THE FAULT IN OUR STARS

by

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Based on the novel by John Green

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HAZEL GRACE LANCASTER (16) lies in the grass, staring up at the stars. We’re CLOSE ON her FACE and we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)
You have a choice in this world, I believe, about how to tell sad stories.

CUT TO a SERIES OF QUICK IMAGES:

Hazel and the BOY we will come to know as AUGUSTUS “GUS” WATERS (17) at an outdoor restaurant in some magical place. [Though we DO NOT SEE HIS FACE, the impression we get is that the two of them look very much the perfect Hollywood couple.]

HAZEL (V.O.)
On the one hand, you can sugar coat – the way they do in movies and romance novels.

“Perfect” Hazel and “Perfect” Gus in a GONDOLA in some foreign country. She rests her head on his shoulder. Again, we cannot get a good look at him.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Where villains are vanquished and... heroes are born and...

“Perfect” Hazel and “Perfect” Gus kiss in an unmarked room. The CAMERA favors Hazel. Gus remains unseen.

HAZEL (V.O.)
... beautiful people learn beautiful lessons...

“Perfect” Hazel and “Perfect” Gus fall onto a bed together. Though we still don’t see Gus, the love in her eyes for him is unmistakable.

HAZEL (V.O.)
... and nothing is too messed up that can’t be fixed with an apology and a Peter Gabriel song.
EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

BACK TO Hazel on the grass, still watching the stars. Were those dreams or were they memories? Still unclear.

    HAZEL (V.O.)
    I like that way as much as the next girl, believe me. It’s just not the truth.

Hazel closes her eyes.

    HAZEL (V.O.)
    This is the truth.

And EVERYTHING GOES BLACK. We HEAR:

    HAZEL (V.O.)
    Sorry.

FADE IN ON:

INT. DOCTOR’S OFFICE - DAY

The real Hazel is no less beautiful than the one we just saw.

    HAZEL (V.O.)
    Late in the Winter of my 17th year...

There are, however, some key and obvious differences.

First, you’ll notice the OXYGEN TUBE in her nostrils which help her to breathe.

Second, you’ll notice her hair - which we couldn’t see in the grass. It’s much shorter than the “Perfect” version, the result of someone whose head was completely shaved a few years before.

    HAZEL (V.O.)
    ... my mother decided I was depressed.

    HAZEL
    I’m not depressed.

Hazel’s legs dangle over the side of an exam table. Her mother FRANNIE (early 40s, younger than she feels) explains to the oncologist, DR. MARIA:

    FRANNIE
    ... she eats like a bird. She barely leaves the house,

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL

I’m not depressed.

FRANNIE
... she reads the same book over and over...

DR. MARIA
She’s depressed.

HAZEL
I’m not depressed!

Off her look, CUT TO:

QUICK SEQUENCE, which play over:

HAZEL (V.O.)
The booklets and web sites always list depression as a side effect of cancer...

INT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Filled with TEENAGE GIRLS - gossiping, laughing - being teenage girls, basically. And here’s Hazel. With her Mom. And her oxygen tank. Just another day.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Depression’s not a side effect of cancer...

INT. HAZEL’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

She sits watching game shows in the middle of the afternoon. Her Mom brings her a sandwich. A glass of water. And a whole host of prescriptions. Hazel eyes them with indifference.

HAZEL (V.O.)
... it’s a side effect of dying.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Hazel sits alone reading a dog-eared, heavily underlined copy of a novel (“An Imperial Affliction” by Peter Van Houten). She only looks up when distracted by a squeal of delight. A YOUNG GUY has lifted a YOUNG GIRL over his shoulder playfully. He spins her around. Hazel watches a beat - goes back to the book.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Which is what was happening to me.

And we CUT BACK TO:
Frannie continues to talk to the doctor. Hazel continues to dangle her feet.

FRANNIE
... some days she won’t even get out of bed.

Dr. Maria scratches her face, thinking.

DR. MARIA
I may switch you to Zoloft. Or Lexapro. And twice a day instead of once.

HAZEL
Why stop there?

DR. MARIA
Hmm?

HAZEL
Keep ‘em coming. I can take it. I’m like the Keith Richards of cancer kids.
(ALT)
I’m like the Charlie Sheen of cancer kids.

Dr. Maria looks at Frannie who just shakes her head.

DR. MARIA
Have you been going to that Support Group I suggested?

Instead of answering, Hazel looks at her Mom.

FRANNIE
She’s gone a few times.

HAZEL
I’m not sure it’s for me.

DR. MARIA
If you’re depressed --

HAZEL
(exasperated)
I’m not de--

DR. MARIA
(ignoring her)
-- support Groups are a great way to connect with people who are...

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL

What?
DR. MARIA
(breat)
On the same journey.

HAZEL
“Journey?” Really?

FRANNIE
Hazel.

DR. MARIA
Just give it a chance, ok? For me.

Hazel rolls her eyes, knows she’s lost this battle.

DR. MARIA (CONT’D)
Who knows? You might even find it...
enlightening.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

CLOSE UP on PATRICK (30s, pony-tail). He has a guitar.

PATRICK
... we are gathered here today -
literally - in the heart of Jesus.

Patrick gestures above, to the rafters of the church, which is in fact shaped like a cross. (Thus they are - metaphorically - in the heart of Jesus.)

ANGLE on Hazel who just shakes her head. This is the lamest thing she could be doing right now.

PATRICK (CONT’D)
Who would like to share their story with the group?

The basement is filled with SICK PEOPLE. Hazel among them. Most are under the age of 18. QUICK CUTS:

SPEAKER #1
Jillian. Lymphoma.

SPEAKER #2
Angel. Ewing sarcoma.

SPEAKER #3
Sid. Astrocytoma.

(CONTINUED)
SPEAKER #4
Tamra. Neuroblastoma.

PATRICK
Patrick. Testicular. It began a few years ago when I was a perfectly healthy, strapping young man of 31. I’d just gotten married...

As Hazel watches, bored, and Patrick continues, we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)
I’ll spare you the gory details of Patrick’s ball cancer. Basically...

INT. PATRICK’S BATHROOM - DAY
Patrick is urinating. We stay on his face as he finds something off. It’s alarming to him.

HAZEL (V.O.)
...they found it in his nuts...

OMITTED

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY
Patrick, terrified, is wheeled into an OR.

HAZEL (V.O.)
...cut most of it out, he almost died, but he didn’t die. And now here he is --

INT. PATRICK’S LIVING ROOM - DAY
Patrick plays GUITAR HERO on XBOX. He’s really into it.

HAZEL (V.O.)
...divorced, friendless, addicted to video games...

INT. PATRICK’S LIVING ROOM - DAY
Patrick sits on the couch watching an inspirational program on TV while knitting what looks like a RUG of some kind.

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - DAY
Patrick has laid the elaborate (and badly sewn) rug of Jesus Christ on the ground in the middle of the basement and is placing chairs on it for the group to sit.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL (V.O.)
...exploiting his cancertastic past in
the heart of Jesus - "literally" -

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

And as Patrick finishes up his speech, we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)
...to show us that one day, if we're
lucky, we could be just like him.

PATRICK
...which is why I believe every day is a
blessing. Thank you for listening.

Patrick smiles broadly when he finishes. And everyone says:

ALL IN UNISON
“We’re here for you Patrick.”

Hazel says it the least enthusiastically. She locks eyes with
her only friend in Support Group, a blonde kid with an eye
patch, ISAAC. He’s also shaking his head.

PATRICK
Now who else would like to share?
(no response)
Hazel?

Oh no. Patrick gestures for her to speak. Reluctantly she
stands, sighs...

HAZEL
I’m, uh, Hazel.
(beat)
Thyroid originally but with quite the
impressive satellite colony in my lungs.

Not much more to say, Hazel is about to sit down.

PATRICK
And how are you doing Hazel?

Hazel has no idea how to answer that.

HAZEL (V.O.)
You mean besides the terminal cancer?

But that’s not what she says. She says:

HAZEL
Alright? I guess...?

(CONTINUED)
Isaac tries not to laugh at this. Hazel sits back down.

ALL IN UNISON
“We’re here for you Hazel.”

Hazel exhales. This is not at all helpful. A few more beats.

PATRICK
Maybe now I’ll play a song...

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Frannie sits in the car in the parking lot, reading from a book, waiting for Group to be over. She sees the church door open and puts the book away. Hazel comes out, disappointed to see her Mother waiting there.

HAZEL
You didn’t go to the movies, did you?

FRANNIE
(caught)
Maybe next time.

Hazel is a little bummed by this, the lack of life being lived by her parents. But what can she do.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
(re: support group)
So... was it amazing?

Hazel just rolls her eyes, exhales, and we CUT TO:

QUICK SEQUENCE, which plays over:

HAZEL (V.O.)
And that was my life.
HAZEL (V.O.)
Reality shows. Doctor’s appointments.
Eight prescription drugs, three times a day.

A23
INT. HAZEL’S BATHROOM – LATER
Hazel popping more pills.

B23
INT. HAZEL’S BATHROOM – NIGHT
Hazel popping yet even more pills before bed.

INT. HAZEL’S KITCHEN – ANOTHER DAY
Hazel and her parents in the kitchen. Frannie prepares Hazel’s lunch. Hazel’s father, MICHAEL (40s, kind, doing his best to stay positive) drinks coffee at the table.

HAZEL (V.O.)
And worse worse worst of all... support group.

HAZEL
Ugh. You can’t make me.

MICHAEL
Of course we can, we’re your parents.

Hazel frowns.

FRANNIE
You need to get out of the house. Make friends. Be a teenager.

HAZEL
If you want me to be a teenager, don’t send me to Support Group. Buy me a fake ID so I can go to clubs and drink gimlets and take pot.

MICHAEL
You don’t take pot.

HAZEL
See, that’s the kind of thing I would know with a fake ID.

FRANNIE
(beat)
Get in the car.
Hazel mock stabs herself in the stomach with an invisible sword. CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

A small Episcopalian sanctuary in suburban Indianapolis.

HAZEL (V.O.)
And so I went...

Frannie’s car pulls into the parking lot.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Not because I wanted to or because I thought it would help. But for the same reason I did anything these days...

Hazel, oxygen tank in tow, steps out, helped by Frannie.

HAZEL (V.O.)
... to make my parents happy.

She turns to go. Quickly realizing that her mother isn’t going anywhere.

HAZEL
First, you wouldn’t let me drive myself. And now you’re gonna sit and wait the whole time?

FRANNIE
Of course not, no. I...
(she totally is)
I have errands to run.

Hazel knows she’s not planning to run any errands. She doesn’t press the issue.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
Love you.

HAZEL
Love you too Mom.

HAZEL (V.O.)
The only thing worse than biting it from cancer - is having a kid bite it from cancer.

As Frannie gets back in the car, she shouts to her daughter:

FRANNIE
Make some friends!

(CONTINUED)
Hazel just shakes her head. CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Hazel walks towards the elevator. A GAUNT LOOKING KID holds it open for her. Hazel thinks better of it.

HAZEL
I’ll take the stairs.

The KID nods. The doors shut. She turns to go, walking right into:

GUS
Ooph.
HAZEL
Sorry!

A SUPREMELY BEAUTIFUL BOY (we will come to know him as GUS). Tall, lean, muscular, straight short mahogany hair, blue eyes. Hazel has never seen a better looking kid in her life.

GUS
My bad.
HAZEL
No, it’s...

For a brief moment, the Earth stops. They stand looking at one another. Hazel is speechless.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Excuse me.

With the Beautiful Boy watching, a wan smile on his face, Hazel shuffles off as fast as she can, ducking into:

INT. BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Hazel catches her breath. Shakes her head. Surprised at herself. She looks in the mirror. So doesn’t like what she sees. The Earth starts moving again. CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - AFTERNOON

CU The Beautiful Boy. He’s staring at Hazel. That same flirty smile on his face.

CU Hazel. Feeling his eyes. She meets them - then quickly, self-consciously, looks away. Around her, the rest of the GROUP take their seats.

PATRICK
Who would like to begin?

An eager Support Group Member, JULIE stands and begins sharing the weekly battle she’s won and lost.

(CONTINUED)
Hi. I’m Julie. 15. Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.

It’s been an ok week I guess. I’ve been sleeping better. More energy. I don’t feel as sluggish as I used to. So far, everyone seems pleased with my results. But it’s hard, you know. My friends are at school, they have parties on weekends. I can’t help but feel I’m missing out. I should be grateful, I know that, I just... it’s hard, that’s all. It’s hard.

Hazel tries to concentrate on the share - but she still feels the eyes of the Beautiful Boy. It’s intimidating. And intimidation irritates her. Hazel decides to play the game, turning towards him and meeting his gaze.

A staring contest.

The eager Support Group Member’s voice recedes into BG along with the rest of the universe as the acoustic, guitar-picked intro to Josh Ritter’s “Change of Time” fills their world.

The staring contest continues for several more beats. The Beautiful Boy smiles, enjoying this. Hazel raises her eyebrows - not looking away, intimidation be damned.

Patrick’s voice eventually swims back into focus.

Thank you Julie. Isaac, I know you’re facing a challenging time. Perhaps you’d like to say something.

TWO SHOT of Isaac, sitting next to Gus. We can see that Gus continues to stare at Hazel.

Or maybe your friend would like to.

Which causes the Beautiful Boy to look away. Aha! He’s lost the staring contest. Hazel smiles to herself. Gus, who does not want to share, looks over at Isaac. Isaac stands.

Yeah, um... I’m Isaac. Eye cancer.

It’s looking like another surgery in a couple weeks. After which, well, I’ll be blind... Not that I’m complaining or anything.

(MORE)
I know a lot of you have it way worse but, still, I mean, you know, being blind’s gonna suck... My smokin’ hot girlfriend helps. And friends like Augustus here...

Isaac nods towards the Beautiful Boy who now has a name - AUGUSTUS. Hazel stores that in the back of her mind.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
So... yeah. That’s what’s up.

ALL IN UNISON
“We’re here for you Isaac.”

PATRICK
Ok Augustus. Your turn...

Hazel looks at Augustus. He definitely doesn’t want to speak. But he’ll do it. With one more radiant smile in Hazel’s direction, he stands:

GUS
I’m Augustus Waters. Had a touch of osteosarcoma bout a year and a half ago - lost this baby as a result...

Gus holds up his right leg – a prosthetic.

GUS (CONT’D)
But really I’m just here at Isaac’s request.

PATRICK
And how are you feeling Augustus?

GUS
Me? Oh I’m grand. I’m on a roller coaster that only goes up, my friend.

Hazel smiles. Gus catches this. Hazel, immediately embarrassed, stops smiling and looks away.

PATRICK
Perhaps you’d like to share your fears with the group, Augustus.

GUS
My fears?

Gus thinks about this.
Oblivion.
PATRICK
Oblivion?

ANGLE ON Hazel, intrigued.

GUS
Yeah, see... I intend to live an extraordinary life. To be remembered. If I’m scared of anything it’s... not doing that.

Patrick doesn’t quite have the tools to deal with that.

PATRICK
Would, uh, anyone like to speak to that?

And Hazel’s hand goes up. Even Patrick is surprised by that.

PATRICK (CONT’D)
Hazel! That’s unexpected.

Hazel stands, takes a second to gather her thoughts. Augustus watches her, waits for it.

HAZEL
I just wanna say... there will come a time when, you know, all of us are dead.

Gus is now even more fixed on her than before.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
It might be tomorrow. Might be a million years from now but... it’s gonna happen. And when it does, enough generations will come and go, there’ll be no one left to remember Cleopatra. Or Mozart. Or Muhammad Ali, let alone any of us.

The look on Gus’s face is unreadable.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Oblivion’s inevitable, dude. And if that scares you, well, I suggest you ignore it. God knows it’s what everyone else does.

A beat. And then an enormous smile spreads across Gus’s face, not a flirty smile but a surprised one, a real one. CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Hazel waits for her Mom’s car to appear.

(CONTINUED)
Across the parking lot, she sees Isaac going at it with a redhead, MONICA (17), sucking face like there’s no tomorrow against the door of her green Pontiac Firebird. Between kisses, we can hear:

ISAAC
Always.

MONICA
Always.

And Hazel hears:

GUS
Literally.

Hazel turns to find the Beautiful Boy, Augustus, standing right next to her.

GUS (CONT’D)
I thought we were in a church basement but apparently we were literally in the heart of Jesus.

Hazel smiles.

HAZEL
Someone should probably tell him, don’t you think? Jesus? Seems kinda dangerous keeping all these kids with cancer in your heart.

Gus laughs.

GUS
What’s your name?

HAZEL
Hazel.

GUS
No your full name...

HAZEL (confused)
Hazel Grace Lancaster.

Gus nods to himself, smiles. Still fixated on her.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
What?

GUS
I didn’t say anything.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
Why are you looking at me like that?

GUS
Because you’re beautiful.

Hazel is taken aback. No one’s ever said that to her before.

GUS (CONT’D)
I enjoy looking at beautiful people and I decided a while back not to deny myself the simpler pleasures of existence. Particularly given that, as you so astutely pointed out, we’re all gonna die pretty soon.

HAZEL
(beat)
I’m not beaut —

A CUTE YOUNG GIRL walks past them.

YOUNG GIRL
Hey Gus.

GUS
Hey Alisa.

Hazel isn’t surprised that other girls know Gus. Of course they do. She turns back towards Isaac and Monica pawing at each other. She hears:

ISAAC
Always.

MONICA
Always.

HAZEL
What’s with the “always?”

GUS
“Always” is their thing. They’ll “always” love each other and whatnot. Must have texted “always” to each other at least four million times this year.

They continue to watch the show. It’s pretty gross. Isaac squeezes Monica’s breast like a clown horn.

HAZEL
He’s gotta be hurting her boob.

GUS
Let’s watch a movie.

(CONTINUED)
Hazel is again surprised.

HAZEL
Oh. Um. Uh...
(yes!)
Sure. Yeah. I’m... pretty free this week--

GUS
No I mean now.

HAZEL
What?

GUS
Hmm?

HAZEL
What do you mean “now?”

GUS
I’ve got a car.

He shrugs. Hazel has never seen someone so confident.

HAZEL
You could be an axe murderer.

GUS
There is that possibility.
(beat)
Come on Hazel Grace... take a risk.

As Hazel mulls this over, Gus reaches into his pocket and pulls out, of all things, a pack of cigarettes! Hazel is in disbelief. He flips the box open, puts a cigarette between his lips.

HAZEL
Oh my god. Oh. My. God. You’re kidding right?
(off his look)
You just ruined the whole thing!

GUS
Whole thing?

HAZEL
What, you think that’s cool? Oh you idiot! There’s always a hamartia, isn’t there?

(MORE)
HAZEL (CONT'D)
And yours is - even though you had
FREAKING CANCER you give money to a
corporation for the chance to acquire
EVEN MORE CANCER!? Ugh. And you were
doing so well.

As she rants, Gus continues to look at her with that smile on
his face. Hazel does not find it so amusing.

HAZEL (CONT'D)
Let me tell you... not being able to
breathe? Sucks. Totally sucks.

GUS
Hamartia?

Hazel folds her arms and turns away from him.

HAZEL
A fatal flaw.

Gus takes a beat and then moves to face her, the smile still
etched on his face.

GUS
They don’t hurt you unless you light
them.

HAZEL
Sorry?

GUS
I’ve never lit one.

Hazel turns back to him.

GUS (CONT’D)
It’s a metaphor. See? You put the thing
that kills you between your teeth. But
you don’t give it the power to do the
killing.

Hazel is floored. And impressed.

HAZEL
Metaphor.

Gus holds her gaze. And it’s at this point Frannie pulls up.

FRANNIE
Hi sweetheart. “Top Model” time?
Hazel looks at Gus, cigarette dangling from his lips. Cool as anything. Handsome as hell. She looks back at her mom.

HAZEL
I can’t tonight.
(off her confused look)
I’ve made plans with Augustus Waters.

And with that, she walks off. Frannie looks at the boy with the cigarette in his mouth. This could be trouble. Or awesome. Or both. And we CUT TO:

INT. GUS’S CAR – AFTERNOON

Hazel is terrified. Turns out, Gus is the world’s worst driver. When he brakes, her body flies forward against the seatbelt. And when he hits the gas, seconds later, her neck snaps back in the seat. Gus sees the look on her face.

GUS
I failed the test a couple times.

HAZEL
You don’t say.

GUS
Most amputees can drive with no problem but... yeah. Not me.

HAZEL
I’m surprised you have a license.

GUS
Tell me about it!

Another brake forces Hazel against the seat belt.

GUS (CONT’D)
The fourth time I took the test... it was going about how this is going... and when it was over, the instructor looks at me and goes, “your driving, while unpleasant... is not technically unsafe.”

HAZEL
Aha. Cancer perk.

GUS
Total cancer perk.

A few beats of silence.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GUS (CONT’D)
So what happened to you?

Hazel takes a deep breath. She’s told this story before but somehow this seems different.

HAZEL
I was 13 when they found it.

And as she speaks, we see it unfold. SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL BED - FLASHBACK - DAY
13-YEAR OLD HAZEL has a biopsy.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Stage IV thyroid cancer.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY
13-YEAR OLD HAZEL on the operating table. It’s a nightmare.

HAZEL (V.O.)
I had surgery first.

INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY
This poor little girl is taking a beating. And it’s just getting started. Getting radiation treatment.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Then Radiation...

INT. HAZEL’S KITCHEN - FLASHBACK - DAY
Having her head shaved by Frannie.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Then Chemo...

INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY
With a PICC line in a chemo chair.

HAZEL (V.O.)
All of which worked for a while.

INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY
A RADIOLOGIST looks at an X-ray. He’s not pleased.

HAZEL (V.O.)
And then stopped working.
INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

14-Year Old Hazel lies in bed, struggling to breathe. Frannie tries to comfort her. Dad calls for a Nurse.

HAZEL (V.O.)
And then my lungs started filling up with water.

INT. ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

In the ICU, her parents standing over her.

HAZEL (V.O.)
That should have been the end.

FRANNIE
(through the tears)
You can let go, sweetie. Don’t be afraid.

14-Year Old Hazel nods. Michael can’t keep it together any longer. He completely breaks down.

HAZEL (V.O.)
But it wasn’t.

INT. ICU - THE NEXT MORNING - FLASHBACK - DAY

The sun shines in the room. 14-year old Hazel eats ice chips, the color has returned to her cheeks.

HAZEL (V.O.)
The antibiotics kicked in. They drained the fluid from my lungs. And in time I got better. Stronger.

INT. YET ANOTHER HOSPITAL ROOM - FLASHBACK - DAY

Slightly older Hazel is getting more intravenous medication. It’s never ending.

HAZEL (V.O.)
I even found myself in an experimental trial. You know the ones that are famous in the Republic of Cancervania for not working.

INT. RADIOLOGIST’S OFFICE - FLASHBACK - DAY

A SECOND RADIOLOGIST examines a second X-ray.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL (V.O.)
It’s called Phalanxifor. Didn’t work in over 70 percent of patients but, for some reason...

The Radiologist looks surprised.

HAZEL (V.O.)
...it worked in me. They called it “The Miracle.”

And finally, BACK TO:

INT. GUS’S CAR – AFTERNOON

Gus has one eye on the road, the other on Hazel. He was impressed with her before. He’s totally dazzled now.

HAZEL
Of course my lungs still suck at being lungs but, theoretically, they could continue to suck in just this way for, I dunno, a while maybe.

GUS
So are you back in school or...?

HAZEL
Can’t.

GUS
Why not?

HAZEL
Already got my GED.

GUS
A college girl! Well that explains the aura of sophistication...

He smiles at her. She smiles back. Shoves his upper arm playfully. They’re easing into each other.

Eventually Gus’s car pulls into his driveway, knocking over a GARBAGE CAN in the process.

GUS (CONT’D)
We’re here!

He’s as good at parking as he is at driving. CUT TO:
Hazel follows Gus inside. She quickly notices all sorts of engraved plaques and framed signs with phrases like “Home is Where the Heart Is” and “True Love is Born from Hard Times.” Hazel looks at Gus quizzically.

GUS
My parents call them “encouragements.”
(rolling his eyes)
Don’t ask.

Gus’s MOM and DAD (40s) are in the kitchen making dinner.

GUS (CONT’D)
Hey guys.

GUS’S MOM
Augustus, hi. New friend?

Gus’s parents don’t seem surprised to see Gus with some random girl in their house. Hazel takes note of that.

GUS
This is Hazel Grace.

HAZEL
It’s just... Hazel.

GUS’S DAD
How’s it going, Just Hazel?

GUS
(abruptly)
Downstairs if you need us!

Gus drags Hazel to the next room. As she’s pulled:

HAZEL
Nice to meet you!

They walk down the carpeted stairs - Gus having an easier time with his one leg than Hazel is with her oxygen tank and weak lungs.

Eventually they arrive at Gus’s basement bedroom. There’s a TV with a video game console, a few band posters, and a whole host of basketball memorabilia (autographed sneakers, school trophies, framed images etc.) Gus sees her looking at them.

(CONTINUED)
GUS
I used to play.

HAZEL
Must have been pretty good.

GUS
These are mine. And these. The rest of it’s just cancer perks.

Gus grabs a DVD from his stack of DVDs. Hazel sits down on the bed, her breathing noticeably heavier.

HAZEL
Need to sit.

Gus sits down next to her on the bed.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Don’t get any ideas.
(catching her breath)
All that standing... and stairs... and then more standing... lotta standing for me.

GUS
I understand.

HAZEL
I’ll be fine in a minute. Unless I faint. I’m a bit of a Victorian lady, fainting-wise.

Gus smiles. He waits for her breathing to slow down. In time:

GUS
You ok?

Hazel nods, smiles.

GUS (CONT’D)
So what’s your story?

HAZEL
I already told you my story. I was diagnosed --

GUS
Not your cancer story. Your story. Interests, hobbies, passions, weird fetishes...

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL

Um...

GUS

Don’t tell me you’re one of those people who becomes their disease.

HAZEL

No. I’m just... I don’t know... un-extraordinary.

GUS

I reject that out of hand. (beat, Hazel shrugs)

Think of something you love. First thing that comes to mind.

HAZEL

“An Imperial Affliction.”

GUS

Ok. What’s that?

HAZEL

It’s a novel. My favorite novel.

GUS

Does it have zombies?

HAZEL

(laughing)

What? No.

GUS

Stormtroopers.

HAZEL

Seriously? (he shrugs)

It’s not that kind of book.

GUS

Sounds horrible.

HAZEL

It’s not, it’s... kind of my bible actually.

GUS

Interesting. What’s it about?
HAZEL
Cancer.
(off his look)
But not in that way, trust me. The guy
who wrote it, Peter Van Houten, he’s...
well, the only person I’ve ever come
across who seems to a) understand what
it’s like to be dying and b) not have
died.

GUS
(intrigued)
In that case... I am going to read this
horrible book with the boring title that
does not contain zombies or
stormtroopers. And in exchange...

Gus pulls a book from his bookshelf.

GUS (CONT’D)
... all I ask is that you read this
brilliant and haunting novelization of my
favorite video game.

Hazel looks at the slim, ridiculous novella. She laughs.

GUS (CONT’D)
Don’t laugh, it’s awesome! All about
honor and sacrifice, bravery and heroism,
embracing your destiny, leaving a mark on
the world.

HAZEL
(beat)
But mostly it’s things blowing up.

GUS
Hell yeah!

She laughs again. She’s adorable when she laughs. He holds
the book out for her and she takes it. And as she does, their
hands get tangled together for a brief, charged moment.

GUS (CONT’D)
Your hands are cold.

HAZEL
Not so much cold as under-oxygenated.

GUS
Hazel Grace...
(beat)
I love it when you talk medical to me.

(CONTINUED)
Hazel blushes. And off her completely smitten smile, CUT TO:

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

A LIGHT on in an upstairs window. Hazel’s Bedroom.

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hazel sits in bed reading Gus’s novella. Frannie enters carrying folded laundry, notices the new book.

FRANNIE
That’s different.

Hazel shrugs. Frannie looks intrigued.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
Did he give it to you?

HAZEL
By “it” do you mean herpes?

FRANNIE
A mother can dream, can’t she?

(ALT)
Feisty! I like it.

Hazel rolls her eyes. At which point, her phone buzzes. She excitedly checks it - only to be disappointed. Frannie notices.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
Don’t worry. I’m sure he’ll call.

HAZEL
I’m not worried. Please. It’s not like I’m waiting for him to call or anything. I just... we hung out. No big deal.

Frannie says nothing to that. Her silence says it all. Hazel rolls her eyes. CUT TO:

QUICK SERIES OF SCENES:

Hazel continues “not to wait” for Gus’s call. We see her:

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Brushing her teeth. And checking her phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Watching TV. And checking her phone.
INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Eating breakfast. And checking her phone.

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - DAY

Hazel looks out her window. Trying not to check her phone. Willing herself to not check the goddamn phone. And checking the phone.

Where is he?! Did he forget about her?

INT. HAZEL’S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Hazel at the dinner table with her parents. She’s a little sullen, barely touching her food.

Hazel’s phone buzzes. She tries not to seem too eager to check it, what with her parents watching and all. She subtly looks down at her lap. And sure enough: a text from Gus! Her eyes bug out. We see:

”Tell me my copy is missing the last ten pages or something.”

Hazel smiles. Goes back to eating. Frannie and Michael share a quick glance. A second later, there’s a follow-up text.

”Tell me I have NOT reached the end of this book!”

Hazel smiles again.

And then a third text:

”A BOOK CAN’T END IN THE MIDDLE OF A SENTENCE?! WHAT IN GOD’S NAME IS THIS MADNESS! AAAAAHHH!”

Hazel now laughs out loud. Michael clears his throat. Hazel looks up.

MICHAEL

Would you like to be excused?

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Hazel sits down on a patio chair and dials the phone. We see Michael, through the window, watching TV in the living room.

Gus answers on the first ring.

GUS (O.S.)

Hazel Grace.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
Welcome to the sweet torture of reading
"An Imperial --"

At which point she hears a loud WAIL coming from the other end of the phone.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
What the -- are you ok?

GUS (O.S.)
Me? Yeah. I’m excellent.

INTERCUT between Hazel on the patio and:

INT. GUS’S BASEMENT BEDROOM – NIGHT

Isaac’s head is buried in Gus’s couch. He’s wailing like a banshee, having some kind of nervous breakdown.

GUS
(onto phone)
I am, however, with Isaac.

Hazel hears more wailing. Has no idea what to make of it.

GUS (O.S.) (CONT’D)
(to Isaac)
Dude! Hey! Does Support Group Hazel make this better or worse?

Hazel genuinely has no idea what the hell is going on.

GUS (CONT’D)
Isaac! Focus. On. Me.

Hazel waits a few beats for Gus to come back on. Finally:

GUS (O.S.) (CONT’D)
(to Hazel)
How fast can you get here?

Hazel thinks about this. Before she can even respond:

GUS (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Great. Door’s open. Gotta run!

And then CLICK. Hazel looks at the phone. And on her face, CUT TO:

INT. GUS’S BASEMENT – NIGHT

Hazel descends the steps, carefully. She calls to them.
HAZEL

Hello?

She hears an ungodly moan before she sees anyone. What has she gotten herself into? Eventually Gus appears at the base.

GUS

Hazel!
(calling to Isaac)
Isaac, Hazel from Support Group is coming downstairs.

Gus waits for a response. None comes. He gestures for her to follow him into the room. Before he does:

GUS (CONT’D)
A gentle reminder: Isaac is in the midst of a psychotic episode.
(Hazel nods)
You look nice, by the way.

Hazel blushes, follows Gus into the room to find Isaac sitting upside down in a gaming chair. Tears are flowing down his reddened cheeks. Empty soda cans and bags of junk food lie around him.

HAZEL

How ya doing Isaac?

Again, no response. Hazel looks to Gus for an explanation.

GUS

Seems Isaac and Monica are no longer a going concern.

HAZEL

Oh I’m sorry.
(beat)
Do you want to talk about it?

Isaac starts to sob again.

ISAAC

I just want to cry and play video games.

HAZEL

Fair enough.

GUS

It doesn’t hurt to talk TO him, however. If you have any sage words of feminine advice...

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
I actually think his response is appropriate.

GUS
“Pain demands to be felt.”

HAZEL
(lights up at that)
You’re quoting my book!

Gus winks at her. At which point, Isaac lets out another howl. Gus gestures for Hazel to sit. The two of them flank Isaac. He finally speaks.

ISAAC
She didn’t want to break it off after the surgery. Said she couldn’t handle it. I’m about to lose my eyesight and she can’t handle it.

Hazel rubs his shoulder in sympathy.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
I kept saying “always” to her. Always, always, always. And she just kept talking over me and not saying it back. It was like I was already gone, you know? “Always” was a promise! You can’t break promises.

HAZEL
Sometimes people don’t understand the promises they’re making when they make them.

ISAAC
Right, sure, but you keep the promise anyway. That’s what love is. Love is keeping the promise anyway.

GUS
That could be an “encouragement.”

It’s silent for a beat. And then Isaac stands up, a funny look on his face.

GUS (CONT’D)
Isaac...?

Suddenly Isaac starts kicking his chair across the room.

(CONTINUED)
Here we go...

The chair lands against the bed. Gus hands Isaac something else to throw, a pillow. Isaac grabs the pillow and slams it against the wall. He dives on it and beings pummeling the pillow like a maniac.

That’s it! Punch that thing.

And so he does. As he continues to, Gus looks at Hazel.

I’ve been wanting to call you for days now but I’ve been waiting until I could form a coherent thought re: “An Imperial Affliction.”

(she smiles)
I can’t stop thinking about it.

I know, right!?

Hang on.
(turns to Isaac)
Isaac!

Gus stands and takes the pillow out of Isaac’s hand.

Pillows don’t break.

Gus hands Isaac one of his basketball TROPHIES.

You need to break something.

Isaac looks at it, then back to Gus as if asking permission. Gus nods. Isaac holds it over his head and SMASH! The trophy breaks into a million pieces. Isaac almost smiles. Gus hands him another.

Go to town, my friend.

Are you sure?
GUS
I’ve been looking for a way to tell my
Dad that I kinda hate basketball. Think
maybe we’ve found it.

Isaac thinks about that. Grabs a trophy. Gus nods. Isaac
smashes it. Grabs another one. The smashing is just getting
started. Meanwhile, Gus sits down next to Hazel. They ignore
him as:
GUS (CONT’D)
So. “An Imperial Affliction.”

HAZEL
I’m glad you liked it.

GUS
But that ending, Hazel...

HAZEL
It is rather abrupt.

GUS
Are you kidding!? It’s evil!

Isaac continues loudly smashing the TROPHIES to bits. Gus and Hazel try to talk over the noise.

GUS (CONT’D)
I mean, I totally get that she died or whatever - Anna. But there is an unwritten contract between author and reader and I think ending your book in the middle of a sentence kind of violates that contract.

HAZEL
But that’s part of what I like about it. It portrays death truthfully. You die in the middle of your life, in the middle of a sentence. But I do - God, I do want to know what happens to everyone else.

GUS
Yeah like her Mom.

HAZEL
The Dutch Tulip Man...

GUS
Sysiphus the Hamster...

Hazel beams. Gus totally gets the book. A bond between them. They’re barely noticing Isaac’s rampage now.

GUS (CONT’D)
Have you tried contacting this... Peter Van Houten?
HAZEL
I’ve written letters. He’s never responded. Apparently he moved to Amsterdam, became a recluse. Hasn’t published anything. Doesn’t do interviews.

GUS
Sad.

HAZEL
Yeah.

Having smashed all the trophies, Isaac stands there panting, bronze carnage all over the floor.

GUS
Feeling better, Isaac?

Isaac thinks about it. Shakes his head no. Gus walks over to him, puts his arm around him, looks at Hazel.

GUS (CONT’D)
That’s the thing about pain... it demands to be felt.

Hazel smiles. And on her face, we CUT TO:

INT. LANCASTER HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Where Hazel is having dinner with her parents.

FRANNIE
Dr. Maria called today. The PET Scan is set for the eighth.

Hazel nods. This could be a source of worry but she’s not going to think about that right now. She’s upbeat. And she’s actually eating, which her parents can’t help but notice. Frannie and Michael look at one another, pleased.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
I told you Support Group was a good idea.

Hazel’s phone buzzes. “Augustus.” She looks to her parents.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
What are you waiting for? Go!
Hazel lays on the grass in her backyard staring up at the stars. She rings him back and as she does SPLITSCREEN w/ Hazel in the grass and:

INT. GUS’S BASEMENT BEDROOM – NIGHT

Gus (upside down) in bed, a laptop on his chest.

GUS
Hazel Grace.

HAZEL
Hello Augustus.

GUS
I can’t stop thinking about this goddamn book.

HAZEL
(smiles)
You’re welcome.

GUS
On the other hand... we do need closure, don’t we?

HAZEL
What we need is a sequel.

GUS
Yes. We need to know what happens to Anna’s family after she dies.

HAZEL
That’s what I kept asking Van Houten for in my letters.

GUS
But he never wrote back.

HAZEL
That’s correct.

GUS
Because he’s a recluse.

HAZEL
Yeee-up.

GUS
Utterly unreachable.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
Unfortunately so.

Gus clears his throat, smiles. Hazel waits.

GUS
“Dear Mr. Waters...”

HAZEL
Huh?

GUS
“I am writing to thank you for your electronic correspondence.”

Hazel sits up. Could it possibly...?

GUS (CONT’D)
“I am grateful to anyone who sets aside the time to read my book...”

HAZEL
Augustus!?

GUS
What?

HAZEL
What are you doing?

GUS
Mmm.... I might have found his assistant. Emailed her. She might have forwarded that email onto Van Houten. Shall I continue?

HAZEL
(stunned)
Oh my god!

GUS
Ahem.
   (clears his throat)
“I am particularly indebted to you, sir,” he called me sir...

HAZEL
Keep reading, keep reading!

(CONTINUED)
GUS
“Both for your kind words about ‘An Imperial Affliction’ and for taking the time to tell me that the book, and here I quote you directly, ‘meant a great deal’ to you and your friend, Hazel.”

HAZEL
You did not.

GUS
Of course I did.

Hazel is stomping her feet in excitement.

GUS (CONT’D)
“To answer your question: No. I have not written anything else, nor will I. I do not feel that continuing to share my thoughts with readers would benefit either them or me. However thank you again for your generous email. Yours most sincerely, Peter Van Houten.”

Silence.

GUS (CONT’D)
So... yeah... That happened.

More silence. Hazel is entirely speechless.

GUS (CONT’D)
Hazel Grace?

HAZEL
If you’re making this up, I’m going to hurt you. You know that, right?

GUS
Do you really believe, with my meager intellectual capabilities, that I could just make up a letter from the great Peter Van Houten?

HAZEL
Oh my god!

GUS
I’ve been trying to tell you, I’m... kind of awesome --

HAZEL
Can I... would you mind if I...

(CONTINUED)
Hazel jumps up as fast as her lungs will allow. CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hazel sits at her computer, Van Houten’s assistant’s email address staring her in the face. The cursor blinks on a blank page. And then Hazel starts writing...

HAZEL (V.O.)
“Dear Mr. Peter Van Houten, my name is Hazel Grace Lancaster. My friend Augustus Waters, who read your book - at my recommendation - just received an email from you at this address. I hope you will not mind that he shared that email with me.”

While Hazel reads the letter, we see a SERIES OF SCENES showing the next several days. They include:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Hazel and Gus drinking coffee. He’s enthusiastically telling a story, cigarette dangling from his lips. Hazel is enjoying every moment. But that damn cigarette. She snatches it out of his mouth and they both share a laugh. Huge contrast from when Hazel was in the very same spot. All alone.

HAZEL (V.O.)
“I was wondering if you wouldn’t mind answering a few questions I have about what happens after the end of the book. Specifically, the following:”

OMITTED

INT. GUS’S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Sitting on the floor. Wearing separate headphones but listening to the same song. Sharing something magical together. Close. Their knees almost touching.

HAZEL (V.O.)
“Does Anna’s Mom marry the Dutch Tulip Man;

(MORE)
is the Dutch Tulip Man up to something -
or is he just misunderstood? What happens
to Anna’s friends?

INT. HAZEL’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Watching TV. Their bodies almost touching. But not quite.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Lastly, I was hoping you could shed some light on Sisyphus the Hamster. These questions have haunted me for years. And I don’t know how long I have left to get answers to them.”

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

And finally, back in Hazel’s bedroom. She finishes reading this letter into the phone.

HAZEL
“I know these are not important literary questions and that your book is full of important literary questions, but I would just really like to know.”

INTERCUT w/ Gus bouncing a ball against the wall, listening.

HAZEL (CONT’D) (reading it aloud to him)
“And of course, if ever you do decide to write anything else, even if you don’t want to publish it, I’d love to read it. Frankly, I’d read your grocery lists. Yours with great admiration, Hazel Grace Lancaster.”

GUS
Not bad.

HAZEL
You think?

GUS
Bit pretentious. But then again, Van Houten uses words like “tendentious” and... “bacchanalia” so I think he’ll like it.

Hazel smiles, looks at a clock.

HAZEL
Is it really almost 1?

(CONTINUED)
Neither one of them want to hang up the phone.

GUS
Ok...

HAZEL
Ok...

They both laugh at this.

GUS
Perhaps “ok” will be our “always.”

Hazel smiles.

HAZEL
Ok.

GUS
Ok.

HAZEL
Ok.

A few more beats of silence, the both of them brimming with the giddiness and swoon of being 17 and in love. We stay with Hazel. Is it really possible this Beautiful Boy likes her? She can’t quite convince herself yet. CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Isaac lies in bed, bandages covering his eyes, now officially blind. A NURSE attends to him while Hazel sits by his side.

ISAAC
She hasn’t even visited. Fourteen months we were together. What kind of person...

ISAAC’S NURSE
You’ll get over her Isaac. Just takes a little time. You’ll see.

(CONTINUED)
The Nurse exits the room.

ISAAC
Is she gone?

HAZEL
Yeah.

ISAAC
Did she really just say “you’ll see?”

HAZEL
(shakes her head)
Qualities of a Good Nurse. Go.

ISAAC
One: doesn’t pun your disability.

HAZEL
Two: gets blood on the first try.

ISAAC
Yes! That is huge. I mean, seriously, I’m not a voodoo doll. Poke with precision please.

HAZEL
Three...

ISAAC
No condescending voice.

HAZEL
You mean...
  (lays it on thick)
“I’m going to insert this extremely sharp object into your skin now so you might feel a tiny, little pinch.”

They laugh and then lapse into silence for a moment.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
You doing alright, Isaac?

ISAAC
I don’t know. To be honest, I think a hell of a lot more about Monica than my eye. Is that crazy? That’s crazy.

HAZEL
It’s a little crazy.
ISAAC
But I believe in love, you know? I don’t believe that everybody gets to keep their eyes or not get sick or whatever, but everybody should have true love. Don’t you think?

Hazel thinks about it as Isaac presses the button on his pain pump, self-administering morphine.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
Mmm... that’s better.

He exhales as the pain pump starts to kick in.

HAZEL
Good. Good, Isaac.

Hazel sits with him as he drifts off to sleep. CUT TO:

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - MORNING
INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - MORNING

Hazel rolls out of bed, stumbles to her computer. She casually checks her in-box and is shocked to discover - he’s written her back!

HAZEL
Holy shit!
(reading aloud)
“Dear Ms. Lancaster... I cannot answer your questions, at least not in writing, because to do so would constitute a sequel, which you might publish or otherwise share on the internet. Not that I don’t trust you, but how could I trust you, I barely know you.”
(again aloud)
Holy shit!

Hazel’s jaw hangs open as she reads the next part:

HAZEL (CONT’D)
“Should ever you find yourself in Amsterdam, do pay a visit at your leisure. Yours most sincerely, Peter Van Houten” Son of a - WHAT IS THIS LIFE!!

Frannie races in, clearly expecting a health problem.

FRANANIE
What’s wrong?!

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
(realizing she scared her)
Nothing. Sorry.

FRANNIE
(confused)
Nothing?

HAZEL
Everything! Look!

Hazel shows Frannie the note. Frannie reads it.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Can we go to Amsterdam?

Frannie thinks about how to respond for a beat.

FRANNIE
Hazel, I... I love you and... I want nothing more than for you to have everything in the world but I... Amsterdam? I mean...
(pained)
How would we do that? You know money’s tight around here and... getting the equipment there alone would cost --

HAZEL
(deflates)
No, yeah, of course...

Clearly Frannie feels awful. Which makes Hazel feel awful.

FRANNIE
There might be some way --

HAZEL
Don’t do anything. Ok. Seriously. Forget I mentioned it.

FRANNIE
I’m sorry Hazel.

A beat between them. Frannie walks out, sadly. Hazel sits on the bed, totally bummed now for two reasons.

HAZEL (V.O.)
Guilt is definitely a side effect of cancer.
Hazel and Gus get out of his car and walk towards the entrance to Support Group.

GUS
Just ask the Genies. Use your wish.
HAZEL
I’ve used it already. Pre-“Miracle.”

GUS
What’d you do?

Hazel doesn’t want to say. Gus realizes. Stops walking.

GUS (CONT’D)
Not Disney.

HAZEL
I was 13...

GUS
Tell me you did not go to Disney World.
(Hazel looks away)
Hazel Grace! You did not use your one dying Wish to go to Disney World!

HAZEL
(feeble)
And Epcot Center.

GUS
(hands in the air)
Oh my God!

Gus starts walking again. Hazel follows.

HAZEL
(defending herself)
We had fun on that trip.

GUS
That is the saddest thing I’ve ever heard!

HAZEL
I met Goofy...

They get to the entrance.

GUS
Now I’m embarrassed.

HAZEL
Why are you embarrassed?

Gus opens the door for Hazel.
GUS

How can I have a crush on a girl with such cliche wishes?

Hazel stops in her tracks. The word “crush” taken her totally by surprise. She looks at him. Then quickly looks away, blushing. Gus continues on about Disney but all Hazel can think about is “CRUSH”. She tries not to seem too excited.

CUT TO:

INT. PET SCAN ROOM - DAY

Frannie and Michael watch through glass as Hazel, in a hospital gown, is slowly fed through the machine. A TECH explains that she should hold still, try and relax, etc. But Hazel knows. She knows all about these procedures. She’s a pro. CUT TO:

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - DAY

Gus is waiting on the front stoop when Frannie’s car pulls up. They’re home from the hospital.

He wears an Indiana Pacers JERSEY and carries a bouquet of bright orange TULIPS.

Michael gets out of the passenger’s seat to help Hazel out of the car. Gus rises to assist them. Frannie, carrying Hazel’s belongings, smiles as she passes Gus on her way inside.

MICHAEL
Is that a Rik Smits jersey?

GUS
It is indeed.

MICHAEL
(beat)
Man, I loved that guy.

Hazel sees Gus, wasn’t expecting him.

HAZEL
Gus?
68 CONTINUED:

GUS

Hi Hazel.

(beat)

How would you like to go on a picnic?

69 INT. HAZEL’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gus is with Michael downstairs.

MICHAEL

Something to drink?

GUS

I’m great Mr. Lancaster.

70 INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - DAY

Hazel puts on LIP GLOSS at her bedroom mirror. She can faintly hear this conversation downstairs:

71 INT. HAZEL’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Michael and Gus on the couch.

MICHAEL

You’re a survivor yourself?

GUS

(taps his leg)

Didn’t cut this fella off for the hell of it. Though it is an excellent weight-loss strategy. Legs are heavy!

MICHAEL

How’s your health now?

GUS

N-E-C for fourteen months.

MICHAEL

That’s fantastic.

GUS

I’m very lucky.

72 INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - DAY

Hazel checks herself out in the mirror. Seems to like what she sees a lot more than before. She hears:

(CONTINUED)
MICHAEL (O.S.)
Son, you have to understand... Hazel’s still pretty sick. She will be the rest of her life.

Hazel stops what she’s doing, listens.

MICHAEL (O.S.) (CONT’D)
She’ll want to keep up with you – she’s that kind of girl –

INT. HAZEL’S LIVING ROOM – DAY
BACK on Michael and Gus.

MICHAEL
... but the truth is, her lungs --

HAZEL (O.S.)
You ready Gus?

Hazel appears, silencing her Father mid-sentence. She takes Gus’s arm. Off they go and we CUT TO:

EXT. PARK – AFTERNOON
Behind the Indianapolis Museum of Art is 152 Acres of Gardens and Grounds. Hazel and Gus walk together.

HAZEL
Is this where you bring all your romantic conquests?

GUS
Every last one.
(beat)
Probably why I’m still a virgin.

Hazel laughs, elbows him.

HAZEL
You’re not a virgin.
(off his look)
Are you really?

Gus picks a STICK up from the dirt. Draws a BIG CIRCLE in it.

GUS
See this? This circle is virgins...

Now Gus draws a much smaller circle inside that circle.

(CONTINUED)
GUS (CONT’D)
And this... is 17 year old dudes with one leg.

Hazel laughs. Point made. He grabs her hand, helps her walk up a tiny hill. Once up there, Gus lays a blanket on the ground. They sit, looking out over a rather odd SCULPTURE - a set of GIANT WHITE BONES where children can jump and play.

GUS (CONT’D)
(explaining)
“Funky Bones” by Joep Van Lieshout.

HAZEL
He sounds Dutch.

GUS
And he is. Much like Rik Smits. And tulips.

Hazel raises an eyebrow at Gus. He’s sure taking this Amsterdam/Dutch thing pretty far. He removes some sandwiches and orange juice out of a basket.

GUS (CONT’D)
Sandwich?

HAZEL
Let me guess --

GUS
(nods)
Dutch cheese. And tomato.
(she takes one)
The tomatoes are Mexican. Sorry.

They eat for a second, their eyes watching the children play on the bones.

GUS (CONT’D)
How cool is this? A skeleton being used as a playground.

HAZEL
You do love your symbols.

GUS
Speaking of which...

Gus stands up, clears his throat.

(CONTINUED)
GUS (CONT’D)
You’re probably wondering why you’re sitting here eating a bad cheese sandwich and drinking orange juice with a guy in a Rik Smits jersey.

HAZEL
It has crossed my mind.

GUS
Hazel Grace, like so many before you — and I say this with great affection — you spent your Wish... moronically.

HAZEL
I was thir—

GUS
Hush! I’m in the midst of a grand soliloquy here.

HAZEL
Sorry. Please, continue...

GUS
You were young. Impressionable. The Grim Reaper staring you in the face. And the fear of dying with your one true Wish left ungranted led you to rush into making one you didn’t really want, for how could little Hazel Grace, having never read “An Imperial Affliction” ever know that her one TRUE wish was to visit Mr. Peter Van Houten in his Amsterdamian exile.

Hazel nods in agreement.

GUS (CONT’D)
If you were smart, you would have saved your wish til the time in your life when you really knew your true self.

Gus stops talking. Hazel is confused.

HAZEL
But I... didn’t save it.

Gus smiles.

GUS
Good thing I saved mine.

(CONTINUED)
Hazel cocks her head to one side. What is he talking about?

GUS (CONT’D)
Got it in exchange for the leg.
(beat)
And I **still** have it.

She starts to realize.

HAZEL
Are you saying --

GUS
I’m not gonna **give** you my Wish or anything. But I too have an interest in meeting Peter Van Houten and it wouldn’t make much sense to meet him without the girl who introduced me to his book, now would it?

(Hazel’s eyes widen)
I talked to the Genies and they’re in total agreement.
(beat)
We leave in a month.

Hazel is so excited that she grabs Gus and pulls him into a hug. And then:

HAZEL
Wait.
(beat)
Why are you doing this?

Gus thinks about this.

GUS
Because Hazel Grace... I found my wish.

Hazel is beyond touched. She leans in to him, their faces close, lips inches apart, and just when it looks like something might happen, they hear:

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Gabriel!

And there’s a CUTE YOUNG KID watching them.

WOMAN’S VOICE (CONT’D)
Get back over here!

The Young Kid scurries back to his Mother. Hazel looks at Gus. They burst out laughing. Romantic moment not to be.
At which point, we hear:

FRANNIE (PRELAP)
Wait, he did WHAT?!

INT. HAZEL’S UTILITY ROOM - EVENING

Frannie, in the midst of folding her laundry, cannot believe what she’s hearing.

FRANNIE
That’s incredible! That’s like the most beautiful... it’s actually kind of insane.

HAZEL
I know but --

FRANNIE
Didn’t you just meet this guy? I mean you barely -- wait a minute...

HAZEL
Mom...

FRANNIE
Oh my god Hazel! Tell me everything! Did you kiss him? Is he your boyfriend?

HAZEL
Mom, focus. Amsterdam.

FRANNIE
Amsterdam. Right. Well... (beat, she sighs)
Look, as your mother, I would love to say yes, but... I’m just your mother Hazel.

AND WE CUT TO:

INT. DOCTOR’S OFFICE - ANOTHER DAY

Where Dr. Maria shakes her head.

DR. MARIA
I don’t know...
HAZEL
You said the PET scan is encouraging!

DR. MARIA
The PET scan is encouraging! But we don’t know how long it’ll stay that way.

HAZEL
I’m not seeking political asylum. It’s one week. A vacation.

DR. MARIA
How can I -- What if you get sick? In a foreign country!

HAZEL
They have doctors in Amsterdam. And cancer.

DR. MARIA
 stil unsure
Not all cancers are alike. And yours is particularly unusual, Hazel. The only way I could ever authorize a trip like this is if someone familiar with your case --

HAZEL
 (turns to her Mom)
So she can come too.

FRANNIE
Wait, what?

HAZEL
The Genies can hook it up. They’re loaded!

Frannie had not considered that to this point. It’s kind of the best idea in the world.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
You’ve never been to Amsterdam, have you Mom?

And judging from her face, seems she’d kinda like to. Dr. Maria looks at Frannie, shrugs – kid’s got a point.

Hazel smiles. And on that smile, we SMASH CUT TO:

BLACK.

Over which, we HEAR:

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL (V.O.)
And then this happened.

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
[Note: There’s no sound in this sequence. Just images.]

Hazel wakes up screaming in the middle of the night, shaking and holding her head.

Frannie and Michael burst in. Mom grabs her crying daughter, frightened beyond belief, waves to Michael to call for help.

HAZEL (V.O.)
People talk about the courage of cancer patients. And I do not deny that courage...

Michael grabs a phone, frantically dials 911. We see (but do not hear) him call for help.

He leaves the room to do so and Fran stays behind, rocking with her daughter, promising her it’ll all be ok. Whatever nightmare this is, it’s going to end.

HAZEL (V.O.)
I’d been poked and stabbed and poisoned for years and still I trod on.

CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Michael carries Hazel into the chaotic emergency room. They’re practically running. There’s still no sound.

HAZEL (V.O.)
But make no mistake...

The doctors rally to assist the screaming, crying child. She’s wheeled away from her family who can only watch. We stay with her and WE HEAR:

HAZEL (V.O.)
In that moment I would have been very, very happy to die.

END SEQUENCE.
The sound returns. And it’s the sound of a heart monitor. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. It’s also the sound of a working heart. Hazel has made it through. Frannie and Michael by her side.

FRANIE
They thought it was a brain tumor.

MICHAEL
It wasn’t - thank god --

HAZEL
So what happened?

FRANIE
The usual. Fluid in the lungs, preventing oxygenation. They put that in...

There’s a TUBE in Hazel’s side draining fluid into a plastic bladder that hangs off her bed.

FRANIE (CONT’D)
Drained a liter and a half last night.

(That’s a lot of fluid.)

MICHAEL
The good news is... no tumor growth. No new tumors in your body.

Hazel nods. That is a relief.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
We’re all so relieved.

Frannie embraces her daughter.

FRANIE
This is just a thing Hazel. It’s a thing we can live with.

Hazel nods again. Only in the universe of Hazel Grace Lancaster is something like this just a thing. Meanwhile:

GUS
Mr. Lancaster! How’s she doing?
MICHAEL
Better, thank you. Much better.

Gus nods, as relieved as the rest of them.

GUS
They won’t let me in. Family only.

MICHAEL
I’m sorry --

GUS
No I get it. Will you just... will you tell her I was here?

MICHAEL
Of course I will.

Gus smiles. And sits back down. Though he won’t get to see her, he still wants to stay.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
Gus.

Michael really likes this kid.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
Why don’t you go home, get some rest?

Gus looks up. That might be for the best. CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Hazel and her Parents sit at a very large conference table along with Dr. Maria and THREE OTHER ONCOLOGISTS - her whole “Cancer Team.” DR. SIMMONS (late 60s, white beard, old school) speaks.

DR. SIMMONS
Normally the tumors start resisting the treatment. And that hasn’t happened here - yet.

Hazel hears the “yet” the loudest.

DR. SIMMONS (CONT’D)
On the other hand, the drug may be worsening the edema.

DR. MARIA
The truth is... very few people have been on Phalanxifor as long as Hazel has. We don’t really know the long term effects.

(CONTINUED)
That comforts no one. Sensitive Michael starts to cry a little bit. He grabs Frannie’s hand. Dr. Simmons continues...

   DR. SIMMONS
   What we’re trying to do is prevent endothelial growth which, if overexpressed, can contribute to disease, decay, vascular inhibition, and the spread of the cancer cells we’re working so hard to eradicate. The survival rates of patients with severe endothelial growth decreases exponentially the more...

And as he drones on with some cancer gobbledygook, Hazel’s eyes remain firmly fixed on her parents. Holding hands, Dad in tears, she hates what she’s doing to them. And seeing them like this - it jogs a memory. CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ICU - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

We saw this once before. It looks like the end for 13-year old Hazel. Her father is weeping off to the side while her mom stands over her, holding her hand, and asking:

   FRANNIE
   (through the tears)
   You can let go, sweetie. Don’t be afraid.

13-year old Hazel nods. The doctors get to work. The anaesthetic takes hold and Hazel goes under. But not enough. Cause she totally hears her mother say:

   FRANNIE (CONT’D)
   Oh Michael...
   (crying into his shoulder)
   I won’t be a mom anymore.

She falls into her husband’s chest. And we’re BACK TO:
Hazel comes out of the memory when her parents see her staring at them. She tries to shake it off. Dr. Simmons is still talking nonsense when:

HAZEL
I have a question.

DR. MARIA
Yes Hazel.

HAZEL
Can I still go to Amsterdam?

Dr. Simmons can’t help himself. He laughs. Everyone looks at him. He clears his throat.

DR. SIMMONS
That would not be wise at this juncture.

HAZEL
Why not?

The doctors look at each other, trying to be delicate here.

FRANNE
Is there any way...?

DR. SIMMONS
It would... increase some risks --

HAZEL
So does going to the mall --

DR. SIMMONS
Yes but an airplane?

HAZEL
They have oxygen on airplanes.

DR. MARIA
Hazel --

HAZEL
It’s my life, right?

DR. SIMMONS
You’re Stage IV --

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
I have this opportunity I may never have again. If the medicine’s working, I don’t see why --

DR. MARIA
(to Dr. Simmons)
Perhaps there’s a scenario --

DR. SIMMONS
No. Look...
(beat)
I don’t know any other way to say this, Hazel. You’re just too sick.

And this is like a punch in the gut.

DR. SIMMONS (CONT’D)
I’m sorry.

Everyone feels horrible now. Dr. Maria, Frannie and Michael, and even Hazel. This meeting couldn’t have gone worse.

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE – DRIVEWAY – LATE AFTERNOON

Hazel’s parents bring her home from the hospital. She looks miserable. It’s clear the last few days have been a big emotional setback. CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Her parents tuck her in.

FRANNIE
We’ll be right outside.

Hazel nods. Her phone buzzes. She looks at it. A text from Gus that reads: “ok?” Hazel looks at it.

And she doesn’t write back. CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S KITCHEN – MORNING

Hazel sits staring at nothing. Soon enough, the house phone rings. Hazel ignores it. Michael comes in from another room with the phone in hand.

MICHAEL
(whispers, to Hazel)
Gus again.

Hazel thinks about it – silently shakes her head, no. Michael says into the phone.

(CONTINUED)
MICHAEL (CONT’D)
I’m sorry Gus, she’s asleep.

Hazel remains sitting there, sullen.

Michael hangs up the phone. Sits down at the table. Doesn’t say anything. Eventually Hazel looks at him.

HAZEL
What?

MICHAEL
Nothing.


HAZEL
It’s not fair to him.
(Michael doesn’t react)
It’s not.
(still no reaction)
He doesn’t need this in his life. Nobody does. It’s... more trouble than it’s worth --

MICHAEL
You’re right.

Hazel looks at him, surprised.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
Mom and I we were just saying the same thing. Could be time we toss you out on the street. Drop you off at an orphanage somewhere, make you their problem.

Michael stands.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
I’m serious... We’re not sentimental people.

Hazel shakes her head, smiles. He walks off, leaving her alone. She sits there another beat. Exhales.

OMITTED

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING

Hazel walks out back. Looks up at the clouds, threatening rain but not yet delivering it.

(CONTINUED)
She sits down in the grass, on the verge of tears. Receives a text message from “Augustus.” It just says “hello?” Again, she ignores it.

In the backyard, there’s an OLD RUSTY SWING SET that’s been there for years. Hazel looks at it.

And starts to cry. Just for a few brief moments, she lets herself cry.

Soon she gets another text. “This silence is deafening.” Hazel’s heart breaks. She can’t take it anymore. She picks the phone back up. And dials.

GUS (O.S.) Hazel Grace!

HAZEL Hi Augustus.

GUS (O.S.) Are you crying, Hazel Grace?

HAZEL Kind of.

GUS (O.S.) What’s the matter?

HAZEL I don’t know...

(beat) I mean, I do know. It’s a lot of things. It’s... I want to go to Amsterdam. And I want Van Houten to tell us what happens after the book. And I don’t want my particular life. And also the sky is making me sad. And there’s this old, pathetic swing set that my Dad made for me when I was a kid. It’s just... everything.

Hazel is on the verge of losing it again. A few beats of silence pass by.

GUS (O.S.) I demand to see this swing set of tears.

Hazel can’t help but smile and we CUT TO:

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

And now they’re on the swings.
GUS
I see your point.
(beat)
This is one sad swing set.

Hazel doesn’t say anything. They swing for a beat as Gus looks at Hazel. Knows what she’s going to say.

GUS (CONT’D)
You do realize... trying to keep your distance from me will in no way lessen my affection for you.

Hazel says nothing.

GUS (CONT’D)
All efforts to keep me from you will fail.

Hazel looks at him. He’s sure not making this easy.

HAZEL
Look, Augustus, I -- I like you. I like hanging out with you. But I can’t let it go any further.

GUS
Why not?

HAZEL
Because.

GUS
Because why?

HAZEL
Because I...

GUS
Tell me - tell me what the problem is --

HAZEL
I don’t want to hurt you --

GUS
I wouldn’t mind --

HAZEL
You don’t understand --

GUS
No you don’t understand, Hazel Grace --

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
Augustus --

GUS
It would be an honor to have my heart --

HAZEL
(loudly)
I’m a GRENADE!

That silences him.

(continued)
HAZEL (CONT’D)
I’m a grenade. And at some point I’m gonna blow up, and everything in my wake will be obliterated and I really... I just... I need to minimize the casualties. Do you understand?

GUS
(beat)
A grenade.

Hazel nods, sadly.

HAZEL
That’s why I don’t have a hamster.

And now she’s on the verge of losing it again. Gus remains silent. Exhales. All he can say is:

GUS
We have got to do something about this frigging swing set.

Hazel is grateful for his understanding. And off her face, CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM – DAY

Hazel sits at the computer screen writing a Craigslist post. Gus stands next to her.

HAZEL
(typing)
“Swing Set Needs Home.”

GUS
“Desperately Lonely Swing Set Needs Loving Home.”

HAZEL
“Lonely, Vaguely Pedophilic Swing Set Seeks Butts of Children.”

Gus laughs.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
No?

Gus laughs harder. Hazel laughs with him.

GUS
That’s why.

(CONTINUED)
Hazel looks at him, not understanding.

GUS (CONT’D)
In case you were wondering... that’s why
I like you.
(beat, off her look)
You’re so busy being you that you have no
idea how perfectly unprecedented you are.

And Hazel processes that. Then looks away.

HAZEL
You can’t say things like that.

GUS
What? That’s how I speak to all my friends.

Hazel shoots him a look. He gets it.

GUS (CONT’D)
I know. I know... Friends.

Gus puts his hand out to shake. Hazel smiles, shakes it. It
pains her but she’s made her decision and she’s sticking to
it - for both of their sakes. CUT TO:

OMITTED

INT HAZEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hazel is about to go to sleep. Before she does, she sends Gus
a text: “Thank you for understanding.”

She waits. Gets a text back.

“Ok.”

Hazel reads it. Writes back: “Ok.”

A beat. Gus responds: “oh my god, stop flirting with me!”
Hazel smiles at this. It turns into a sad one. Her decision
is made and it’s final. She turns off the light and goes to
sleep. CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - DAY

Hazel is at her computer reading a new email from Lidewij
Vliegenthart. Clearly Hazel was not expecting this.
HAZEL (V.O.)
“Dear Hazel, I have received word via the Genies that you will be visiting us with Augustus Waters and your mother beginning on the 4th. A week away! Peter and I are delighted and cannot wait to --

Hazel is confused. She stands and walks into the hallway.

HAZEL
Mom?

No response.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Mom!
(still nothing)
MOM!!!

Frannie races out of her room in a towel, dripping wet.

FRANNIE
What is it, what’s wrong?!

HAZEL
Sorry, I... I didn’t know you were in the shower.

FRANNIE
(exhausted)
Bath. I was just... just trying to take a bath for five seconds. What’s the matter?

HAZEL
Did you ever call the Genies to tell them the trip is off? I just got an email from Peter Van Houton’s assistant. She still thinks we’re coming.

Frannie purses her lips and squints past Hazel. Clearly unsure what to say.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
What?

Frannie can’t keep a straight face.

FRANNIE
I didn’t want to tell you until Dad got home but... (beat)
We’re going to Amsterdam!

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
(still not believing)
What are you talking about?

FRANNIE
We spoke to Dr. Maria. It’s 3 days instead of 6, I have the contact numbers of three different oncologists --

HAZEL
(yelling)
I LOVE YOU SO MUCH!!

Hazel can’t move all that fast to hug her Mom so Frannie comes to her and they embrace. After:

FRANNIE
I’m getting back in the tub now.

Hazel smiles. Frannie leaves. Once alone, Hazel grabs her cell. ANGLE ON IT.

Hazel sends Gus the following text: “STILL FREE ON THE 3RD? :-)”

A moment later Gus responds: “EVERYTHING’S COMING UP WATERS!”

Hazel is over the moon with excitement. She smiles, then tries to calm herself, knowing it’s the best thing.

HAZEL
(whispering to her lungs)
One week, lungs. Keep your shit together one more week...

EXT. HOUSE - A WEEK LATER - DAY

Hazel tries her best to help Frannie and Michael carry everything outside - oxygen tanks, a suitcase for clothes, another for medicines and back-up medicines just in case etc. They’re all crazy with enthusiasm.

HAZEL
Amsterdam!

FRANNIE
Amsterdam!

And then, as if on cue, a LUXURY SUV pulls around the corner. Gus pops out of the sunroof, huge smile on his face.

(CONTINUED)
GUS
Like I said to the Genies, I travel in style or I don’t travel at all.

Hazel, smiling, can only shake her head. The DRIVER helps Michael load up the car. Gus gets out to greet all of them.

GUS (CONT’D)
(to Michael & Frannie)
Always a pleasure, sir, ma’am.
(beat)
Hazel Grace. Ok?

HAZEL
Ok.

GUS
Ok.

The two of them are beaming. Michael finishes loading the bags in the car, kisses his wife goodbye, turns to embrace Hazel. She hugs him back and of course he starts to cry.

MICHAEL
(whispering)
I’m so proud of you.

HAZEL
For what?

Michael lets go of her and wipes away his tears. They look at each other. Unable to help himself, he grabs her for another hug. Hazel lets him, laughing.

OMITTED

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

They wait in line for the security checkpoint. Hazel with her oxygen tank, Gus with his noticeable limp and Frannie helping with all the equipment. A LITTLE GIRL (6, cute braids) eyes Hazel curiously. When it’s Hazel’s turn:

TSA AGENT
Miss, are you sure you are able to walk through without oxygen?

HAZEL
I’m good. I got this.

Hazel unhooks the plastic nubbins from her nose. Gus helps place the oxygen tank on the conveyer belt.

(CONTINUED)
While walking through the WTMD, the Agent offers Hazel a helping-hand. Hazel refuses the assistance by nodding no.

Hazel takes slow, careful steps through the X-RAY SCAN MACHINE. She seems determined to get through this without any assistance. And she does.
But upon reaching the other side it’s clear that even these few steps without oxygen were a struggle.

Hazel holds on to the side of the conveyer belt to steady herself. When her tank reappears she puts the cannula back in place. Still light-headed, she closes her eyes, focuses on her breathing. Catches her mom watching, nervously.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
(with some difficulty)
Amsterdam!

INT. AIRPORT SECURITY - LATER - DAY

Hazel sits on a bench on the other side, waiting for Gus and Frannie to go through. The cannula is working its magic again and Hazel can breathe. We see various Passengers watching her. She ignores the attention until the Little Girl appears.

LITTLE GIRL
What’s in your nose?

HAZEL
It’s called a Cannula. These tubes give me oxygen and help me breathe.

The GIRL’S FATHER swoops in, a little frantic.

GIRL’S FATHER
Jackie... Oh, I’m sorry.

HAZEL
(sincere)
No, no. It’s alright.

LITTLE GIRL
Would they help me breathe too?

HAZEL
I dunno. Wanna try?

Hazel removes her cannula and let’s the Little Girl try it.

LITTLE GIRL
Tickles.

HAZEL
Right?

By this point, Frannie and Gus have joined Hazel by the bench.
LITTLE GIRL
I think I am breathing better.

HAZEL
Well... I’d love to give you my cannula but... I kinda really need the help.

The Little Girl nods, hands it back to Hazel, who quickly reattaches it.

LITTLE GIRL
Thanks for letting me try it.

They smile at each other before the Little Girl walks back to her family. She waves. Hazel waves back.

AIRPORT ANNOUNCEMENT (O.S.)
We will now begin pre-boarding Flight 144 to Amsterdam. For those passengers in need of extra assistance...

HAZEL
I think that’s us.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Hazel sits in the middle with Frannie on the aisle and Gus at the window. He looks around, antsy.

HAZEL
Have you never been on a plane before?

Gus shakes his head, he has not. And he’s nervous. He pulls a cigarette out of his pocket and puts it in his mouth. Within seconds a FLIGHT ATTENDANT rushes over.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Sir, you can’t smoke on this plane. Or... any plane.

GUS
(cigarette in his mouth)
I don’t smoke.

The Flight Attendant shoots him a look.

HAZEL
It’s a metaphor. He puts the killing thing in his mouth but doesn’t give it the power to kill him.

(CONTINUED)
FLIGHT ATTENDANT
(no nonsense)
That metaphor is prohibited on today’s flight.

Gus nods and puts the cigarette away.

PA SYSTEM
“Flight attendants, prepare for departure.”

The engines roar to life and the plane accelerates towards take off. Gus is getting more worried by the second. He grabs the arm rest, his eyes wide.

HAZEL
Ok?

Gus doesn’t say it back. Hazel laughs.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
This is what it feels like to ride in a car with you.

Gus grabs Hazel’s hand as the plane lifts off. He looks out the window – they’re flying! – and then back to Hazel.

GUS
We’re flying! Look!

Hazel smiles at his enthusiasm.

GUS (CONT’D)
Holy -- look at that?! NOTHING HAS EVER LOOKED LIKE THAT EVER IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY!

He’s adorable at this moment. Hazel can’t resist leaning over to give him a quick, chaste kiss on the cheek. Immediately, she catches herself.

FRANNIE
(playful)
I’m right here, remember. Your mother...

HAZEL
We’re just friends, Mom.

GUS
She is. I’m not.

Hazel shoots him a look. Gus shrugs – “what, it’s the truth.” Hazel just shakes her head. CUT TO:
LATER. Mid-flight, the plane is dark, Frannie’s asleep. Hazel and Gus watch the same gory action movie. Actually, he watches the movie. She just watches him watch it. He watches it with gusto. CUT TO:

SFX: the PLANE touching down. - DAY  CUT TO:

EXT/INT. AMSTERDAM HIGHWAY - TAXI - DAY

Hazel, Gus, and Frannie ride in the back of a TAXI. Hazel looks out the window, taking in the landscape. It’s as if they’ve been transported - not only to another universe but to another time as well.

MULTI-COLORED ROW HOUSES lined on both sides of a windy CANAL. HOUSEBOATS float against the edges and everyone rides BICYCLES down cobblestone streets. It’s astounding.

EXT. HOTEL - AMSTERDAM - ESTABLISHING - DAY

The taxi arrives. We hear:

    FRANNIE (OVERLAP)
    Let’s get you dressed!

INT. HOTEL - LATE AFTERNOON

Hazel’s suitcase is opened and she’s digging through it, trying to pick out an outfit.

    FRANNIE
    Reservations for two at a place called Oranjee. Mr. Van Houten set it up.

Hazel finds one dress. Discards it. Looks for another.

    FRANNIE (CONT’D)
    Very fancy according to the Guidebook.
    And romantic.

Hazel is getting frustrated. She’s nothing to wear. At which point, Frannie hands her a WRAPPED GIFT. Hazel looks at her – what’s this? Frannie smiles. Hazel opens it to find:

The perfect Dress. Stylish, elegant, and perhaps a little sexy. She hands it to her. Hazel smiles.

    HAZEL
    Mom...

(CONTINUED)
FRANNIE
I’m just saying...

HAZEL
You’re saying a teenage girl running free
with an older boy on the streets of a
foreign city famous for its vice and
debauchery... is totally cool with you.
That’s what you’re saying?

FRANNIE
(beat, excited)
That is exactly what I’m saying!

Hazel just shakes her head. CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Frannie opens the door to find Gus in a perfectly tailored
BLACK SUIT, cigarette dangling from his mouth.

FRANNIE
(calling to the bathroom)
Hazel! Gus is here.
(to Gus)
Looking sharp.

GUS
Thank you ma’am.

A few beats later Hazel emerges from the bathroom. She wears
a knee-length, pale blue SUNDRESS. And she looks...

GUS (CONT’D)
Wow.

HAZEL
I...
(beat)
Am I under-dressed?

GUS
You look gorgeous.

Gus offers Hazel his arm. She takes it. They’re ready to go.

EXT. RIVERBANK - LATE AFTERNOON

Hazel and Gus in a GONDOLA, his arm around her. It really
couldn’t be more romantic. But she’s still fighting it.

Hazel leans into his body, but only a little. They stay like
that, expectation of the evening building. CUT TO:
A106  EXT. ORANJEE RESTAURANT - NIGHT  A106 *
Establishing.  *

106  INT. ORANJEE RESTAURANT - NIGHT  106 *
Hazel and Gus are shown to a TABLE.  *

    HOSTESS
    Your table, Mr. And Mrs. Waters.

Gus pulls out Hazel’s chair for her. A WAITER brings them a bottle of CHAMPAGNE as they sit.

    HOSTESS (CONT’D)
    The champagne is our gift.

Hazel and Gus look at each other. Is this a dream? The champagne is poured and Gus raises his glass.

    GUS
    Ok.

Hazel raises hers.

    HAZEL
    Ok.

They clink glasses and sip.

    HAZEL (CONT’D)
    Wow that’s good.

    WAITER
    Do you know what Dom Perignon said after he invented champagne?
    (beat)
    ‘Come quickly,’ he said. ‘I am tasting the stars!’

Hazel and Gus smile.

    WAITER (CONT’D)
    Welcome to Oranjee. Would you like a menu or will you have the chef’s choice?

Gus looks at Hazel. She shrugs.

(CONTINUED)
GUS
The chef’s choice sounds lovely.
(the Waiter nods)
And can we get more of this?

WAITER
We have bottled all the stars for you
this evening, my young friends.

The Waiter leaves. Hazel and Gus look at each other.

GUS
Thank you for coming to Amsterdam.

HAZEL
Thank you for letting me hijack your
wish.

GUS
Thank you for wearing that dress which is
like whoa.

Hazel shakes her head, trying not to smile but it’s hard.

The Waiter brings two more glasses of champagne and a plate:

WAITER
Belgian white asparagus with a lavender
infusion.

Hazel takes a bite.

HAZEL
Oh my god.

GUS
Yeah?

Gus takes a bite.

HAZEL
I mean...

GUS
That is just...

HAZEL
There are no words. * 

(CONTINUED)
Hazel and Gus smile. This night could not be going any better so far. CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

LATER. We FOLLOW a tray of food from the KITCHEN, through the restaurant, until it lands on Hazel and Gus’s table. Gus takes a bite. If it wasn’t already clear on his face:

GUS
I want this dragon carrot risotto to become a person so I can take it to Vegas and marry it.

Hazel also marvels at the deliciousness. After a few bites, she leans back in her chair.

HAZEL
I like your suit.

GUS
Thanks. First time wearing it.

HAZEL
That isn’t the suit you wear to funerals?

GUS
Oh no. That one’s not nearly this nice.
(off her look)
When I first found out I was sick - they told me I had like an 85% chance to be cancer-free. Great odds, sure. But that meant a year of torture, the loss of my leg, and still a 15% chance it might fail.

A long beat.

GUS (CONT’D)
So anyway right before the surgery I asked my parents if I could buy a suit, like a really nice suit, just in case I didn’t make it.

HAZEL
It’s your death suit.
GUS
That’s what it is.

HAZEL
I have one of those. Bought it for my
15th birthday. Don’t think I’d wear it on
a date, though.

GUS
Are we on a date?

HAZEL
Watch it.

Gus winks. CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

LATER. Dessert on the table. As they euphorically eat:

GUS
God?

HAZEL
Maybe.

GUS
Angels?

HAZEL
No.

GUS
Afterlife?

HAZEL
Nah. Well...
(beat)
Maybe I wouldn’t go so far as to say no.
I just... I’d like some evidence.
(Gus nods)
What do you think?

GUS
Absolutely.

HAZEL
Really?

(CONTINUED)
GUS
Oh for sure. I mean, not like a heaven where you ride unicorns, play harps, and live in a mansion made of clouds but, yeah, I believe in something.

Hazel is surprised.

GUS (CONT’D)
There has to be something. Otherwise... what’s the point?

HAZEL
Maybe there is no point.

GUS
I refuse to accept that.
(beat)
I won’t accept it.

Hazel thinks about it. She appreciates his conviction but is still not sure she agrees. The hand they’ve been dealt too unfair. Hazel looks out at the water as she says:

HAZEL
I hope you’re right.

GUS
I’m in love with you.

That gets her attention.

GUS (CONT’D)
You heard me.

HAZEL
Augustus --

GUS
I’m in love with you. And I know that love is just a shout into the void, and that oblivion is inevitable, and that we’re all doomed and that there will come a day when all our labor has been returned to dust, and I know the sun will swallow the only earth we’ll ever have, and I am in love with you.
(shrugs, matter-of-fact)
Sorry.

At which point, the Waiter reappears.
Hazel is still too speechless to respond, her eyes fixed on Gus. Eventually Gus answers for them.

GUS
Just the check, please.

WAITER
No, sir.
(beat)
Your meal has been paid for by Mr. Van Houten.

Gus raises his eyebrows at Hazel. This Van Houten guy is something else.

Hazel and Gus sit, soaking in the beauty of the city - and the evening.

A crisp Spring morning in Amsterdam. The buzz in the air outside is equalled by the buzz in:

Where Hazel excitedly paces through the room.

FRANNIE
I really don’t get that shirt.

Hazel wears a screen print t-shirt of Magritte’s “Ceci N’est Pas Une Pipe.” (A painting of a pipe with words below that mean “This is not a pipe.”)

HAZEL
Van Houten will get it. Trust me. There are like fifty Magritte references in “Imperial Affliction.”

FRANNIE
(reading)
“This is not a pipe.”

HAZEL
Exactly.
FRANNIE
But it is a pipe.

HAZEL
No it’s not. It’s a drawing of a pipe. See?
(she doesn’t)
All representations of a thing are inherently abstract. A drawing of a thing is not the thing itself. Nor is a t-shirt of a drawing of a thing the thing itself.

Frannie is still at a loss but she’s impressed.

FRANNIE
When did you get so grown up? I feel like it was yesterday I was telling 8-year old Hazel why the sky was blue. You thought I was a genius back then.

HAZEL
Why is the sky blue?

FRANNIE
(beat)
Because I say so.

A knock on the door. Gus pokes his head in.

GUS
Who’s ready for some answers!

INT/EXT. AMSTERDAM - ON THE TRAM - MORNING

Hazel and Gus ride the crowded tram through the city. ELM TREES line the canals, their pale petals blowing into the wind like a spring snowstorm.

An OLD COUPLE stands to give up their seats - this happens all the time. Hazel again tries to protest and again it falls on deaf ears. She and Gus sit. They look out the window into the city. Excited.

EXT. VONDELSTRAAT ROW HOUSES - DAY

Gus and Hazel stand outside Van Houten’s white house.

HAZEL
I’m so excited I can barely breathe.

GUS
As opposed to other days...?
She playfully hits him. He takes her arm, picks up the oxygen tank, and up they go towards his front door.

As they approach, there’s a noticeable NOISE coming from inside the house. It’s the deep thump of a BASS BEAT. Loud. Like, obnoxiously loud.

Hazel grabs the brass ornament and knocks. They wait. There’s no response.
GUS (CONT’D)
Maybe he can’t hear over the music?

Gus tries again, this time with more force. Still nothing. He tries a third time. Finally, the music stops. They wait. Still excited. And then,

Through the closed door, they hear:

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
LEEE-DUH-VIGH!

WOMAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Are they here, Peter?

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
There’s a knock on the --
(beat)
Who the hell’s “they?”

Gus and Hazel share a look. Uh-oh. Is he not expecting -- ?

At which point, the door opens — opened by the Woman whose voice they’d been hearing — Van Houten’s assistant LIDEWIJ (30s, Dutch, pretty in a bookish way).

LIDEWIJ
Please. I am sorry. Come in.

Hazel and Gus share one more awkward glance before Gus takes a step. Hazel follows. They walk:

INT. VAN HOUTEN’S HOME — DAY

Lidewij leads Gus and Hazel through a corridor. We see HUGE BAGS of what looks to be garbage lined against the walls. The Man is still shouting to her.

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
I said who the hell is “they,” Lidewij.

Lidewij smiles to Gus and Hazel as they walk, shakes her head, nothing to worry about. She shouts back to him.

LIDEWIJ
They are Augustus and Hazel, the young fans with whom you’ve been corresponding.

Gus and Hazel smile at hearing their names. Perhaps this will help things take a turn for the better. Hazel accidentally trips over one of the BAGS, spilling out, not trash, but FAN MAIL. All of these bags contain unopened, unread letters from fans.
They follow Lidewij until they find themselves entering a living room so sterile, it’s creepy. The walls are empty and white, there’s a single couch, a small ottoman, and a lounge chair. That’s it.

And in the chair, a MAN IN PAJAMAS. Huge potbelly, thinning hair, a week-old beard. This is PETER VAN HOUTEN.

LIDEWIJ
You invited them, remember?

He looks them up and down a beat. Then turns to Lidewij.

VAN HOUTEN
You know why I left America, Lidewij? To never have to encounter Americans.

(beat)
Get rid of them.

Hazel and Gus can’t believe it. This is terrible!

LIDEWIJ
I will not do this Peter. Be nice.

She virtually shoves Gus and Hazel in the couch near Van Houten. They all sit there. One beat, two beats. No one knows what to say. Until finally:

VAN HOUTEN
Which of you is Augustus Waters?

Gus raises his hand tentatively. Van Houten looks him over. Grunts. The awkwardness returns. Eventually, Hazel says:

HAZEL
Mr. Van Houten.

VAN HOUTEN
Hmm...

Van Houten kicks his feet up on the ottoman, crosses his slippers.

HAZEL
Thank you. For writing back to us.

VAN HOUTEN
Clearly an error in judgment. Yours are the first missives to which I’ve replied and look where that got me.

(MORE)
Scotch?

HAZEL
Um, no thanks.

VAN HOUTEN
Augustus Waters?

GUS
It’s 11am.

VAN HOUTEN
Just me then, Lidewij.
(downs the drink)
Another scotch and soda, please.

LIDEWIJ
Perhaps some breakfast first Peter?

VAN HOUTEN
She thinks I have a drinking problem.

LIDEWIJ
I also think the Earth is round.

Nevertheless, Lidewij pours Peter half a glass and hands it to him. He takes a sip, then sits up straight.

VAN HOUTEN
So you like my book.

HAZEL
Yes. We - well, Augustus, he made meeting you his Wish so that we could come here and talk to you.

Van Houten says nothing. Takes a long pull on his drink.

VAN HOUTEN
Did you dress like her on purpose?

HAZEL
(looks at her shirt)
Kinda.

Van Houten says nothing to that.
VAN HOUTEN
I do not have a drinking problem. I have a Churchillian relationship with alcohol: I can crack jokes and govern England and do anything I want to do. Except not drink.

He glances over at Lidewij, who dutifully refills his glass.

GUS
Incidentally, thank you for dinner last night.

VAN HOUTEN
(to Lidewij)
We bought them dinner last night?

LIDEWIJ
It was our pleasure.

VAN HOUTEN
(sighs, takes another drink)
You’ve come a long way so... what is it I can do for you?

HAZEL
We have some questions --

VAN HOUTEN
Uh-huh...

HAZEL
About what happens, you know... after... the end of your book. Specifically to those who Anna leaves behind. Like her Mom, the Dutch Tulip Man, Sisy --

VAN HOUTEN
(interrupting)
How familiar are you with Swedish hip-hop?

Hazel looks at Gus. Is he kidding?

HAZEL
I would say... limited?

VAN HOUTEN
But presumably you know Afasi Och Filthy’s seminal album “Flacken.”
GUS

Um...

VAN HOUTEN

Lidewij! Play ‘Bomfalleralla’ immediately.

Lidewij sighs but she does as she’s told. A few seconds later, some loud Swedish rap song blasts from the speakers. Hazel and Gus sit through this, totally baffled.

HAZEL

(yelling over the music)
I’m sorry, sir. We don’t speak Swedish.

VAN HOUTEN

(yelling)
Who the hell speaks Swedish? The important thing is not what nonsense the voices are saying, but what the voices are feeling.

The song continues another awkward ten seconds or so before Gus has enough. He gets up and turns off the music.

GUS

Are you messing with us?

VAN HOUTEN

Pardon?

GUS

Is this some kind of performance?

VAN HOUTEN

Rudolf Otto said that if you had not encountered the numinous then his work was not for you. And I say to you, my friends, if you cannot hear Afasi Och Filthy’s bravadic response to fearfulness, then my work is not for you.

Hazel is really getting worried at this point. They came all this way for this?

HAZEL

So anyway... when the book ends, Anna’s mom --

VAN HOUTEN

(raising a hand to silence her)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
Let us imagine that you are racing a tortoise.

Hazel and Gus fidget in their seats. Lidewij frowns, clearly feeling bad for them. Van Houten continues.

The tortoise has a ten yard head start. In the time it takes you to run ten yards, the tortoise has moved maybe one yard. And so on, forever. You are faster than the tortoise but you can never catch him, you see, you can only decrease his lead. Now certainly you can run past the tortoise as long as you don’t contemplate the mechanics involved but the question of how turns out to be so complicated that no one really solved it until Cantor’s proof that some infinities are bigger than other infinities.

Hazel and Gus have no idea how to respond.

I assume that answers your questions.

I don’t know what’s going on.

And yet you seemed so intelligent in print, Mr. Waters. Has the cancer found its way to your brain?

Peter!

Gus could throw a punch right now. Hazel tries to calm the situation.

Can we please, maybe, talk about Anna for a sec? I mean, I understand that the story ends mid-sentence because she dies or she becomes too sick to continue --

I’m not interested in talking about that book.
HAZEL
- but that doesn’t mean her family and everyone she loves doesn’t have a future, right?

VAN HOUTEN
I said I’m not interested --

HAZEL
(getting upset)
But you promised!
(calms herself)
Mr. Van Houten, you said you would tell us what happens and that’s why we’re here. We... I need you tell me. Surely you’ve thought about it. I mean, as characters --

VAN HOUTEN
Nothing happens to them! They’re fictions. They cease to exist the moment the novel is over.

This is not what Hazel came all this way to hear. She won’t accept it.

HAZEL
They can’t!
(again, has to calm herself)
I mean, I understand. In a literary sense. But it’s impossible NOT to imagine some future --

VAN HOUTEN
I can’t do this. Lidewij, get rid of them, please.
(Lidewij doesn’t move, he turns back to Hazel)
I won’t indulge your childish whims. I refuse to pity you in the manner in which you’re accustomed.

HAZEL
I don’t want your pity --

VAN HOUTEN
Of course you do. Like all sick kids, your existence depends on it.

LIDEWIJ
Peter!

(CONTINUED)
VAN HOUTEN
(on a roll)
You are fated to live out your days as the child you were when diagnosed, the child who believes there is life after a novel ends. And we, as adults, we pity this, so we pay for your treatments, for your oxygen machines. We give you food and water though you are unlikely to live long enough --

LIDEWIJ
Peter, that’s enough!

VAN HOUTEN
You are a side effect of an evolutionary process that cares little for individual lives. You are a failed experiment in mutation.

Lidewij throws her apron on the ground, tears in her eyes. She’s done with this. Gus as well has balled his fists, ready to fight. But not Hazel. Van Houten’s words have not phased her one bit. She rises from the couch.

HAZEL
Listen douchepants. You’re not gonna tell me anything I don’t already know about illness. I need one thing and one thing only from you before I walk out of your life and that’s for you to tell me what happens to your goddamn characters!

VAN HOUTEN
(beat)
I can’t tell you.

HAZEL
Bullshit!

VAN HOUTEN
I can’t --

Van Houten goes to take a drink but...

HAZEL
Make something up.

... Hazel smacks it right the fuck out of his hands, surprising everyone. After a beat:

VAN HOUTEN
Lidewij. I’ll have a martini please.

(CONTINUED)
I don’t work here anymore.

Oh don’t be ridiculous.

No one moves. Van Houten realizes he’s alone in this.

I’d like you to leave.

You’re really not gonna tell us?

I would like you... to leave.

Hazel is furious. Gus stands next to her, touches her arm is if to say “come on, enough of this guy.” CUT TO:

Gus and Hazel tearing towards the exit. When they get to the door, Van Houten calls to them, one more thing to say:

Have you ever stopped to ask why you care so much about your silly questions?

A beat.

Go fuck yourself.

And with that, they go:

Both of them are practically shaking. Hazel especially. Gus hugs her tight as he sees her breakdown.

Hey. It’s ok. It’s ok...

I’ll write you a sequel.

I will. Better than any shit that drunk could write. With blood and guts and sacrifice. You’ll love it.

Hazel nods, then wipes away tears. She fakes a smile and Gus gives her a hug. Afterwards:
HAZEL
I spent your Wish on that asshole.

GUS
You did not spend it on him. You spent it on us.

They embrace once more.

HAZEL
I wanted...

GUS
I know... I know. Apparently the world is not a wish-granting factory.

This gets a real smile from Hazel. That’s when Lidewij comes outside. Clearly she’s been crying too.

LIDEWIJ
I’m so sorry. Circumstance has made him cruel. I thought meeting you would help him, if he would see that his work has shaped real lives, but... I’m very sorry.

Hazel says nothing. Gus holds her in a very protective way.

LIDEWIJ (CONT’D)
Perhaps we can do some sightseeing. Have you seen the Anne Frank House?

GUS
Cause that’ll totally cheer us up...

LIDEWIJ
It’s a beautiful place.

HAZEL
I’m not going anywhere with that monster.

LIDEWIJ
No.
(beat)
He is not invited.

EXT. ANNE FRANK HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Lidewij walks back from the ticket kiosk with more bad news.

LIDEWIJ
I’m afraid there’s no elevator.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
Oh, um, that’s alright.

LIDEWIJ
No, there are many stairs. Steep stairs.

HAZEL
I can do it.

GUS
Hazel --

HAZEL
I can do it!

Hazel is not going to stand for any more disappointments today. They are going inside. CUT TO:

INT. ANNE FRANK HOUSE - GROUND FLOOR - AFTERNOON

A VIDEO plays on a MONITOR showing the Nazi invasion of Holland. Hazel and Gus stand with Lidewij in a pack of BACKPACKERS and TRAVELERS about to take the tour. Many of them begin to walk up the first flight of stairs.

LIDEWIJ
Shall we?

Hazel nods. Both Hazel and Gus walk slowly up the stairs. So far so good. They find themselves in an office space.

LIDEWIJ (CONT’D)
This is the bookcase that hid the Frank family and four others.

The BOOKCASE is half open. Behind it is an even steeper set of stairs, only wide enough for one person at a time.

Some of the Travelers begin to walk up the stairs. Gus looks at Hazel – are you sure we should continue? She begins the climb, determined. Lidewij trails behind, carrying her oxygen tank.

Hazel moves very slowly. We are aware of her labored breathing the entire time.

ANGLE ON OTHER TOURISTS, watching and quietly commenting. Just like at the airport, except now in foreign languages.

Hazel arrives on the NEXT FLOOR - an empty room. She’s definitely starting to struggle. She leans against the wall to catch her breath. Gus comes to her side, wipes her brow.

(CONTINUED)
GUS
You’re a champion.

Hazel smiles. When she’s feeling up to it they walk into the next room, also empty. And another staircase, even more narrow and steep – practically a ladder. When Gus sees this he looks at Hazel:

GUS (CONT’D)
That’s enough --

HAZEL
(resolute)
I’m ok.

Hazel very slowly begins the climb. Again we’re aware of her every breath. It’s dark. And it’s becoming very difficult. Near the top Hazel stumbles but is finally able to pull herself through.

Once there, she falls to the floor, slumping against the wall, trying to catch her breath. Gus crouches next to her.

GUS
We’re at the top. That’s it.

Hazel becomes aware that TOURISTS look at her with concern. She smiles, stands up, nothing to see here.

And now they’re in the final room – a long, narrow hallway. This is where Anne Frank and 7 other people lived in hiding for as long as they could. There’s a TIME LINE detailing their story.

LIDEWIJ
The only member of the whole family to survive was Otto, Anne’s father.

Gus takes Hazel’s hand.

LIDEWIJ (CONT’D)
I don’t know how you go on, without your family.

Lidewij stays behind to study part of the exhibit. Gus leads Hazel into the room at the end of the hallway where a VIDEO details the last days of Anne Frank’s life. Over it, we hear a YOUNG GIRL’S VOICE reading from the diary.

The Travelers stand to watch and listen. Gus and Hazel do the same. The room is dark.

(CONTINUED)
GIRL’S VOICE (O.S.)
“At such moment’s, I don’t think about
the misery…”

Gus and Hazel stand very closely together. The video is the
cherry on top of a very emotional day. Hazel watches it.

GIRL’S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT’D)
“…but about the beauty that still
remains.”

Gus, meanwhile, is just watching Hazel, the same way she
watched him on the airplane. After a beat, she catches him.
Their eyes meet. The emotions build...

GIRL’S VOICE (O.S.) (CONT’D)
“Try to recapture the happiness within
yourself. Think of all the beauty in
everything around you… and be happy.”

And Hazel KISSES Gus. A most passionate, intense, you-and-me-
against-the-world kind of kiss, better than any they’ve
experienced or could even imagine. It seems to last for a
small eternity.

Eventually, they break away and open their eyes. They quickly
notice all the Travelers staring at them. For a brief second,
they wonder if that was a very inappropriate thing to do...

When suddenly everyone starts clapping for them, moved by the
whole thing. One EUROPEAN even shouts “bravo!” Hazel blushes,
Gus smiles, bows, he grabs her hand. We hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)
I fell in love with him the way you fall
asleep. Slowly. Then all at once.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

They fall onto Gus’s bed, kissing. Hazel is very in the
moment and now it’s Gus who seems nervous. As they kiss:

GUS
It’s above my knee.

She ignores him, more kissing. She takes off his shirt.

GUS (CONT’D)
It tapers a little and then it’s just
skin --

HAZEL
What?

(CONTINUED)
Hazel pulls away from him.

GUS
My leg.
(beat)
Just so you’re prepared --

HAZEL
Oh get over yourself.

Hazel kisses him again. Now he tries to pull her shirt off but it gets tangled in with her oxygen tube. He can’t figure it out. Eventually the whole thing is hilarious to them. They shake their heads – laughing – certainly not your typical Hollywood movie moment. And yet, for them:

HAZEL (CONT’D)
I love you, Augustus Waters.

GUS
I love you too, Hazel Grace.

They resume kissing. It’s heating up. Hazel stops for a beat, inserts the cannula, gets some much needed oxygen. Smiles. Gus smiles back.

And when she can breathe again, kissing continues. CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM – MORNING

Gus wakes up in the bed. He looks around for Hazel but she isn’t there. On the bed is a piece of paper. A note.

It reads: “Dearest Augustus…”

Beneath that is a BIG CIRCLE, labeled “Virgins.” And in that circle is a SMALLER SECOND CIRCLE labeled “17 year old dudes with one leg.” We’ll notice part of that circle is now outside the bigger circle. Gus flashes that signature smile.

INT. HOTEL CAFE – DAY

Hazel and Gus sit with Frannie drinking coffee, re-enacting yesterday’s events, having a great time.

GUS
You called him “douchepants.”

HAZEL
I know!

GUS
What is that?
HAZEL
It just came out! I was angry.

GUS
Douchepants.

They both giggle at the whole thing.

HAZEL
It was awful, Mom. You can’t imagine.

FRANNIE
And then what happened?

HAZEL
Then we went to the Anne Frank museum.

FRANNIE
And after that?

A quick glance between Hazel and Gus.

HAZEL
We just... walked around.

Hazel and Gus smile, thoroughly in love but trying to keep it in check in front of her Mother.

FRANNIE
Sounds lovely.

They’re all still smiling. Hazel has truly never been happier. Gus can’t take his eyes off of her. Loves seeing her like this. And yet the image stirs something sad in him as well. We can start to see it brewing...

HAZEL
(checking her watch)
There’s still a few hours till our flight. Should we check out the Rijksmuseum? That’s pretty close to here. Or the Paradiso. Or the Oude Kerk. God there’s so much to see. We’ll never hit everything.

FRANNIE
You’ll just have to come back is all.

Hazel shoots her a look. As if.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
What?

(CONTINUED)
Hazel just shakes her head at her mom.

HAZEL
Could you not be ridiculous right now?

And by this point, the sadness in Gus's eyes is unmistakable. But Hazel and Frannie are too engaged to notice...

FRANNIE
I’m not being ridiculous. I’m being positive --

HAZEL
Oh boy --

GUS
(interjecting)
Mrs. Lancaster.

Both Hazel and Frannie stop talking and turn to Gus. They both can see in his face - something big is weighing on him.

GUS (CONT’D)
Is it alright if Hazel and I have some time alone?

Frannie doesn't know what's going on. But something is.

FRANNIE
(nods)
Of course.

She stands. Hazel looks at Gus. Also can’t quite read the situation.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
I’ll meet you back in the room.

And with that, she walks off. Hazel turns back to Gus, still not sure what's happening. He gives her his best Gus smile.

GUS
Wanna take a walk?

They stroll across a footbridge. Hazel notices he’s struggling with something.

HAZEL
Augustus?

Gus takes a cigarette out, sticks it between his lips.
HAZEL (CONT’D)
What is it?

GUS
There’s something I have to tell you...

They walk in silence a few beats.

GUS (CONT’D)
Just before you went into the hospital...
There was this... I felt this... ache in my hip.

Hazel grabs onto his arm, a lump already forming.

Gus takes the cigarette out of his mouth, clenches his teeth tightly, trying not to cry.

GUS (CONT’D)
I had a PET scan.

Gus sits down on a BENCH. Looks up at her. Tries to smile.
Before he even says it, she knows.

GUS (CONT’D)
It lit up like a Christmas tree, Hazel.
The lining of my chest, my liver... everywhere.

Hazel loses it in that moment, hugging him for dear life, her head in his lap.

HAZEL
I’m so sorry, Augustus. I’m so so sorry --

GUS
I’m sorry too --

HAZEL
It’s so unfair --

GUS
I should have told you --

HAZEL
It’s so fucking unfair!

A beat. Gus still trying not to cry.

GUS
Apparently the world is... not a wish-granting factory.
And at that point, Gus lets it go, lets himself cry and be sad and feel awful.

But just for a second. Then he shakes it off, pulls Hazel’s face up to his, tries again to smile through the tears.

**GUS (CONT’D)**

Don’t you worry about me, Hazel Grace. I’ll find a way to hang around and annoy you for a long time.

She hugs him, perhaps a little too tightly. He winces.

**HAZEL**

Does it hurt?

**GUS**

It’s ok.

(beat)

I’m ok.

**HAZEL**

Ok.

**GUS**

Ok.

But of course it’s not ok. Not by a mile.

Hazel takes a moment to look at him, touches his cheek.

**GUS (CONT’D)**

What?

**HAZEL**

I’m just... I’m very fond of you.

He grabs her hand and holds it.

**GUS**

I don’t suppose you can forget about it, treat me like I’m not dying.

**HAZEL**

I don’t think you’re dying, Augustus. You’ve just got a touch of cancer.

Gus nods. Squeezes her hand.

**GUS**

Would it be absolutely ludicrous to make out right now?
Hazel doesn’t answer. She just kisses him, hard. And on the two of them, so in love, we CUT TO:

INT. AIRPLANE - DUSK

Hazel lays on Gus’s shoulder as he stares out the window, leaving Amsterdam behind.

INT. INDIANAPOLIS AIRPORT - BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

As they ride down the escalator, Hazel sees Michael standing amongst the livery drivers. He holds a sign that says - instead of someone’s last name - “My Beautiful Family (and Gus).”

Upon seeing them, he immediately starts to cry of course. He kisses his wife, gives Hazel a big hug. Gus goes to shake his hand but Michael hugs him as well. CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S LIVING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Hazel sits with her father on the couch. All he can say is:

MICHAEL
I’m sorry Hazel.

They sit for a beat. Tears form in Michael’s eyes.

HAZEL
You’re not gonna say it?

MICHAEL
What’s that?

HAZEL
The usual. “Everything happens for a reason...”

Michael shakes his head.

MICHAEL
I don’t know, Haze.
(beat)
I always thought being an adult meant
knowing what you believe...
(beat)
... that has not been my experience.
CUT TO:

INT. GUS’S BASEMENT BEDROOM - DAY

Gus lays in bed, eyes open, a PICC line now being fed through a port in his chest. Chemotherapy at work.

Hazel and Isaac are keeping him company.

HAZEL
How are your eyes?

ISAAC
Great. Wonderful. I mean, they’re not in my head is the only problem.

GUS
I hate to one-up you but... seems my entire body is made out of cancer now, so...

Isaac nods. Tries not to get emotional but it’s happening. He goes to touch Gus’s arm and accidentally touches his thigh.

GUS (CONT’D)
Whoa, I’m taken.

Isaac laughs.

ISAAC
(to Hazel, re: Gus)
Did you write his eulogy yet?

Hazel is confused.

GUS
Dude!

ISAAC
What?

GUS
I haven’t asked her.

ISAAC
Oh.
(beat)
Oops.

HAZEL
What are you talking about?
ISAAC
My bad.

HAZEL
(still confused)
Augustus?

Gus looks at her, grows a little serious.

GUS
I need speakers at my funeral. I thought maybe you and Isaac... but especially you --

ISAAC
Hey!

GUS
Would you be kind enough to whip something up?

HAZEL
(touches his hand)
I would love to.

They hold hands.

ISAAC
You guys are adorable - makes me sick...

Hazel play slaps Isaac on the arm.

HAZEL
How’s your love life? Anything from Monica?

ISAAC
Nope. Not a word.

HAZEL
She hasn’t even like, texted to ask how you’re doing?

He shakes his head. Gus gets an angry look on his face.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
That is so messed up!

ISAAC
I’ve stopped thinking about it. Moving on. There’s a new girl in Support Group with these humongous -

(CONTINUED)
Isaac gestures to his chest. Hazel is confused.

HAZEL
How do you even know that?

ISAAC
I’m blind but I’m not that blind.

GUS
Hazel Grace!

They turn to him.

GUS (CONT’D)
Do you happen to have five dollars?

No one knows what that means. CUT TO:

INT. FRANNIE’S CAR - DAY

Gus is in the passenger’s seat. Isaac sits in the back. Hazel returns to the car. With a CARTON OF EGGS.

HAZEL
Ok now what?

Gus smiles. CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Hazel, Gus, and Isaac lean against Hazel’s car staring something down.

ISAAC
Is it there?

GUS
Oh it’s there.

REVEAL they’re looking at Monica’s green Firebird.

ISAAC
She’s in the house?

GUS
Who cares where she is? This is not about her. This is about you.
(sticks out his hand)
Hazel...

Hazel nods, opens the egg carton, hands Gus an egg. Gus puts it in Isaac’s hands. Positions Isaac – who, of course, can’t see a thing – towards the Firebird.

(CONTINUED)
Isaac winds up and tosses the EGG.

It misses the car by a mile. After a beat:

    ISAAC
    I didn’t hear anything.

    GUS
    A little to the left.

    ISAAC
    My throw was to the left or I should aim
to the left?

    GUS
    Aim left.

Isaac turns his shoulders.

    GUS (CONT’D)
    Lefter.

Isaac turns some more. Hazel leans in to Gus:

    HAZEL
    Shouldn’t we wait until dark to do this?

    GUS
    It’s all dark to Isaac.

    ISAAC
    How bout now?

    GUS
    Yes! Excellent! And throw hard.

Gus hands him a SECOND EGG. Isaac winds up and hurls it — missing the car again but hitting the HOUSE.

    GUS (CONT’D)
    Bullseye!

    ISAAC
    Really?

    GUS
    No you missed it by like 20 feet.
    (hands him a THIRD)
    Try one more time.

Isaac hurls it, this time smashing the car’s taillight. Isaac’s face lights up.

(continues)
HAZEL

Woo hoo!

Isaac grabs for ANOTHER EGG. Throws it. Then ANOTHER. He’s a throwing machine. Most of them miss but at least he’s enjoying himself. Finally there’s a DIRECT HIT on the car door, triggering the alarm. Isaac pauses.

GUS

Keep throwing, keep throwing!

Isaac does. Gus smiles, putting an unlit cigarette in his mouth. Hazel watches him, enjoying this moment.

Eventually, MONICA’S MOM opens the front door and comes out.

MONICA’S MOM

What in God’s name --

An EGG whizzes by her head, causing her to flinch dramatically.

MONICA’S MOM (CONT’D)

Aaah!

She sees Hazel, Gus, and Isaac. Tries to make sense of this.

GUS

Are you Monica’s mom?

MONICA’S MOM

(confused)

I am.

GUS

Hello ma’am. Your daughter has done an injustice and we’ve come here seeking revenge. We may not look like much. Between the three of us, we have five legs, four eyes, and two and a half working lungs. But we also have two dozen eggs. So if I was you, I would go back inside.

Monica’s Mom is very confused. A beat. Without another word, she turns and goes back inside. The three of them celebrate. As Isaac picks up where he left off, Hazel gently kisses Gus on the cheek. And over we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)

A few days later, Gus landed in the hospital with chest pains.
INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - MORNING

Hazel bounds in to find Mrs. Waters in the waiting room. She stands to hug Hazel. They both sit down.

HAZEL
How’s he doing?

MRS. WATERS
He’s had a tough night, Hazel. His blood pressure’s low. His heart --

Mrs. Waters fights back the tears.

HAZEL
What about the chemo?

MRS. WATERS
(shakes her head)
They’re gonna stop the chemo.

They both know what that means. Mrs. Waters gathers herself.

HAZEL
Can I see him?

Mrs. Waters doesn’t want to say no but in her brief hesitation, Hazel understands completely. This is his mother. She needs to be with him too. Hazel nods.

MRS. WATERS
We’ll tell him you were here.

HAZEL
I’m just gonna hang out for a while. If you don’t mind...

Mrs. Waters smiles, hugs her again, walks out through the heavy doors towards Gus’s room. Hazel sits in the chair. Same chair Gus sat in while waiting for her. It’s as though they’ve switched places.

EXT. INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

Hazel pushes Gus, now confined to a WHEELCHAIR, to their spot on the hill overlooking “Funky Bones.” A second picnic, this time with champagne. Hazel pours some for them both into little plastic cups. She’s trying to be upbeat – but it’s difficult. Gus watches the kids play on the bones.

HAZEL
What are you thinking about?

(CONTINUED)
GUS
Oblivion.

HAZEL
Augustus...

GUS
I know it’s kid’s stuff but... I always thought I’d be a hero, you know, with a grand story to tell. Something that would run in all the papers. I thought I was special --

HAZEL
You are.

GUS
Yeah but... you know what I mean.

Hazel, annoyed finishes her cup, tosses it to the side. Gus can tell he’s said something wrong.

GUS (CONT’D)
What?

HAZEL
I do know what you mean, I just... I don’t agree.

Hazel stands up, anger building.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
This obsession with being remembered --

GUS
Don’t get mad --

HAZEL
But I am mad!
(LogLevel)
I think you’re special, is that not enough?

GUS
Hazel --

HAZEL
You think the only way to live a meaningful life is for everyone to love you, for everyone to remember you. Well guess what, Gus, this is your life. This is all you get. You get me, and your family, and this world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL (CONT'D)
And if that’s not enough, well I’m sorry, but it’s not nothing. Cause I’ll remember you, I’ll love you --

GUS
You’re right --

HAZEL
And I just wish... I just wish you’d be happy with that.

GUS
You’re right. I’m sorry.
(pulling her back down)
I’m sorry.

Gus hands Hazel another cup. Raises his to hers in a toast.

GUS (CONT'D)
It’s a good life, Hazel Grace.

She softens. They toast.

HAZEL
It’s not over yet, you know.

Gus nods. Of course it isn’t. And yet they both know there isn’t much time. CUT TO:

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hazel is asleep. Suddenly, her phone buzzes. She looks at it - “Gus” - then she looks at the clock - 2:35am. A pit grows in her stomach. A quick panicked beat before she answers:

HAZEL
Hello?

GUS (O.S.)
(weakly)
Hazel Grace.

HAZEL
(relieved)
Oh, thank God. Hi. Hi, I love you!

GUS (O.S.)
I’m at the gas station --

HAZEL
What?

(CONTINUED)
GUS (O.S.)
Something’s wrong. You gotta... please come help me.

INT/EXT. FRANNIE’S CAR - NIGHT

Hazel drives like a maniac down the street, eventually finding herself at the Speedway gas station.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Gus’s car is alone in the parking lot and she pulls up next to it. She gets out of her car, opens his driver’s side door, and finds him sitting there, his shirt stained with vomit and blood. She gags from the smell.

GUS
(mumbling)
Hi.

Hazel looks down at his hands which are pressed tightly to his belly. She sees something is leaking from the TUBE sticking out of it.

HAZEL
(panicked)
Oh, God, Augustus, I’m calling 911.

GUS
No! Please! Hazel, listen to me. Do not call 911 or my parents -- I’ll never forgive you -- Don’t, please.

Gus starts to cry.

GUS (CONT’D)
Please just look at it.

Hazel lifts up his shirt. His ABDOMEN is bright red.

HAZEL
I think it’s infected...

Hazel feels his forehead, he’s burning up.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Gus, what the -- why are you here? Why aren’t you home?

Gus throws up. He doesn’t even have the energy to turn his mouth away from his lap.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL (CONT’D)
Oh, sweetie...

GUS
I wanted to buy some cigarettes. I lost my pack. Or they took it. I don’t know. They said they’d get me another one but I wanted... to do it myself. Do one little thing myself.

Hazel doesn’t know what to do.

HAZEL
I can’t fix this. I have to call someone. I’m sorry.

GUS
No, Hazel, please!

But she must. She gets out her cell phone and dials. At which point, Gus really loses it, weeping like the poisoned, dying teenage boy that he is. As Hazel dials, we hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)
I wish I could say Augustus Waters kept his sense of humor till the end, did not for a moment waiver in his courage and his spirit soared like an eagle to the sky...

GUS
(to himself, shaking)
I hate myself I hate myself I hate this I hate this...

HAZEL (V.O.)
...but that is not what happened.

EXT. GAS STATION – NIGHT
An EMT loads Gus into the back of an AMBULANCE.

INT. AMBULANCE – NIGHT
Hazel is allowed to ride with him in the back. As the car starts moving, Gus grabs her hand. We ride with them:

GUS
Read me something.

HAZEL
Read you something?

(CONTINUED)
GUS
Do you know any poems?

HAZEL
I know one.

GUS
Read it to me.

HAZEL
"The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams.
   (beat, tries to remember)
   "So much depends / upon / a red wheel / barrow / glazed with rain / water / beside the white / chickens."

GUS
   (beat)
   Is that it?

That is it. But there’s another ten minutes of driving to do.
Hazel thinks fast.

HAZEL
No of course not. Um... what else...
   (thinks)
   so much depends upon...

Hazel thinks on her feet. She wants so badly to distract this boy she loves from his agony. She looks out the window. We CUT TO what she describes:

135  EXT. HAZEL’S BACKYARD - DUSK

CU the sky at dusk, billowing clouds up above.

HAZEL (V.O.)
... a blue sky...

136  EXT. HAZEL’S BACKYARD - DUSK

CU BRANCHES on trees, their leaves blowing with the wind

HAZEL (V.O.)
... cut open by the branches of the trees.

137  INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

BACK ON HAZEL, looking at Gus, trying to smile, weak, barely conscious.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
And so much depends...

CU the G-TUBE, protruding from Gus’s stomach.

HAZEL (V.O.)
on the transparent G-tube/ erupting from
the belly...

CU Gus’s lips, impossibly blue, desperate for oxygenation.

HAZEL (V.O.)
...of the blue-lipped boy.

BACK ON Hazel, tears falling from her face as she cradles
Gus’s head in her arms.

HAZEL
So much depends upon this observer/ of
the universe...

And as Gus is drifting off to sleep, WE HEAR a different VO:

HAZEL (V.O.)
One of the less bull-shitty conventions
of the cancer genre is the convention
known as the “Last Good Day...”

EXT. GUS’S HOUSE - DAY

Gus comes home from the hospital. He does not look good - but
he lives. Hazel is there to help get him inside.

INT. GUS’S HOUSE - DAY

Gus no longer sleeps in his basement. Nor does he sleep in
his own bed. He sleeps in a HOSPITAL BED set up in a guest
room. Hazel is with him. They’re watching sports on TV.

HAZEL (V.O.)
This is where the victim of cancer finds
himself unexpectedly with some hours...

EXT. GUS’S BACKYARD PORCH - DAY

Hazel and Gus getting some fresh air. She sits there reading
a book. Gus just sits there. His eyes staring off into
nothing. Hazel squeezes his hand. He looks over, as if waking
from a dream. She manages a smile. He manages one back.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL (V.O.)
... when it seems like the inexorable decline has suddenly plateaued, when the pain is for a minute bearable.

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM – EVENING

Hazel on her bed, staring at nothing. Her eyes fall on the dog-eared copy of “An Imperial Affliction.” She frowns.

HAZEL (V.O.)
The problem, of course, is that there’s no way of knowing that your last good day is your “Last Good Day.”

She stands to retrieve it. Opens it up to find a FLOWER from the restaurant in Amsterdam, pressed inside. Smiles at the memory. Puts the book back. Places the flower on the night stand by her bed.

HAZEL (V.O.)
At the time, it’s just another decent day.

Her phone buzzes – Augustus. She answers, cheerfully.

HAZEL
Hi, Augustus.

GUS (O.S.)
Good evening, Hazel Grace.

His voice is strong today, and Hazel is happy to hear it.

GUS (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Quick question for you. Did you ever write that eulogy I asked you to prepare?

Hazel looks at an ENVELOPE resting at the edge of her desk.

HAZEL
I may have...

GUS
Excellent. Do you think you could find yourself at the Literal Heart of Jesus in a few minutes?

HAZEL
Um... sure. Yeah. Is everything --

GUS (O.S.)
I love you Hazel Grace.

(CONTINUED)
And with that, the call ends. Hazel, confused, stands to go.

INT. HAZEL’S DINING ROOM – NIGHT

Frannie and Michael are bringing plates of food from the kitchen to the dinner table. Hazel comes down from upstairs.

HAZEL
Can I have the car keys?

FRANNIE
What, we’re just sitting down to eat--

HAZEL
I have to go --

FRANNIE
(disappointed)
Hazel...

HAZEL
I’m not hungry.

FRANNIE
You barely ate lunch today--

HAZEL
I said I’m not hungry.

MICHAEL
You can’t not eat--

HAZEL
I am aggressively un-hungry--

FRANNIE
Hazel, just because Gus is sick--

HAZEL
This is not about Gus.

FRANNIE
--you can’t starve yourself. You need to stay healthy--

HAZEL
But I can’t, Mom! I can’t stay healthy because I’m not healthy. I am dying. I am going to die and leave you here all alone and you won’t have me to hover around and you won’t be a mother anymore and I’m sorry but there’s nothing I can do about it, ok? So just SHUT UP!

(CONTINUED)
MICHAEL

Hazel!

Hazel immediately regrets what she said. But at the same time...

FRANNIE

What do you mean “I won’t be a mother anymore?”

(Hazel looks at her)

Why would you say that?

HAZEL

I heard you. That night in the ICU before “The Miracle”...

FRANNIE

I said “I won’t be a mother anymore?”

Hazel nods sadly. Frannie takes that in.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)

Oh god I did, didn’t I?

(beat)

I was so scared. And I really though once you were gone, it would...a part of me would never...

Frannie grabs hold of Hazel’s shoulders.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)

It’s not true, Hazel. I know that now.

I was wrong. I know that even if you die--

HAZEL

When.

A beat. Another beat. This isn’t easy for Frannie to accept. But she must.

FRANNIE

Even when you die - I will always be your mother. It’s the greatest thing I will ever be. It’s who I am...

(beat)

Hazel, listen to me... it’s gonna hurt like hell to lose you but... you of all people know it’s possible to live with pain.

Hazel takes that in. She sits down, exhales.

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
My biggest fear in the world is that... when I am gone you won’t have a life. That you’ll just... sit around all day staring at the walls or just... off yourselves or something.

MICHAEL
We’re not gonna do that.

FRANNIE
I don’t just... sit around.

Hazel doesn’t understand. Frannie looks at Michael like, “should I say something?” He nods. She goes for it.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
I’ve... I’m taking classes. To get my master’s in social work.

Hazel is stunned.

FRANNIE (CONT’D)
It’s a way for me to take what I know and... maybe help people, council families --

HAZEL
Wait so when you’re waiting for me outside Support Group or whatever, you’re actually...

Frannie nods. Finally able to “admit” it.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
That’s amazing! Mom, I don’t -- why would you keep that from me?!

MICHAEL
Because, we --

Frannie and Michael don’t quite know how to say it.

FRANNIE
We didn’t want you to feel abandoned --

HAZEL
Are you kidding? This is great! You’ll be great!

(CONTINUED)
Hazel pulls Frannie into a hug.

FRANIE
Thank you. That means everything to me.

HAZEL
I just want to know you’ll be ok.

FRANIE
And we will.
(taking her face in her hands)
We will, Hazel. I promise.

And Hazel believes it. They’ve both had things they needed to say and they’ve finally been said. We CUT to:

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

As Hazel enters the empty sanctuary, a wheel-chair bound Gus is directing Isaac up to the podium.

GUS
A little to the right. Your other right... There. That’s it. Perfect.

Gus is thinner than we’ve ever seen him, thinner than any young man should be. But for now, he’s happy. Hazel approaches.

GUS (CONT’D)
Hazel Grace, you look ravishing. Doesn’t she look ravishing, Isaac?

ISAAC
How would I know?

Gus nods, fair enough.

HAZEL
So, um, what’s going on guys?

ISAAC
You’re late.

HAZEL
Late for what exactly?

Gus gestures for her to sit next to him and she does.

(CONTINUED)
GUS
I wanted to attend my own funeral. (beat) I’m hopeful I’ll get to attend as a ghost, but just to make sure, I thought I’d — well, not to put you on the spot, but I thought I’d arrange a pre-funeral.

HAZEL
Why now?

GUS
No time like the present.

HAZEL
(looks around the room) How did you even get in here?

GUS
Would you believe they leave the door open at night?

HAZEL
Um, no.

GUS
As well you shouldn’t.

He smiles and for a brief moment it’s old Gus. Hazel laughs. Isaac clears his throat.

ISAAC
“Augustus Waters was a cocky son of a bitch. But we forgive him. We forgive him... not because he had a heart as good as his real one sucked, or because of his superhuman handsomeness... Or because he got 18 years when he should have gotten more.”

GUS
17.

ISAAC
I’m assuming you’ve got some time, you interrupting bastard! I mean seriously... (back to the speech) “Augustus Waters talked so much that he’d interrupt you at his own funeral. And he was pretentious. Sweet Jesus I never understood a word out of that kid’s mouth. I mean who talks like that?!

(CONTINUED)
Gus nods - that part is true.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
“But I will say this: when the scientists of the future show up at my house with robot eyes and they tell me to try them on, I will tell the scientists to piss off, because I don’t even want to see a world without Augustus Waters.”

Hazel smiles - but it’s one that triggers an immediate emotional waterfall.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
“And then, of course, having made my point, I will put my robot eyes on because, I mean... robot eyes!”

Gus has a big smile on his face.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
“So anyway, Augustus, my friend... Godspeed.”

Gus nods a couple times.

GUS
Thank you Isaac.

This causes Isaac to lose it. He clings to the lectern.

ISAAC
Goddamn it, Gus.

GUS
Hey don’t swear in the Literal Heart of Jesus.

ISAAC
Shit! Ass! Balls!

Isaac sighs. Wipes away the tears. And another beat passes.

ISAAC (CONT’D)
Can I get a hand here, Hazel?

Hazel remembers Isaac can’t see. She rises, goes up to get him, walks him back to her seat.

GUS
Hazel Grace, it’s down to you.

(CONTINUED)
Hazel takes a piece of paper from the envelope, walks up to the dais. She takes a beat to ready herself. And begins.

HAZEL
“Augustus Waters was the great star-crossed love of my life. Ours was an epic love story, and I won’t be able to get more than a sentence into it without disappearing into a puddle of tears.

(beat)
Like all real love stories - ours will die with us, as it should. I’d hoped that he’d be eulogizing me, because there’s no one I’d rather have...”

And that’s all she can get out before falling apart. She lets it out for a couple beats and then pulls herself together.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
(beat, composing herself)
“I can’t talk about our love story so instead I will talk about math. I am not a mathematician, but I know this: there are infinite numbers between 0 and 1. There’s .1 And .12 And .112 And an infinite collection of others. Of course, there is a bigger infinite set of numbers between 0 and 2, or between 0 and a million. Some infinities are bigger than other infinities. A writer we used to like taught us that. I want more numbers than I’m likely to get, and God, I want more numbers for Augustus Waters than he got. But, Gus, my love, I cannot tell you how thankful I am for our little infinity. You gave me a forever within the numbered days, and for that I am eternally grateful. I love you.”

Gus smiles, nods, and closes his eyes. CUT TO:

BLACK.

Over which we hear a RINGING TELEPHONE.

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hazel turns on the LIGHT by her bed. Her HOUSE PHONE is ringing and it’s 4am.

She knows instantly.
HAZEL (V.O.)
Augustus Waters died eight days later in the ICU...

Hazel’s head falls into her chest.

HAZEL (V.O.)
... when the cancer, which was made of him, stopped his heart, which was also made of him.

Her bedroom door opens. It’s Frannie and Michael. This only confirms her worst fears. She starts to cry. Her parents embrace her in the bed.

HAZEL (V.O.)
It was unbearable. The whole thing. Every second worse than the last.

EXT/INT. FRANNIE’S CAR / MALL PARKING LOT - RAINY DAY

The rain falls hard on Frannie’s car as Hazel sits in the driver’s seat. The loudest music she can possibly blare turned up to the max. She’s trying to drown out all the horrors of the world. Over which we hear this:

HAZEL (V.O.)
One of the first things they ask you in the ER is to rate your pain on a scale from 1 to 10. I’d been asked this question hundreds of times and I remember once...

INT. DOCTOR’S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Young Hazel sits with a NURSE in her hospital bed. She’s looking as ill as she feels. We hear:

HAZEL (V.O.)
...early on, when I couldn’t catch my breath and it felt like my chest was on fire, and the nurse asked me to rate the pain. Though I couldn’t speak, I held up 9 fingers.

Young Hazel weakly holds up both hands, but tucks her thumb in, holding up only 9 fingers.

HAZEL (V.O.)
And later, when I started feeling better, the nurse came in and she called me a fighter.
INT. FRANNIE’S CAR - RAINY DAY

BACK TO: Hazel in the car.

HAZEL (V.O.)
“You know how I know,” she said.
(beat)
“You called a ten a nine.”

The loud music isn’t protecting her as well as she hoped.

INT. HAZEL’S BEDROOM - ANOTHER MORNING

Hazel puts on her funeral dress. She looks in the mirror.

HAZEL (V.O.)
But that wasn’t the truth. I didn’t call it a nine cause I was brave. The reason I called it a nine was... I was saving my ten.

OMITTED

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Hazel sits with the gathered MOURNERS as Gus’s COFFIN is about to be lowered into the ground. Michael and Frannie by her side.

HAZEL (V.O.)
And this was it. The great and terrible ten.

GUS’S PARENTS sit in the front row, crying. Frannie is especially upset. Hazel sees this - her mother watching another mother bury a child. Hazel reaches out and takes Frannie’s hand. They hold on tight as a MINISTER stands to address the mourners.

MINISTER
Augustus Waters fought hard for many years. His battle was a courageous one and his strength was a source of inspiration for each and every one of us...

Hazel frowns. This is all such bullshit. And she hears:

MALE VOICE
What a load of shit, eh kid?

Hazel recognizes that voice. But it doesn’t make sense. She turns around and, sure enough, it’s Peter Van Houten.

(CONTINUED)
MINISTER
Let us pray.
Everyone clasps their hands, closes their eyes. Hazel keeps staring at Van Houten, too shocked to do a thing.

**VAN HOUTEN**

We need to fake pray now.

Van Houten bows his head. Hazel, still stunned, is trying to make sense of this unexpected appearance, when she hears:

**MINISTER**

And now we’ll hear from Gus’s... special friend Hazel Lancaster.

Hazel stands, walks up towards the casket. When she gets there, she removes a pack of Camel Lights, places it on the coffin where other mourners have left dirt and rocks.

She turns to face everyone.

**HAZEL**

I was his girlfriend.

Hazel clears her throat. Reaches into her pocket. Takes out her notes.

CU - the eulogy she already read. We see, in her handwriting, “Augustus Waters was the great star-crossed love of my life.”

BACK ON Hazel. She looks up. Sees Gus’s parents in the front. She looks back at her notes, one last time. Folds it up.

And instead, she says:

**HAZEL (CONT’D)**

There’s a beautiful quote in Gus’s home that reads “if you want the rainbow, you gotta deal with the rain.”

Hazel continues to speak but we over it, WE HEAR instead:

**HAZEL (V.O.)**

I didn’t believe a word, of course. But that was ok. I knew this was the right thing to do.

Gus’s Parents, arm in arm, nod along with every word.

**HAZEL (V.O.)**

Funerals – I’d decided – they’re not for the dead. They’re for the living.

Van Houten watches as well. It’s impossible to know what he’s thinking at this moment. And we CUT TO:
The worst of it over. Hazel hugs her parents goodbye.

FRANNIE
Are you sure you don’t want some company?

HAZEL
I just want to drive for a while.

Frannie nods. Hazel turns and walks through the parking lot towards the car. She gets in, turns the ignition.

Suddenly, a KNOCK on the window.

VAN HOUTEN
Can I hitch a ride with you?

INT. FRANNIE’S CAR

Hazel is about to say absolutely not. But before she gets a word out, Van Houten is already in the car. He shuts the door, whips out his flask, takes a swig. Hazel looks at him in disgust. A few beats of awkward silence passes. Until...

VAN HOUTEN
Omnis Cellula e cellula.

Hazel ignores him.

VAN HOUTEN (CONT’D)
Your boy Waters and I corresponded quite a bit in his last --

HAZEL
You read your fan mail now?

VAN HOUTEN
Oh I would hardly call him a fan. He despised me. But he was quite insistent I attend his funeral and tell you what became of Anna and her mother. So here I am and that’s your answer: omnis cellula e cellula.

(beat)
“Life comes from life.”

HAZEL
I am so not in the mood.

VAN HOUTEN
You don’t want an explanation?

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
Nope. Thanks though. Have a great life.

VAN HOUTEN
You remind me of her.

HAZEL
I remind a lot of people of a lot of people.

VAN HOUTEN
My daughter was eight. She suffered beautifully. For so long.

Hazel wasn’t expecting this.

HAZEL
She had leukemia? Like Anna?

VAN HOUTEN
Just like her, yes.

And now Hazel is beginning to understand Van Houten. Her attitude softens.

HAZEL
Were you married then?

VAN HOUTEN
Not when she died, no. I was insufferable long before Anna, my dear. Grief doesn’t change you... it reveals you.

Hazel takes that in.

HAZEL
Well I’m sorry for your loss.

VAN HOUTEN
And I’m sorry for yours. And for ruining your trip.

HAZEL
You didn’t ruin our trip. We had an awesome trip.

VAN HOUTEN
Are you familiar with the Trolley Problem?

(CONTINUED)
HAZEL
What?!

VAN HOUTEN
There’s a thought experiment in the field of ethics known as the “Trolley Problem.”

HAZEL
You’ve gotta be kidding me --

VAN HOUTEN
Phillipa Foot was a philosopher--

HAZEL
I don’t give a shit, Van Houten!

VAN HOUTEN
Hazel, I’m trying to explain something to you! I am trying to give you what you wanted--

HAZEL
What I want is for you to get out of my car so I can go home, by myself, and grieve for a while. Can you do that for me please?

Van Houten takes out a FOLDED PIECE OF PAPER. He holds it out to Hazel.

VAN HOUTEN
You’ll want to read this--

Hazel snatches the paper from his hand, crumples it up in a ball and throws it at him. It lands on the floor at his feet.

HAZEL
Get out of the car!

He does as he’s told, stepping out onto the street.

Hazel is about to drive off. But before she does, she takes one last look at the sad man by the side of the road.

Swallowing her anger, she rolls down her window.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Hey Van Houten...
(beat)
The sunshine agrees with you.
(beat)
You should get out more.
And with that, she drives away. In the rearview mirror, she sees him raise the FLASK, as if toasting her. Maybe, just maybe, he will try to change. Hazel blinks away some tears and drives on. CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Hazel sits on the floor against her bed and weeps. Soon there's a knock.

MICHAEL (O.S.)
Can I come in?

Hazel leans over and unlocks the door. Michael kneels down next to her, putting her head on his shoulder.

Hazel presses her face into his shirt and cries some more. Michael squeezes her tightly. And this time, he doesn’t cry.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
I’m so so sorry.
(beat)
It was a privilege to love him, though, wasn’t it?
Hazel nods into his shirt. Then looks up at her Dad.

MICHAEL (CONT’D)
Gives you an idea how we feel about you.

Michael smiles at Hazel. And he doesn’t cry. Hazel draws strength from him. We hear, from downstairs:

FRANIE (O.S.)
Hazel! There’s a friend here to see you.

Hazel looks up. CUT TO:

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Hazel and Isaac sit on the grass, near where the old swing set of tears used to be, talking.

ISAAC
Do you know if it hurt or whatever?

HAZEL
He was really fighting for breath, I guess. He eventually went unconscious, but it seems like, yeah, it wasn’t great or anything. Dying sucks.

ISAAC
(long beat)
It just seems so impossible.

HAZEL
Happens all the time.

ISAAC
Are you angry?

HAZEL
Very.

ISAAC
Me too.
(a few beats)
Gus really loved you, you know.

HAZEL
I know.

ISAAC
He wouldn’t shut up about it.

HAZEL
I know.

(CONTINUED)
ISAAC
It was annoying.

HAZEL
I didn’t find it that annoying.

They sit there in silence a few beats.

ISAAC
Did you read the note or whatever from your author friend?

HAZEL
He is not my friend and -- how do you know about that?

ISAAC
We talked at the cemetery. Said he came all this way to give you that.

HAZEL
Yeah well I’m over it. I never want to read another word of that asshole’s again.

ISAAC
Yeah but he didn’t write it - Gus did.

HAZEL
(stunned)
What?

ISAAC
That’s what he said. Gus had written something, sent it to Van Houten --

Hazel sits up. Her heart is racing.

HAZEL
Oh my god.

ISAAC
What?

INT/EXT. FRANNIE’S CAR - MAGIC HOUR

Hazel is inside the car, rummaging crazily through the trash in an effort to find what Van Houten gave her. She’s about to give up when she sees it - crumpled up into a ball beneath the passenger’s seat. She reaches under, pulls it up, and unwraps it. As she reads, WE HEAR:
Mr. Van Houten, I’m a good person but a shitty writer. You’re a shitty person but a good writer. We’d make a good team. I don’t want to ask you any favors but if you have the time, and from what I saw you have plenty, please fix this for me. It’s a eulogy for Hazel.

Hazel is overcome with emotion.

She asked me to write one and I’m trying, I just, I could use a little flair. See the thing is... we all want to be remembered.

She smiles to herself, remembering:

156 INT. CHURCH - FLASHBACK - DAY
That first time Gus and Hazel ran into each other.

157 INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - FLASHBACK - DAY
The staring contest in Support Group.

GUS’S VOICE
We all want to leave a mark.

158 INT. GUS’S CAR - FLASHBACK - DAY
Driving (badly) in Gus’s car.

159 EXT. PARK - FLASHBACK - DAY
The near kiss at the picnic by “Funky Bones.”

GUS’S VOICE
But not Hazel. Hazel is different. Hazel knows the truth. She didn’t want a million admirers, she just wanted one. And she got it. Maybe she wasn’t loved widely but she was loved deeply. And isn’t that more than most of us get?

160 INT. FRANNIE’S CAR - MAGIC HOUR
And BACK TO HAZEL reading the letter, tears in her eyes.

GUS’S VOICE
When Hazel was sick, I knew I was dying. But I didn’t want to say so.
Gus stealthily sneaks into Hazel’s single room in the ICU. She sleeps. He kneels by her side.

GUS’S VOICE
She was in ICU and I snuck in for ten minutes and sat with her before I got caught. Her eyes were closed, her lungs were intubated...

Gus takes her hand and holds it.

GUS’S VOICE (CONT’D)
... but her hands were still her hands, still warm, and the nails painted this dark blue black color and I just held her hands and I willed myself to imagine a world without us and what a worthless world that would be.

AND BACK TO HAZEL reading the letter. She never knew that story, never knew he was there. CUT TO:

Hazel walks out to the grass behind her house, the oxygen tank dragging behind her. She lays down on the grass and looks up at the stars - the same IMAGE that opened the movie.

GUS’S VOICE
She’s so beautiful. You don’t get tired of looking at her. You never worry if she’s smarter than you cause you know she is. She’s funny without ever being mean.

She remembers:

The magical dinner.

The romantic GONDOLA in which they sat overlooking the water.

The passionate kiss which we now see is happening in Anne Frank’s house.
INT. HOTEL ROOM - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

The two of them falling onto the bed together.

[All of these are images we saw at the beginning of the movie, only now, we SEE the oxygen tank, we SEE Gus’s leg, we SEE the fumbling and the difficulties etc. They don’t make these images less beautiful. They make them twice as beautiful - because they’re real.]

GUS’S VOICE
I love her, god I love her. I’m so lucky to love her, Van Houten. You don’t get to choose if you get hurt in this world but you do have a say in who hurts you.

EXT. HAZEL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

AND BACK ON Hazel in the grass. She holds the letter to her chest. A single tear falls onto her cheeks.

GUS’S VOICE
I like my choices. I hope she likes hers.

Hazel CLOSES HER EYES.

GUS’S VOICE (CONT’D)
Ok, Hazel Grace?

A beat. Another.

Hazel OPENS HER EYES. And she says to the universe:

HAZEL
Ok.

BLACK.