of friends and an unlikeable monster.

And a part of me hopes that if I can just help Sofie and Becca get a little bit of justice, maybe help Indy learn what happened to Sofie, help find Becca if there's still time, maybe I don't need to feel like I'm worthless.

Call me selfish for my motives all you want, but at least I'm helping people, right? I'm helping Indy and in return I can clear my conscience. Now I just need to find where to start. The library might have some record of last year. It's worth a try, I guess.

(AL exits off stage)

Scene 5 ---- > Scientific Method

Two girls sit at a new desk. They are talking softly to each other with books spread around the desk.

AL walks on stage.

AL. The scientific method is a system of acquiring knowledge through observation and the experimental testing of a hypothesis.

(She walks as she talks, stop when she notices the girls.)

AL. *(surprised)* To be honest I didn't think I'd find *them*. At least not so quickly.

(She walks over to the girls after taking a breath. They were talking softly, but CL starts to speak louder, seemingly defensive.)

CL. Yeah, I put it back. I stopped by Brady's basketball this morning, snapped some pics for a bit of a distraction, and dropped it off immediately after.

AU. Good. I need that science homework that's due tomorrow...

AL. Hey Gemma, Chloe, I just heard about what happened to Rebecca. I'm sorry, it's gotta be a hard thing to go through.

AU. *(Caught off guard)* Huh?

CL. Oh, yeah. Thanks.

AU. We're trying to get through it.

AL. Right. Well, if you guys need to talk to someone, you know where to find me.

AU. Thanks.

CL. We'll keep that in mind.

(AU and CL share a sarcastic look, turning away from AL. AL still stands behind their table.)

AU. *(Noticing AL is still there)* What else do you want?

AL. Nothing, nothing. It's just – I feel for you two, you know? Last year there was Sofie, now, this. You guys just can't catch a break.

AU. Yeah, it's real rough. But now we're graduating, so... *(she trails off, waiting for AL to leave. Her and CL smirk at AL standing there.)*

AL. I know we haven't talked for a while, but I think with all this happening, when a mutual friend goes missing, the past can just- *(be forgotten)*

CL. Hold on, mutual friend?

AU. Last time I checked Becca talked to you *less* than we ever did.

AL. Well, I just thought we could move past *(motioning between them all.)* this all...

AU. *(Standing up.)* Oh, I don't think you have the right idea.

CL. You think we're just going to move past everything?

AL. Yeah, turn over a new leaf and all.

(AU and CL break into laughter.)

I don't know if it was that funny...

AU. *(Composing herself)* Oh my god, you were serious.

CL. I was waiting for you to start laughing.

(AL stands there as they keep calming themselves.)

AU. You're lucky we're even talking to you.

AL. I don't see what your problem is.

AU. My problem is that you're always acting like we'll just forgive you and move on. We *aren't* going to be friends.

(Beat.)

AL. I have the Chemistry homework you said you needed.

AU. Oh, that's alright. I'll – *(get it from someone else later)*

AL. *(She opens her backpack to start pulling out the homework.)* Think of it as a peace offering.

(She puts the camera and computer case onto the desk. When CL and AU see the camera, they look at each other, shocked.)

CL. Why do you have a yearbook camera? You're in yearbook?

AL. *(pause)* No, my friend forgot it so I'm keeping it safe.

AU. Oh, your only friend Indium, right?

CL. I remember her from last year. When Imploding Indium wasn't so stable.

AU. (*Glancing at the camera.*) She doesn't know.

AL. No. I'll tell her soon.

CL. Right...

AU. You've always been good at keeping secrets.

AL. Alright, I'll be going now, (*sarcastically*) great to talk to you both.

AU. (*Stopping AL.*) Oh come on. Right when we were starting to have a good chat? Let's talk about this.

CL. Indium really doesn't know?

AL. What do you want me to do? Text her right now and tell her?

AU. Might do you well to clear your conscience.

AL. Might do you well to keep your nose in your own business.

CL. Aw, flimsy aluminum is trying to stab at you.

(*CL and AU start to laugh.*)

AU. We aren't the bad guys here.

AL. And so what happened last night?

AU. How would you know anything? You weren't even invited.

AL. Well- (*beat.*) I've got common sense and a brain.

CL. Half of one, maybe.

AL. Look this isn't- (*the point.*)

AU. Isn't what? Because to me it seems like you're harassing two grieving highschoolers.

AL. You don't seem like you're grieving to me.

AU. Keep your nose in your own business and we'll do the same.

(*Beat.*)

Brady's leaving now, we've got to go. Chloe?

CL. Pack these up for us, will you Aluminum?

AL. Whatever.

(*The girls exit.*)

AL sits for a moment. Music rises. Then stacks up the books on the table. She pauses when she picks up one of them.

AL. “Handling the flame.”? Hm.

(She picks up more)

AL. “Safe Use and Handling of Flammable Liquids.”?

“Everything is Flammable” By Gabrielle Bell?

Music rises as she finishes stacking the books. She pulls out her computer and types in the name of one of the books, looking from the title of it to the computer.

Scene 6 ---- > Dissociation

AL. Dissociation is when a chemical reaction breaks a compound into two or more parts

IN enters. She walks over to where AL stands.

IN. What are you working on?

AL. Oh, I'm just cleaning these up.

IN. Why are you looking at these? Is your future career in arson?

AL. No, *(beat.)* I just saw Gemma and Chloe.

IN. Why would they need these? I thought they were into Physics, not chemistry.

AL. I couldn't tell you.

IN. I guess...

(Pause. She looks to the audience realizing something.)

IN. *(To audience)* Most of my memories with Gemma and Chloe either include them creating rumours behind their 'friends' backs, or bad mouthing *each other* as soon as the other is out of earshot.

(Beat.)

I've always wanted to be looked at, seen in some way. That attention was possible because of my sister, Sofie, and more rumours than a celebrity gossip page. She'd drive me home and spill everything the girls had said that day. Secrets of their own, or people Sofie called friends, and drama of absolute strangers in her grade, a year above me. She said it was retribution. That they share gossip, and in return she tells other people to expose the girls for their snake tongues and the poison they'd spit when they talked. And after she'd tell me I'd tell anyone who'd listen.

That feeling when you're sharing a secret that's not your own and the person across from you is so enraptured you know they're hanging on to your every word. It's addictive.

But there were times when the pressure got so high it felt like drowning.

The times when it's *your* secret being shared, or Sofie's. When she disappeared, the secrets were her legacy. Her story. Her life after life. Spinning a web for her, muddling people's opinions of who she was.

I'd hear them sometimes, whispered as I passed a group of strangers in the hall. And I always felt tiny, insignificant. My weak comeback stuck in my throat to the point of feeling-

AL & AG. Suffocated.

AG. Suffocation. To die from lack of air or inability to breathe. That's what it feels like. When your friends start to whisper as soon as you step out of the room.

When any defense you have sinks down on your chest, smothering you to the point of suffocation.

Before the party I always *thought* that if I spread things about others, and not vice versa, that I wouldn't be suffocated.

But I guess people start to get their own voice in grade 12, at least my friends did.

IN. I didn't think they meant it.

AL. What do you mean, Indy?

IN just shakes her head, like she can't get the words out.

AL. Indy, what do you mean?

IN. When they were talking about Rebecca in the bathroom, I thought they were joking. We all had moments when we were fed up with Rebecca's bullshit, I thought that was all it was.

AL. All *what* was?

IN. The shit talking. The plans they made, the ideas they suggested.

CL. The beach party would be the perfect place.

IN. I never imagined- I mean, I just thought with them knowing each other for so long and all.

AU. I bet you could convince your boyfriend to let us use his truck.

AL. What did they say, Indy?

CL. (*Laughing*) I doubt any of them would even question it. (*imitating*) We just want to help our dear friend Rebecca while

she's passed out drunk. Shame on us for being caring friends.
Not our fault if she wakes up in the middle of the forest.

CL and AU laughing loudly.

IN. They were- were saying what they'd do if they had an opportunity.

AU. How about this? Spill some alcohol on her, and then if someone's lighter gets a little too close,

IN. Saying how they'd hurt her. Daydreaming about doing worse than just hurting her.

CL. Better idea! Spill some gasoline on her, say it's water

AU & CL. (*yelling*) and then light her up!

Silence. Music rises.

IN. I guess I should have known.

Should have put the piece together.

Saw the signs from last year. The similarities between then and what they said.

I could have stepped out from my stall, and asked,

AG. You aren't being serious, are you?

IN. And maybe they would have been honest,

Admitted to me their plans of murder. They'd say,

CL. And you've never pictured her head on a skewer? We could finally make that happen.

IN. Or maybe they would have denied it.

AU. It's just these jokes we have. What? don't you have any friends you joke with?

CL. Wouldn't be surprised if she didn't.

IN. If I would've known how far they'd really go I wouldn't have waited. Waited for it to come to this.

AL. Indy, it's not your fault. (*She sits in the chair, putting her hand on IN's.*)

IN. But I can't let them get away with this. (*She stands*) I can't let Becca become another Sofie situation all over again, with no justice and no revenge.

AL. It won't be. Her dad won't let it happen.

IN. But everyone let Sofie go unfound, where was our dad's million dollars? Or the coast guard searching for longer than a few days? Where was any help when we needed it? We have evidence against Chloe and Gem, I won't let them get away with this for a second time.

AL. Take a breath Indy, please. What?

IN. *(AL still talking over her)* A breath?

AL. What are you planning on doing?

IN. SOMETHING!

AL. We're on the same page, but we can't jump to actions without thinking them through.

IN. What are you saying? You're just letting them walk free? How are you not as mad as I am.

AL. I am Indy, I'm mad. *(IN scoffs)* but Becca wouldn't want us to react so impulsively.

IN. Well Sofie would. She would want justice to be served, so if you won't help me, I'll figure it out myself.

(She begins to exit)

AL. INDY. Stop running off instead of facing the facts. You need to think about this. I don't want you to do something you will end up regretting.

IN. Stop trying to live my life for me. I know what I'm doing. I will not sit here while we think up a mediocre plan. I need to do *something*. So, either you come with, or you're just as *volatile* as the other girls.

(Pause)

AL. I have always stood by you Indy. I have sat by and encouraged you while let yourself waste away. Don't call me toxic just because I'm not advocating for you to hurt yourself even more.

IN. Oh well, I'm so sorry for grieving my dead sister. Admit that you despise the fact that, even after my sister *died*, I still live a life, and I still experience things to the fullest. You crumbled apart after some bitchy mean girls left you in their dust, and

everyday you're trying to prove to yourself that I'm also about to crumble, just so that you can justify your own breakdown. I know that Sofie would want me to live life without regret, and if I do something rash occasionally, like bringing her and Becca's *murderers* to justice, then so be it, call me reckless. I know that Sofie would want reparation. And I think that if you really asked yourself, Becca would, too.

So, *stop* trying to control my actions, *stop* making your own idea of me, and *STOP* waiting for me to collapse so that you can rationalize your own shortcomings.

(There is a pause as the two look at each other. Indy grabs the camera and turns around, starting to leave.)

AL. Indy, think about this for a moment.

IN. *(she stops briefly and turns around.)* I've thought about it, and I've decided to get some long over-due justice. *(She exits)*

AL. *(calling after her)* Revenge isn't justice, Indy.

AL starts to pack all the things on the table, getting ready to run after IN.

AL. The melting point. When everything begins to distort, and the heat rises, heavy smoke blocking out reasonable thought and suffocating any possibility of a sensible compromise. A moment when you stop and consider what has led up to this. *(To audience. Yelling.)* What led up to this? Have there really been hints all along?

I've begun to realize that not everything,
is how I imagined it would be.

And though my hands are trying to grasp,
At the melting world around me,
I fear I can't do enough.

Can't put the pieces together quick enough for them all to
remain intact.

And as my world melts,

I know the impending burn is close,

The flames licking at my hands as I pack up these textbooks.
(She grabs the items as she mentions them)

My laptop, my phone.

My skin feels uncomfortably hot as I grab my backpack.

I need to go find Indy, before she does something
unchangeable.

Scene 7 ---- > Absolute Zero

AL. Absolute zero is the lowest possible temperature.

Theoretically, at absolute zero, atoms stop moving.

(AU enters onstage in a huff)

AU. *(Yelling.)* There you are. Irritating Indium got out again, was the lock on her cage not strong enough?

AL. What are talking about?

AU. Chloe is disinfecting her scratches from the rabid bitch you call a friend.

AL. Where's Indy? What did you do to her?

AU. We did what we needed to. I thought you got the message when we talked before. She was trying to spit flames, so she should have been ready to get burned. Not our fault common sense is missing from that family.

What I want to know is what *you* said to her? I know she's basically insane – she just proved that – but she kept yelling something about you.

AL. I didn't need to *tell* her anything.

AU. Then why were our names, your name, and Sofie the only things understandable from her screaming?

AL. *(slowly.)* I. Didn't. Tell. Her. Anything.

AU. Yes, you did, I know you did. And I know it wasn't anything important because your name wasn't said *as mad as* the rest of ours.

AL. Maybe she's just a smart person and realized that invasive bull frogs are better off dead instead of hurting other frogs.

AU. What the fuck is that supposed to mean? I'm a frog now?

AL. No you're the invasive species- oh my god never mind.

AU. Just admit it's your fault she blew up.

AL. I already said>

AU. Oh, don't give me this shit, Aluminum.

AL. I didn't *say* anything.

AU. *(Yelling and grabbing the front of AL's shirt)* Imploding Indium just attacked my best friend>

AL. It's Indy

AU. And you expect me to believe that you had nothing to do with it?

AL. I didn't

AU. Indium might fall for lies,>

AL. Don't bring this up now.

AU. But you don't fool me. What did you tell her? *(As she speaks CL comes on stage, in darkness pushing IN in front of her. She pushed IN to the floor in front of the table, letting her Curl into a ball as CL exits.)* WHAT DID YOU SAY?

AL. Where did you take Indy?

AU. *(She picks up AL's bag from her path and shoves it into AL.)* Fine, you don't want to say anything? We can play that game, just know that your non-compliance *will* be reflecting in Indiums punishment.

(Beat.)

(Laughing.) You could have a school wide search but never find her.

(AU exits. AL sits down)

AL. Someplace I'll never find... How could I let Indy get caught like this? *(Beat.)* Suffocation. To die from lack of air or inability to breathe.

That's how I feel.

The world has melted to the point of boiling, pooling around my feet as I wade through at half the speed.

When I move my head to fast my vision blurs to the point of stars. It's never been like this before.

When I first started my essay a part of me thought my melting point was last year, same as Indy's, but as I smelled smoke in the air and fire on the horizon, I knew my melting point hadn't yet arrived, and now, I'm thinking it has.

Creeping into my life so slowly I hadn't even realized, like an ice cream on a hot summer day. Only now can I feel the sticky

sweetness dripping on to my fingers, the fake friendships, the lies we've built up just to get through this final year.

I briefly imagine a world where everything's back like it was before. When I had first gotten to this school, when Becca was a kind-hearted angel among people.

AG. My names Rebecca, but all my friends call me Bec. Where are you from? I've never seen you here before.

AL. The day she showed me the Chemistry classroom, gave me an oasis...

AG. You could hide in there all day during a school wide search, and no one would ever be able to find you...

(AG lets go of her arm and exits offstage.)

AL. When Becca and I first became friends, I didn't know Chloe and Gemma, and I didn't spend time in the old chemistry classroom when the four of us were friends.

It wasn't until they had *ditched me*, that I needed a place to escape reality. To forget the world and my worries, the girls and *(beat.)* everything that happened that night.

Neither of them knows that Becca showed me where the chemistry classroom is.

I know that's where they are. Where Indy is. This school is small, and yet the classroom has always remained hidden. An oasis.

For homework, or gossip. Skipping class, or extra study time. I can save her, I can apologize, and I can make this up to her.

Scene 8 ---- > Substrate (52 minutes)

AL. Substrate is the matter in which a chemical reaction takes place. I have many memories in the old chemistry class, I guess now it's time to make more.

(She exits. Lights up on chem class, IN is curled underneath the table, where CL lefts her.)

AL. *(a knock sounds.)* Hello? *(She slowly enters. Looking around.)*

(IN groans. AL notices her for the first time.)

AL. Indy!

AL rushes to IN's side, kneeling down behind her, rolling her onto her back.

AL. Indy, Ind! Are you okay? What happened?

IN. *(groaning again.)* Ali? What are you- how did you- Where are we?

AL. You're safe, that's what matters.

IN. *(lifting her head and looking around)* Are we seriously back in this old classroom. Oh my god.

AL. Better here than a... bathroom?

IN. *(she gets up with a little hassle. Pulling herself onto the chair, dusting off her clothes.)* If I didn't get out of here soon, I'd probably die from dust inhalation.

AL. Indy, are you okay? What hurts?

IN. I'm fine, Ali, I don't need your help. I stand by what I said earlier.

AL. Please, Indy, let me apologize-

IN. I'm not in the mood.

AL. But, I didn't know you felt that way, I-

IN. I'd prefer if your lies aren't the first thing I hear as I recover.

AL. *(pause. She looks shocked.)* What have I ever lied to you about.

IN. Well, for one, you didn't tell me you had the camera.

AL. Well I got a little caught up with talking to Chloe and Gemma. I wasn't the one who forgot it in the first place.

IN. Why are you trying to start a fight with someone who was literally on the brink of passing out like 5 minutes ago.

AL. It seems like your brain is working fine.

(The two are silent for a moment. IN picks up the camera, fiddling with it out of nerves.)

AL. *(watching IN.)* You remind me of Sofie sometimes.

IN. Yeah, sure I do.

AL. The first time I met her was the first time I felt dumb. It was like my whole life I had Science as my strongest personality trait, and suddenly it had been ripped away from my grasp. When she started hanging out with us last year, I had to find myself again. Reinvent myself from 'Ali the scientist' to just... Ali.

One time, I had been struggling to understand the concepts in my Physics 11 class. When I mentioned it to Sofie she started to bring it up whenever we were talking. If I said something smart, she'd say, "too bad physics 11 isn't that easy."

(She pauses as the two girls consider this.)

AL. But that, um- that was only a few times. She came over to my house one night so that we could study together, and she explained Physics like it was as simple as the alphabet, and suddenly, I understood it all. All this to say, she was the most intelligent friend I ever had. I wish we'd had more time to get closer. The next day I went to school and aced the pop quiz. That was the night before... the bonfire.

IN. *(to AL)* The bonfire.

(To audience.) I had never expected for some random night in June to become such a pivotal moment of my life. For years, we had been stable, my family, like Sodium Chloride, common table salt.

If you've ever gotten a scratch, and then swam in the ocean, you learn very quickly that salt and wounds don't mix well. So, when Sofie went missing, and wounded me so deeply, my

anchored, balanced, Sodium Chloride life, stopped being so stable.

I was left alone on a small, lonely, island surrounded by salt water. Everywhere I could see people had stable friendships, secure homes, steady grades, and here I was, a melting pot of Uranium and Plutonium; one wrong move and the atomic bomb of Indy would detonate. People were cautious around me, not saying anything they thought could make that bomb go off, everyone except for Ali.

At least I thought so.

She had been ditched by the very same girls who let my sister go to that bonfire. She was just as explosive as I was. Until suddenly she was trying to be the one living my life.

Controlling what I do, getting so angry if I 'do something she wouldn't have.' I'm sure that we'll get over it. At least I hope we do.

(Silence as IN flicks through the pictures. AL sits quiet at the bottom of the table.)

Scene 9 ---- > Volatile

AL. Volatile refers to when a substance has a vapor pressure so high that the substance becomes *volatile*. That's what it's been like since last year's party.

CL. Last night was kind of like the final 'hurrah' of grade 12. When you can bathe in the glow of being a teenager one final time.

AU. It doesn't matter how many times you've skipped science class.

AG. It doesn't matter who you've been friends with since elementary school.

CL. And what you'll do with your future isn't important.

AU. For one night, you're just a soul wanting to party. No stress, no worries, no consequences.

CL. That's how it always was. When we were sophomores with special invitations, and then again at 16, with even more people willing to bring us along.

AU. But the second year was different. There *was* worry. A looming cloud. I had felt it the night before when the girls were over at my place for a Friday night sleepover.

AU. I just can't stand her.

AG. I had just come back from helping my mom with the dishes.

CL. I know right. Like, who does she think she is, talking about us like that?

AG. Gemma sitting on my bed, reading through a magazine. Chloe painting her nails. And Ali. Sitting at the bed post.

AL. I don't know why she still hangs around us. You'd think she'd get the message.

AG. Who are we talking about?

AU. Who do you think?

AG. Sofie.

AL. What if we just... I don't... make her disappear somehow. That way she'd never be able to share our secrets again.

(silence)

(To the audience.) I didn't mean for the words to come out the way they did. In a tone that wasn't joking, and instead said, 'let's brainstorm more ideas.' But, still, there was no need to overreact like they did.

AU. What are you talking about?

CL. You want to... *kill* her?

AL. No, what?! I never said that. I was joking. I just mean I wish we could have shut her up sooner.

(Silence again. AL is beginning to get defensive.)

AL. In the way that, you know, she's always spilling our secrets, so if only we could go back in time and never tell them to her in the first place.

AG. What did you mean at first?

AL. I didn't mean anything. I was joking.

AG. I think maybe you should go back home for the night. There isn't really space for four of us anyways.

AL. But, Bec, I didn't... I wasn't serious.

CL. She's right, Ali.

AU. We'll see you at school.

AL. No, I'll see you before school. The parties tomorrow.

CL. It might be best if you don't come to the party.

AU. It might make the night run smoother.

AL. Right...

AG. And the party *was* good. I danced for hours. And then I saw Chloe, Gemma, and Sofie all talking together. I walk over to them, and we start talking about a random topic.

AU. That is, until Ali showed up.

CL. I see her first. She's running to us, slipping slightly on the uneven sand.

AG. Then she begins to yell.

AU. Yelling at us, about how we 'betrayed her'

CL. Asking how we could talk with Sofie, after talking so bad about her the night before.

AU. How could we uninvite her, and then replace her with Sofie?

AL. Gemma was arguing, and I was making sure neither of them did anything... harmful. Chloe began to cry, I could see it, but I couldn't take my attention off the other two. That's when Sofie moved to comfort Chloe.

AU. The final straw to break Ali.

CL. And when she saw Sofie beside me-

AL. *(softly.)* It wasn't my fault.

AU. Yes, Ali. It was.

AL. No, *(she steps forward.)* no. I didn't do anything.

AG. No?

AL. *(weakly)* no.

CL. Indy has no idea...

AG. How could you do that to a friend.

AU. We knew we couldn't trust you.

CL. Did you lie to us like that?

(AL shakes her head.)

AU. *Would* you have lied to us if we hadn't been there?

AL. No. I didn't have choice.

CL. With what?

(CL exits.)

AU. No choice but to lie to Indy?

(AU exits.)

AL. It's not my fault.

AG. Or no choice but to kill her sister?

(AG exits.)

AL. IT'S NOT MY FAULT.

(AL puts her head in her hands. The three who had been talking step back. There's a moment of silence.)

IN. *(surprised, looking to AL)* What?

AL. Nothing, nothing.

IN. No, tell me what's not your fault.

(CL and AU enter back onstage.)

CL. I thought I heard you, Aluminum.

AU. Go ahead, tell Indium.

AL. I don't know what any of you are talking about. I didn't do anything.

CL. Ugh, we've heard that so many times.

IN. What are you talking about?

AU. If you don't want to recount it, we will.

CL. The night before the bonfire last year Ali here was at our sleepover-

IN. You told me you were studying with my sister?

CL. Did she? How cute...

AL. They're lying Indy, don't believe anything they say.

AU. Oh, we're lying? Explain why you have three scars on your left arm.

(AL lowers her sleeves to cover her arms.)

AL. I have a cat.

AU. Then why are they the same distance as a human hand, not a cat?

CU. We all remember, Aluminum. You can't deflect your way out of this.

AL. You're a liar, Chloe.

IN. What are the scratches from?

AU. Good question. Those scratches are from your very own sister. The result of events that took place exactly one year ago. When Ali got...

AL. Betrayed?

AU. I was going to say. Murderous.

IN. What are they talking about, Ali?

CL. We're talking about when Ali and Sofie got into a bit of a fight.

AL. It wasn't my fault. You guys throw me out of the house. Uninvite me from the bonfire, and BETRAYED ME.

AU. You didn't do anything? No, Ali, we did absolutely NOTHING.

CL. We brought you under our wings, and helped you soar, and then you start saying all these crazy things.

AU. Jealousy does that to a person.

AL. Why would I be jealous of someone who we spent hours bad-mouthing?

CL. Maybe you were jealous because people liked her. You saw us at the party talking to her, and suddenly alarms went off and you blew up.

AL. OKAY MAYBE I WAS JEALOUS. She was smart and pretty, funny and kind, all things I had never been. So yeah – when you guys went full 180 and were acting like she had replaced me I flipped. I-I don't know why. I just couldn't think clearly. I never meant to hurt Sofie.

IN. You're all talking about Sofie?!

AU. Yes, we're talking about Sofie.

IN. What did you do to her, Ali?

AL. Nothing, I-

(They start to overlap their speaking.)

CL. Stop lying.

AU. YOU KNOW >

IN. Just tell me.

AU. THAT'S NOT TRUE.

(This continues.)

AL. I KILLED HER.

(Silence.)

AL. I was fuming- outraged! I wasn't thinking. And when I saw her go to Chloe to console her, I-I blew up.

(Silence again as all three girls stare at AL.)

AL. I wasn't thinking, my hands moved on their own, and I shoved her. I didn't have the leverage to knock her over, so she backed away from me as I tried to push again.

AU. She kept backing up. Everything was so loud.

CL. She couldn't hear as we yelled for her to stop.

AL. And my skin was so hot, like I had broken a fever from rage, that I couldn't feel as the flames grew closer, I couldn't decipher the red of the fire from the red that took over my

vision. I almost couldn't see anything. And so, I pushed her again.

CL. The scratches are from where Sofie tried to stabilize herself.

AL. A picture painted on my arm in memory of the worst thing I have ever done.

IN. *(she's quiet for a moment.)* How could you. I- *(it's quiet.)*

IN. I cannot believe I ever saw you as a friend. I trusted you; I believed you. I consoled you when you grieved losing your friends, and I let you comfort me. From a death- that you- that you caused.

AL. No, Indy.

IN. I don't have words for you. I never want to speak to you again. Forget our memories, forget I exist.

AL. Indy.

IN. I never want to look at you again. *(She exits.)*

AU. So, there it is... Now she knows.

CL. Way to end school. No friends, no one who's even willing to tolerate you.

AU. And to think, none of it was anyone's fault but your own. *(They both exit.)*

Scene 9 ---- > The Melting Point

AL. So... the secrets out.

(Beat.) As I sit and ponder, I begin to think I started melting long ago. Years maybe, months at least. The heat rising like you've turned on a sauna. But then the sauna won't turn off, and you can't open the door, and it keeps getting hotter, and hotter, until its suffocating. Maybe after a while you will get out, and things will get better, but they won't go back to normal.

I think there comes a time in everyone's life,

At around maybe 16 or 17

when they begin to realize that not everything

is how they imagined it would be.

As a teenager, I can only speak to mine own experiences, but in the past day, I don't think anything is how it was since I found out Rebecca was missing.

The world dissolving to reveal a brutal, cold reflection of the world I knew.

And in the mirror, I see myself. In the center of all my life's issues. Looking back with the same bewildered expression that I wore a year ago when I realized what I had done.

I've always felt so sure of things, but I'm not so sure anymore.

Life is often a compilation of cycles. Birth to death, acquaintances, to friends, and back to strangers.

(Beat.)

After seeing how miserable I was last summer, my parents sent me to a therapist. I didn't tell her the details, but I told her what I felt.

How sometimes my life would go fuzzy. How I felt a shadow looming behind me, ready to burn when the melting world around me reached a limit.

She told me those were all 'what-ifs' and that I should go back to everything I know for sure to be true. To *ground* myself.

Well, here are some facts.

One year ago, I pushed a girl into a fire. After that my friends ditched me, and I became friends with Indy for this entire year. Sofie is still missing, I was rushed away so fast, I don't even know what happened to her. I'll be graduating in two days and won't have any friends to celebrate it with. And *(pause.)*

Rebecca is still missing.

I don't think I can confidently say I believe she'll be found; in fact it might be the only thing I'm confident to claim.

Perhaps my high school years will forever be tarnished with the memory of two girls taken to soon, instead of just one, and it will be my legacy that I take with me.

(AL's phone dings. She turns it on.)

Another article about Rebecca? Posted five minutes ago?

AG. 17-year-old, Rebecca Silver, daughter to businessman Scott silver, found, after a 12-hour search conducted by the coast guard.

AL. The melting point. When I begin to realize that not everything,

Is how I imagined it would be.