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By

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**How Jane Austen Fixed Everything: An Examination of a Television
Pilot From Idea to Second Draft.**

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Pilot From Idea to Second Draft.**

By

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Report

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Abstract

**How Jane Austen Fixed Everything: An Examination of a Television Pilot From Idea to
Second Draft.**

By

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2014

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This report covers the development of the pilot episode and show bible of *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. It covers the moment the writer conceived of the idea to the completion of the second draft and finally the planning of the third draft. Furthermore, this report will cover the writer's growth, detailing the two years spent at the University of Texas and how that time molded her into the writer she is today.

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Chapter One: First Impressions

When I first thought of a career as a screenwriter television never crossed my mind. Though I have always watched a large amount of television, I never envisioned writing a character for five or more seasons, 22 episodes a season. I wasn't able to comprehend how to extend a character's journey beyond a two-hour movie. The characters that I created seemed to complete their journey within the 90 to 120 minute time frame.

Before entering the program I had written one feature length script, a coming of age drama/comedy revolving around a seventeen-year-old girl. It dealt with preconceived expectations, those of the main character and the expectations people had of her, and how teenagers react when reality does not mesh with their expectations. The next script I wrote was a drama. It was another coming of age story revolving around a seventeen-year-old girl. This story dealt with the main character's search for acceptance within her family, most importantly acceptance from her father. I quickly realized that these were the types of stories I was drawn to. I had always loved going to the movies but my favorite films, the ones I watched over and over, were coming of age stories. Stories where the main character is trying to figure out life and all the problems that come with it. It was something I related to during my teenage years and also when I began writing.

I was more than halfway through my Bachelors in History when I took my first screenwriting course. I felt a connection to these characters I was watching in films. I was beginning to feel like I didn't know what I was doing with my life; the passion for my degree was quickly fading. Those characters I loved, well they didn't know what they were doing either. I felt a camaraderie with characters like Olive from *Easy A* and Kat Stratford from *10*

Things I Hate About You (feeling a connection to a fictional character will come into play later).

The degree I had been working on for four years no longer felt like it was the right choice. I was felt lost and unsure of the choices I had made at the beginning of my college career. It was after that first screenwriting course that things began to fall into place. There was a spark in me that I had not felt in years. Since I was a child I have dreamed of a life in film, but I never had the courage to follow through on that dream.

In that first screenwriting class I found that courage. It was almost like the inciting incident of a movie. That's what that class was for me. Every original concept I have written has been some form of a coming of age story. It's a story that I know well and a story that can be told a million different ways. My thesis, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*, is a coming of age story. It tells that story in a different way from the others I have written.

As I stated earlier I never considered writing for television. It was a form of writing I was unable to fully grasp, especially when I began to develop, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. However, over the course of my first year in the program and the years spent developing this idea, I would find that I might know more about television writing than I thought. This report will cover how where the inspiration for *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* came from, the various incarnations it went through, both the first and second draft, and most importantly how this project and the program shaped me as a writer.

Chapter Two: Lost In Austen

This idea began with the title. It was something I said off handily to my roommate during our sophomore year of college. During our spring semester we had developed a tradition of watching Jane Austen movies on the weekends. This usually occurred after a disastrous night of partying where the guys in our lives gave us headaches beyond repair. There was one particular night, when we were watching *Pride and Prejudice* (2005). It was the end of the movie, when Darcy and Elizabeth came together. After Darcy's speech, I turned to my roommate and simply said, "She's ruined us. Jane Austen has literally ruined us."

We both shared a laugh and continued to watch the movie, eventually falling asleep on our couch. When I woke up the next morning, what I had said stuck with me. I filed it away, not really knowing what to do with the line; screenwriting wasn't even an idea in my head at that time. I told the story to my mother and a few other friends. They agreed with the sentiment. Jane Austen had ruined all of us. Though, I still had no idea what I would use that line for.

I would begin to figure it out a year later. That little thing I uttered began to take shape into something. I was in the middle of my first screenwriting class. It was an elective, having no impact on my degree. The full title popped into my head, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. In my screenwriting class I found a reason for what I had filed away in my head the year before, though at the time there was no plot, no characters, no setting, just a title.

As a writer I have always taken characters, setting, and plot from own life and put them in my scripts. My first script was set in Atlanta, the town I grew up in. The second script I wrote was almost entirely pulled from my real life. So much so that many of the names were not changed. When I begin crafting characters I have the tendency to base them on the people in my

life. Every set of parents I write ends up looking like my own. There is a little bit of myself in every main character I write. When I began to move past the title and started creating the story world, I inevitably fell back on my laurels. I knew from the moment I started plotting things out how *Jane Austen Ruined My Life* would be based in Atlanta. It is a city I know like the back of my hand. For me there has to be an element of authenticity in the script. As if the writer knows exactly what they are talking about and if anyone tried to argue they would not even stand a chance. There was also the fact that I thought up the title while living in that city. It just seemed fitting.

The characters came next and like before I drew on the people around me. The three main girls, Rose, Lucy, and Julie (though at this moment unnamed), would be based on girls I knew my sophomore year of college. Rose is based on my closest friend that year, my roommate who I watched Jane Austen films with every Saturday night. Truthfully, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* would not exist without her. She was my rock, who took care of me and made sure I didn't do anything stupid. However, she was just as big a mess when it came to boys as the rest of us. She jumped into relationships, never looking, going full force, only to have it backfire in the craziest way.

Originally the character of Lucy was going to be based on one of my oldest childhood friends. We reconnected when I moved to Atlanta and adding her into the story came more from wanting to use her experiences, not so much her character. She had told me a story about a guy friend that was being extremely nice to her. There was one night when he called, asking her how her day went. Naturally, it had been terrible; so he made her a steak dinner and cracked open a nice bottle of wine. She insisted they were just friends. I said she missed out on the Holy Grail,

what we are all searching for. He was her Mr. Darcy and she just passed him by. Her story and my reaction sparked something in my head. At the start of this idea there wasn't a ton of Jane Austen in *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*, other than the title. She was just a reference, nothing more. When I decided to add in my friends' story, I began to think Jane Austen should have a larger impact in the story.

The final roommate was based on another close friend. I had spent the year watching her go from guy to guy, completely unhappy with each, but never apologizing for acting...well like a guy. I admired her ability to brush them off and set them aside for the next one. There was a part of me that felt bad for her. I could she see wanted what the rest of us did, she just never seemed to pick the right guy. Those that were right, well they either had other girlfriends or liked other people. Her experiences reminded me of *Emma* and I began to piece her story together. She would be the girl who falls in love with a guy only to match him up with her best friend, who of course doesn't want him.

More than a year after I began to develop this idea, it felt like things were beginning to fall into place. Except for one thing. My main character. I had no idea who she was or even who I wanted her to be. I spent so much time focusing on my supporting characters that I forgot all about my protagonist. So I did what I always did. She would be based on me and follow all the pitfalls I had my sophomore year. She would fall for her study partner and have it explode in her face. I hadn't figured out her Jane Austen story, which was due to the fact that I had yet to figure out my own.

Looking back I see that my ideas revolved around what I was going through at the time, trying to figure out what I wanted in life and who I was, while being unlucky in love at every

turn. As I've stated writing based around my own personal experiences has become a tendency of mine, though as I have grown as a writer I've learned to separate my life more from characters, so neither mirror each other so closely. At the beginning of *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* I had yet to learn that. I wanted everything to be as close to the truth as possible, thinking that was how I would get the best story. *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* is not the script that taught me how to separate myself from the story. That was a harder process and a harder script. It made me question every choice I made and my skill as a writer. Though, without that lesson, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* would not exist.

Chapter Three: Welcome to Sanditon

The summer before I began the graduate screenwriting program at The University of Texas I decided to begin writing the script I would complete my first year. It was my plan to outline *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* and write the first thirty to sixty pages. I would write them out by hand, as that had become a habit of mind (examples will be provided in the appendices).

As I began to map out the script I started to have some trouble. I knew where the feature should begin and end but I wasn't sure how to get there, how everything was connected. I kept getting stuck. I couldn't finish the outline. I struggled for half the summer, writing and rewriting, coming up with new ideas.

At first the narrative would be compromised of vignettes, much like *Love Actually*. Each girl getting their own section of the film that told their story and then those sections broken up and pieced together to make one story. In writing this version I never made it past a bulleted list of an outline. There always seemed to be something missing; in this version there didn't seem to be any connection between the roommates. The girls felt isolated from each other and were not becoming the best friends that college roommates always become. The way in which the story was being told was hindering the characters and stalling the character development. I had to make a change.

The way in which the story would be told changed to a more traditional narrative. One of the roommates would be the engine of the story, while the rest carried on their own plots. This was meant to be the fix to everything. It would begin with moving into the dorms and then finish, as the girls were moving out, going their separate directions. It was similar to what

happened to me at the end of my sophomore year. I went my separate way from my roommate and my friends. Something just kept feeling off about the script. Even with a traditional plot the characters didn't seem connected. That's when I decided to put the script aside.

When a story is not working for me I find myself unable to write. It's as if I hit a brick wall and there is no rope to help me climb over it. That's how I felt with *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. I shoved the ideas away, putting them in a draw and began to map out another script. *Human Wreckage* would become *Atrium*, the script I focused on for the first year in the year in the program. It is the script that taught me how to separate the reality of what happened and the story of the script. It is the most valuable lesson I learned in the program. I learned it through writing *Atrium*. The process of writing that script tore me apart, but *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* would never be created without it.

Atrium, in all of its forms, is a script that is very close to my heart. It was based on an extremely personal experience, the weekend my grandfather died. When I began writing the script I was very concerned with making sure it was true to what actually happened. I wanted the story to follow the events of that weekend, because I felt that is how I would get an honest script. However, when the script was workshopped I began to notice a different reaction from my classmates. They weren't seeing the script the way I had. The main character was unlikeable, there wasn't a clear goal, and the main character's motivation was unclear. Why was she so sad and angry? Why was there an animosity between her and the bulk of her family? For me these questions had answers. The answers, though, were not coming across in the script. Through workshop I quickly found that while I loved my main character, my classmates were not particularly fond of her. It was a difficult reality to deal with. I was my main character and

because of that it felt as if my classmates did not like me. To say it was a shock would be an understatement. It was a shot to the gut. I began to dread workshop every week, knowing I was going to hear what I had heard the week before. I began to question everything. Was I a horrible person when I was seventeen? I loved the story but I began to see there were problems, problems I had no idea how to fix.

The way to fix *Atrium* occurred during a very innocuous meeting. During the The Austin Film Festival we are able to pitch to industry professionals. I pitched *Atrium* to the creator of The Black List, Franklin Leonard. He liked the script but gave me a piece of advice that I'm sure my classmates had given me, but I had not sunk in. He advised me to take a step back. It was too personally and I was writing the script more for myself and not my audience. He finished by telling me to think of the sixteen year old girl who is feeling the same way I felt when I was seventeen, what would I want to tell her to help her get through this time? In that moment everything clicked. Telling a story exactly how it happened was not going to give my audience an honest story. I took the advice and began to think of what I needed to hear when I was sixteen, what I wish someone had told me. *Atrium* began to change. I pushed forward with the outline I had, but I knew in the next semester *Atrium* would be going through an overhaul.

At same time, after two months in a drawer, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* began to creep back into my head. I knew there would be drastic changes, as the lesson I had learned taught me to let go of the reality of what happened and embrace my imagination as a writer. I contacted a friend of mine and asked her to build me a playlist for *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. I wanted something filled with college age music. Songs the characters would listen to, dance to, and songs that could fit with finding your first love and them breaking your heart. I

explained to her the plot and less than a month later I had fifty songs waiting to be listened to. Often writing a scene begins with a song. What a character would be listening to or what should play over the stillness of that moment, just further builds the story world for me. As I finished the first draft of *Atrium* I listened to nothing but that playlist. As I did the characters began to take further shape. However, it was still a feature film.

How Jane Austen Ruined My Life would not have become a television show without my first spring semester in the program. I had learned the lesson of breaking away from the actuality of what inspired the story, but there was one more thing I had to learn, a love of writing for television. I learned that in the television writing class with Cindy McCreery. That semester, as a class, we wrote a thirteen-episode season of a show. We did so with the hopes to pitch and sell the show during the summer. It was experience that I may not have been ready for but I jumped into with excitement. I had never written an hour show or characters that were not my own. That class was a test. A test I found myself enjoying. I began to see how a character could live beyond two hours, how season arcs work, how episodes work. It was a crash course in television and by the end of it I started to change my mind. Maybe this television thing was not just a bad idea after all.

At the same time I was rewriting *Atrium*. Stepping away and taking a looser approach to the story was working. The animosity toward the main character was gone as more of her backstory was revealed. I took different approaches to the secondary characters, which increased my classmate's connection to the story and the main character. There was now an engine in the script. It was simple, finding a storybook, but it captured the sentiment of the story. Things were beginning to come together.

Throughout my first year at the University of Texas, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* was never far from my mind. In moments of down time I thought back to it, jotted down notes, came up with character quirks. However, the plot always evaded me. Without my first and the experiences I had, *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* would never have been created. I had to write a different story, get a thick skin, learn how to separate the script from reality, and also learn to love writing for television. The summer between my first and second year, I applied those lessons and Jane began to take shape.

Chapter Four: Persuasion

With my first year under my belt, at the beginning of the summer I already knew the script I was going to tackle in the fall. It was going to be *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. I decided to spend the summer outlining the movie, writing character biographies, and figuring out the feature script as best I could. Yes at that time it was still a feature. It would remain a feature until a few weeks before the fall semester began.

My goals for the summer were clear and I had every intention of accomplishing them. Best laid plans and summer vacations tend to not mix. I had a difficult time motivating myself to write. My habits of writing everyday began to slip in favor of my Netflix account. It was summer, I didn't have any responsibilities and I took advantage of that. One thing that I did begin to notice half way through the summer was the amount of television I was beginning to watch. As I've stated I've always been a "television junkie." However, I spent that summer watching every television show I could get my hands on. All of this was thanks to Netflix. I caught up on shows I fall behind on during the school year and binged new shows I discovered in random searches.

It can be easy to see watching television as a waste of time. That's what we are all told as children. Watching too much television will rot your brain. You should be outside playing, experiencing life, etc. However, when your career is based in the film industry, watching television is not a waste of time. In a strange way it is a part of my job. I have to be aware of what is working, what people are watching, and the type of shows each network makes. In a way it is a form of research, although for me it is a highly enjoyable form.

As I watched all of those shows that summer, things began to click for me. I spent more time working on the character biographies than anything else. The girls were becoming more and more detailed and it was becoming clear that a feature wouldn't be enough time to do these characters justice. It was a conversation with my mother that I finally said that a feature might not work for this idea. I told her about all the characters and my fear that they would only receive a small story in a feature. For all the work I had done it just didn't seem fair. I finally said maybe this isn't a feature; maybe this is a television show. The moment I said that, everything began to click. Well everything except for the main character. I knew what Jane Austen character she was based on (Fanny Price from Mansfield Park) but I couldn't figure out how to translate that character into the world of *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*.

I had the characters name before anything else. Audrey Price would be the main character, our entrance into this world, our Jane Austen fanatic. I just had no idea who she was in this world. I had written all of the other character biographies, Rose Dashwood (based on Marianne Dashwood from Sense and Sensibility), Lucy Bennett (based on Elizabeth Bennett from Pride and Prejudice), and Julie Woodhouse (based on Emma from Emma). Audrey was the character giving me the most trouble. I would finally figure her out thanks to my Netflix account.

It was late one July night. I found myself unable to sleep and began searching through my Netflix account. I ran across a BBC production of *Mansfield Park*. Ten minutes into the film and I was scrambling for pen and paper. Inspiration struck and I finally began to figure out who Audrey Price was. There was something that Audrey was missing that Fanny had. Audrey didn't have an Edmund (the love interest in Mansfield Park). That night I finished Audrey's

biography and began crafting Andrew her best friend. At the time he was meant to be the Edmund to her Fanny. He would not stay that way for long.

My decision to turn *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* into a television show came at the same time that I had begun watching the Judd Apatow show *Undeclared*. Though the amount of comedy and themes of my show would be drastically different from *Undeclared* it seemed like a good model to follow. I had also just caught up on the show *New Girl*; again the character ages were different and there was a good deal more comedy, but there was a similar premise, living with people you do not know at all. Two weeks before classes were due to start for fall, I did a rough outline of the pilot episode. It would take place of the first night of college, Audrey not fitting in, seeing her best friend and love of her life make out with another girl, and then getting drunk. I was confident it was going to work. I was, for the first time, confident in this story. I would soon discover though, that what had plotted out wasn't going to work. However, it never once shook the confidence I had in the story as a whole. That was cemented the minute I turned *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* into a show.

Chapter Five: Becoming Jane

In my first class with Professor Lewis I pitched *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*.

Everything seemed fine, no one had any big complaints or worries and I with that I went off to write the outline. A few short weeks can change everything. In my outline I mapped out the world of the story, gave in-depth character biographies, and broke down the teaser, two acts, and tag of the half hour pilot. During workshop, my classmates praised the work I had done to build this world. It felt “lived in” and the characters were incredibly flushed out. However, there were two problems, the first being that this show did not feel like half an hour. There was no big issue set up in the pilot, nothing that could carry a season. I bristled at the comment. I thought back to the shows that inspired me. Did anything major happen in those shows that didn’t happen in mine? I couldn’t think of anything. I took the comment in stride though and continued with workshop.

The second problem hit a bit closer to home. It seemed that even in the outline I was failing to deliver on the promise of the premise. While I could see Jane Austen in every scene, my classmates could not. We brainstormed during my workshop time on how to bring Jane in just a bit more. No concrete ideas were given and most of what people said was made she was not needed. It was then I spoke up. I had been grappling with an idea. It seemed just a bit too crazy. So crazy in fact that I had not shared the idea with anyone, but I decided to test it out on my classmates. What if I brought Jane Austen into the show? A character that breaks the fourth wall and talks to the audience, quoting herself. A bit like Frank Underwood just with charm and understanding instead of power hungry malice. No one really said anything for a moment and I began to rethink my crazy idea. That is until Professor Lewis nodded, and took my crazy idea a

step further. Jane should engage with the girls and offer them advice. I offered up the idea that maybe the girls don't know they're even talking to Jane, that she looks just like another teacher to them. Another positive response from my professor and Jane Austen was suddenly a concrete character in my script.

What had started out as a workshop that would change everything about my script became one that strengthened my idea. Yes the show changed from half hour to an hour and I added in an extra character, but the basics of the show never changed. It was only getting stronger. I remember talking to my mother after that workshop, telling her the new elements I was adding in. It seemed to be all I could talk about and truthfully all I wanted to do was sit down and write the next outline. I had never been so excited to write a script.

As I wrote the next outline, changing the movement of the story to fit a teaser and four acts, the time frame of the pilot expanded, it would include the first week of classes. When it came for that to be work shopped it was obvious that the story was benefitting from an expanded time but the stakes seemed low. I knew that was going to be the case going into workshop. I felt lost on how to fill two acts and I was not above using the talent of my classmates for help. That's what workshop is for after all, right? It was there that the pilot really began to flesh itself out. Audrey, a type A would get kicked out of her dorm. Her original roommates not okay with having a dorky, studious type living with them. It would be the start of a horrible first week of college for the poor girl. She would find herself among roommates she didn't know, people she didn't plan to know. They would be Rose, Lucy, and Julie.

Audrey shares a room with Rose and upon getting there Audrey finds that Rose has already decked the room out. Lucy and Julie share a room on the other side of the dorm, but

Lucy's drum set made it clear that peace and quiet would not be a part of Audrey's future. Julie would be a party girl, a lifestyle Audrey was not used to. The whole point of the roommates being as they were was to take Audrey as far out of her element as possible and then send her running into the arms of her best friend Andrew. The guy she was also completely in love with.

Act II of the Pilot would end with Andrew and Audrey sleeping together. Yes Audrey would lose her virginity in first night in college. At first, thinking life is like a Jane Austen novel, Audrey believes that Andrew is her Mr. Darcy, however over the course of Act III she finds out he isn't. He stands her up for movie night, ignores her during the first week of classes, and at the same time there's another girl in the picture. The girl would be Audrey's former roommate, Megan. At the end of Act III Audrey figures this out, thanks to Julie's easing dropping skills. Resolved that college isn't what she thought, Audrey's going home. However, There's a catch. There's no home for Audrey to go to. Her parents sold the house and bought a Winnebago. Audrey's stuck in this world and can't get out.

In Act IV, Rose, Julie, and Lucy, would set about cheering Audrey up, which would result in Audrey's first frat party. Cue the makeover scene and Lucy begrudgingly going along. The girls take Audrey to a party where of course she gets far too drunk and confronts Andrew. The night would end with the girls coming together, taking a depressed Audrey home. While she may have lost the guy, at the end of it all Audrey was beginning to find a family.

Throughout the episode Jane Austen would pop up, offering advice and breaking the fourth wall. She'd appear to each girl, though they would have no idea it was her. We would also follow the other girls through episode. Rose would begin to fall for her TA after he covered for her on her first day of class. Lucy would begin to deal with that fact that her sister wanted

her to pledge a sorority (something very un-Lucy) and Julie would be more concerned with swim practice and impressing her father/coach than classes.

With that set in place I went off to write and sixty page pilot. I knew where each character was going and how the story was going to play out. I began to jot down makeshift scenes in a journal before every writing them up in Final Draft. My fingers itched to spend most of my time writing and I soon found out that might not be a good thing.

I planned for each act to hit between ten to fifteen pages. When my teaser hit ten I started to have a feeling I might be in trouble. I paid it no mind though and continued writing. During workshop my classmates offered advice on how to cut the length down which I gladly and gratefully took. I never looked back, though. As a writer I am not the type to backtrack. I prefer to get a finished draft out then look at what should change. If I go back then I will never finish the draft and continue working, perfecting something that I can save for a later draft.

When I finished Act I, I hit the twenty-seven-page marker. I was starting to realize my biggest problem was going to be my page count. Instead of hitting my ten to fifteen page limits, I went over. Each act was closer to twenty pages. I tried to limit myself but it was useless. I found that I had too much fun writing these characters. The scenes flowed through my fingers with ease and I could write 5 pages in just an hour. I had never experience that before, usually only able to get out two to three pages a day before I get fatigued. I never felt writing fatigue during my first draft. If I had down time I was writing scenes out in my journal. Thursday nights after a full day of classes and a night of teaching I would spend another two hours writing. I could not stop. All four girls had a full flushed out story and I had an eighty-page pilot.

I knew I would need to address that in the second draft. By the time I hit page forty and realized I had just started Act III I was well aware what my main concern for my second draft would be. That was not the only problem though. The stakes still needed to be higher. Audrey hearing over the phone that her parents sold that house was not as strong as seeing it in person. Her former roommates could be meaner. Her current ones didn't seem as bad as Audrey thought. There were also character problems. While some of my classmates liked Audrey as she was, some viewed her as a wet blanket, and others saw her as a whiner (though that I attribute to the fact that the stakes/horribleness of everyone around her wasn't coming across as badly as I perceived it). Andrew was also coming across as a villain, not Audrey's best friend. His character needed to change. More specifically his reaction to having sex with Audrey needed to change.

Halfway through the fall semester I knew *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* was going to be my thesis. I also knew I was in for a major rewrite. As the fall semester drew to a close I found myself wishing for the summer to start. All I wanted to do was get back to this story. Though changes were needed (and not little changes, massive ones) I was dying to dive back in this world and never leave.

Chapter Six: Miss Austen Regrets

During the spring semester I returned back to features. In our first class I pitched a few ideas, two of which were television shows. While I like both of those ideas, the worlds did not feel lived in. They were nowhere near as flushed out as *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. I did not know the characters or the world so I put those ideas on the back burner, allowing them time to develop and sit in the back of my mind, much like I had done with *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. My other reason was a fear of leaving graduate school with just one feature and two television shows of original material. I was very concerned with making sure I had a variety of writing samples to work with. So at the end of the day I went with the feature.

Over the course of my last semester at the University of Texas I realized something. As a writer I cannot rush a project. The feature I worked on was a post World War II story of epic proportions. Unlike most of the story ideas I have had this was in my head for less than a year. That should have tipped me off that there may be problems. I like to live with a story for a long period of time before I begin writing it. *Atrium* was a story I began thinking about when I was nineteen years old. It did not become a feature script until I was twenty-four. *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* became a story much in the same way. The spark hit me when I was twenty and the story finally making it to final draft when I was twenty-five.

I know that seems like a ludicrous time frame. Letting an idea percolate in my head for five years may seem like a lot of wasted time. However, I must point out that they're not the only story ideas I have planned. I don't focus on one at a time but multiple. However, what I wrote from my spring semester was not one of those ideas.

I began thinking about the idea that would become *Keep the Earth* during the summer between my first and second year. I toyed with writing it during the fall, but Jane Austen was on my mind and my focus remained clearly on her. *Keep The Earth* would be the final script I wrote while living in Austin, Texas. At the time I had no idea it would be the hardest.

Keep The Earth is a work of historical fiction, based loosely on my own family history. I had the beginning of the script mapped out and I walked into class that first week of the semester with no idea how the film would end. That was a new feeling for me. I always had my beginning and ending. When I began writing the outline and then pages I hoped that the ending would come to me. An ending did; however, it is not one that I plan on sticking with. The script was an ambitious one, a bigger story than any I had even attempted. At the end of the day I may have been a little in over my head. It was a story that I had to get out and move on from. It was a messy first draft and I began to realize that the amount of planning I go through with my scripts allow me to write first drafts that are not as chaotic. Within those there is a clear move from beginning to end (though it may take me twenty extra pages to get there). That class gave me more insight in to my process than any other class I've had. I know now I can't go into a script without the ending.

Another problem while I was writing *Keep The Earth* was the fact that I was not fully in the script. My mind was elsewhere. I was itching to get back to *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. My time away from that script, though, made me realize one thing. It was the most fun I had ever had writing. I did not write anything for that script during my final semester. I put my notebooks away and kept the folder hidden on my desktop. I knew if I opened it that would become my focus. I would only talk about my plans for the next draft with those close to me.

What I would do with characters and the plot. The closer I got to the end of the semester the more I talked. I was dying to get back to it and I was beyond excited when *Keep The Earth* was finished and I could once again get back to the script I never really left.

Chapter Seven: Austenland

Before my final semester even started I already had my thesis committee picked out. Having written *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* in Professor Richard Lewis' class I knew that I wanted him to supervise this project. He had a familiarity with the story that I knew would be necessary in completing the next draft. There was more than that though. During class I always found Professor Lewis notes most helpful. It was as if he knew what I was trying to accomplish with the script before I did. It was a guidance I knew I would need going through this process. For my reader I knew I would ask Professor Cindy McCreery. From when I began in the program, I believed that Professor McCreery always understood my voice and style as a writer. I knew she also had written scripts inspired by Jane Austen characters and could make sure my script was as "Austen-y" as possible. I saw an advantage in having a committee member who knew a lot of Austen and one that did not. It was my hope that I would be able to find a middle ground, so that viewers who love Austen would connect to the show and viewers who knew nothing of Austen would not feel isolated.

After meeting with my committee and hearing their notes, I knew I was in for a substantial rewrite. The biggest problem was the length. My eighty-page pilot needed to be cut down by twenty to twenty-five pages. However, that was not the focus of our meeting. The focus instead was on Audrey, my main character. In the first draft I resisted making Audrey similar to Elizabeth Bennett. I cannot tell you why I resisted this. All I know is that when I began writing it seemed like a good idea. Professor McCreery brought up that Audrey's character should be closer to Elizabeth Bennett. That is the character Austen fans love the most and non-Austen fans at least know of. Basing Audrey on Fanny Price, a character from a lesser-

known book, was beginning to look like a missed opportunity. Teenage girls everywhere connect with Elizabeth Bennett, while Fanny Price may not be on their radar. The next thing to change became Audrey. In my upcoming draft she would have more sass and be less of a wet blanket.

In the discussion we decided there should be other character changes too. Julie and Lucy were far too much alike. There were problems with Andrew. The actions he took in the first draft, having sex with his best friend then dating another girl just few days later, were difficult to redeem. Actually they were impossible in the first draft. Audrey would initiate things more and Andrew would not realize how the events of the first night affected his best friend.

The aspect of nerdy-ness and the idea of fitting would be pushed to the forefront of the pilot. It was there in the background of my first draft, but just in the background. Audrey would become a bigger nerd and Andrew would be one as well. However, at the start of college Andrew would go through a transformation. He would move from being a nerd to being, for lack of a better word, cool. As in the first draft Audrey would try and get into a popular dorm only to be kicked out. This time, however, when she moved to her new dorm it is clear this is where the nerds were, the outcasts, the weird kids that didn't fit in. That's who Audrey's roommates would be and that's what she would fight against being a part of in the pilot. At the end of the pilot those would be the girls that would take care of her and make her feel better when everything went wrong.

We decided there needed to be a clearer, driving force in the episode. Audrey needed a goal. That goal would be simple, it was the first weekend of college and she was going to have the best weekend of her life. Instead she would have the worst and then wish to leave school. In

leaving school she would discover that her parents sold their house and bought a Winnebago. She had nowhere else to go and was stuck at the school that ruined everything. At the end of the episode she would return to school. She would return to the roommates she shunned that weekend (because they were too much like her), only to find that they were happy to have her home. They were there to take care of her. The four girls are what will push the show forward, I felt very strongly that the pilot must end with them coming together like a family. I was lucky my committee felt the same.

At the end of the meeting we discussed what I would turn in for the thesis project. I felt very strongly about having a show bible. The one I had, I believed was not strong enough. It had information on the world and the four main characters, but it was a bit chaotic. The bulk of my original bible was more concerned with mapping out the pilot. With all of the character changes I knew I would need to drastically change my show bible. That would be the first thing I would focus on.

I began writing the bible the weekend after our meeting, while I was flying to Los Angeles. Apart from writing my thesis, my summer would consist of an internship at the company Pilar/Segan/Shepard. I would be moving at the beginning of June and begin my internship two weeks into that month. I knew my summer was going to be hectic, but I didn't want to rush my rewrite. I would work on the bible as I moved as well as the new outline. Once getting settled I planned to begin writing my second draft of the pilot.

When I began my bible I knew I would have to start over when it came to the bulk of my characters. Audrey could not stay a wet blanket and there had to be some difference between Julie and Lucy. The original character biographies I had created the summer before would be

picked apart. I would use bits and pieces but not the entire piece. I tackled Audrey first. In making her more like Elizabeth Bennett I found her character becoming more like myself. When I began this project Lucy was the character I based on myself. I was the girl that brought a drum set to college and was sarcastic and negative about everything. However, in my first draft there was a clear disconnect between Audrey and me. The more I changed her back-story to mirror things I had gone through the more I opened up to the character. Audrey became a writer who had no faith in her ability. As you will read in the next chapter I had just gone through something similar. As I wrote, Audrey was becoming me and already the draft was becoming stronger.

I worked through the rest of the character biographies. I noticed in my first draft I fell into a trap I know all too well. I based the characters far too close to the people they were based on. The character of Rose was especially guilty of this. I spent the next few weeks finding ways to separate these characters from who they were based. Rose's story was pulled directly from my college roommate, so instead I paired the backstory with that of my grandmother. Instead of Rose's father taking off in the middle of the night, he would be a Police Officer who died when she was very young. All of the girls had a father who seemed to let them down and adding another felt like playing on the same trope. Julie would no longer simply be just a party girl, but a closeted artist. She would find acceptance in art as well as passion, though that would not come from her family. Lucy would be searching for approval. In the first draft her parents gave her buckets of approval. In the new draft they would be absent and she would be searching for ways to draw them out.

Each character would get pumped up with a bit of “nerdy-ness” that was not present in the first draft. Only one would have their nerdy-ness pushed to the background. That would be Andrew. He would become a closeted nerd, coming into his own in the summer between college and high school. He would become what Audrey wanted to become, a cool kid. He would push his nerdy-ness aside and that would be something Audrey could hold over his head.

Whether it was because I enjoyed writing the bible too much or I did not realize how chaotic moving half way across the country would be, I quickly realized I was falling behind. I knew I needed to start my rewrite before I finished the bible. During our meeting we figured out what the act breaks for the episode should be. From that I began outlining the scenes in each act. I did so by hand. Because my first draft was eighty pages I knew I had to be careful in writing the second. Audrey had to be the main focus of the rewrite, giving each girl a story was not an option. As I outlined I began to notice that I might have some issues with the act breaks. Act I began to look too short, while Acts II and III looked as though they would be far too long. I prepared myself to reevaluate when I began writing pages.

Halfway through June, right after I began my internship, I started writing. I came up with a game plan. I would tackle an act a week. I looked over my calendars making sure I had enough time to really give this rewrite the dedication I wanted. I am not the type of writer that can rush out a draft in a few days. I like to take my time writing and if I can I make sure I afford myself that opportunity.

The Teaser and Act I would not differ greatly from the first draft. It would be more about layering in details, showing the difference between the cool dorm and the nerd dorm, and taking out things that did not concern Audrey, moments that didn't include her or follow the plot

closely. When I reached the proposed end of Act I, I noticed a problem. It was too short. The original end was Audrey meeting her new, nerdy, roommates. I extended a few scenes past the original outline. I ended act I with Audrey's parents leaving the school, discussing something they felt Audrey was not ready to know. Ending the act in this way felt more natural, I also believed it would be a stronger complement to the end of Act III when the viewer discovers what Audrey's parents were talking about.

Act II gave me the most trouble. I was stumped with writing Andrew and Audrey's drunken sex scene. I sat staring at the blank page for hours and to be honest it put me in a slight writing funk. This combined with changing the end of Act I made me begin to doubt my plan for the rewrite. For a few days I set the script aside, going back to the bible. I worked on character bios, season arcs, and planned out feature episodes. A few days break did not help to shed any light on my problems. I decided to just move forward. I would come back to the scene, hoping that the push forward would give me some inspiration. It worked. I finished the act and returned to the scene that had caused me so many problems. Suddenly it wasn't causing me any problems.

In fact the rest of the episode stopped causing me problems. I held onto my plan of one act a week, until I realized I was writing Act IV in the same week I had written Act III. Much like in the first draft I was enjoying writing. I was typing out five to seven pages a night, enjoying writing in a way that I had not since the fall semester. That just so happened to be the last time I wrote *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*. I finished my rewrite a week ahead of schedule and honestly I was a little sad to be done. I loved writing in this world and writing these characters. For next week I looked over the bible, adding in things, perfecting characters,

proofing everything I could. I have never felt as confident in anything I've written as I do in this script. However, I know it could be better.

Chapter Eight: Emma Approved

It would be foolish to think that after two drafts *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* is perfect. I am well aware there is still work to be done and I have already begun planning how to tackle my next draft. As I have stated throughout this report, writing *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*, is the most fun I have ever had as a writer. I am not ready to leave the characters or the world of this story.

Halfway through rewriting the pilot I began to think of what I would change in the next draft. I was already thinking of ways to further increase Jane Austen's presence within the pilot but as a character and thematically. However, I realize it is a very fine line to walk. Too much Jane Austen could isolate viewers and too little would not deliver on the promise of the premise. I have also looked at Jane Austen's books being more concerned with the relationships women have with each other. Yes there is a romantic aspect to each novel, but in reading the novels and watching the film adaptations I believe what drives these stories are the friendships between the female characters. In the next draft I want to continue building the foundation of the relationships between Audrey, Rose, Julie, and Lucy. I know that things will be harder for Audrey in adjusting to her new roommates. Her new roommates would be a bit more overbearing. She will ditch them on the first night in the dorm, wanting to have a classic, cliché college experience, instead of Rose's slumber party idea.

Getting kicked out of her dorm will also be harder on Audrey than it is at the moment. Caroline (the villain of the story), will not be the only voice against her. The other three roommates will have their own personalities. At the moment they are slightly in the background. They will move forward in the next draft. Audrey will also face getting kicked out alone. Right

now her parents are with her. She will ask them to stand outside as she takes the moment for herself. It ends up not working out, as Audrey has to face her parents after being shunned for her dorm. Caroline will appear sweet and wholesome to Audrey's parents, making them believe Audrey made a mistake. Talk about kicking someone while they're down.

My goal with the next draft is to continue building on what I have. Things need to be harder for Audrey. The scene in Act II that gave me so much trouble this draft will be worked on and perfected. Much like with the Jane Austen aspect, that scene is walking a fine line. I don't want either character to appear predatory or as if they are taking advantage of a situation (though Audrey slightly is). I know that scene will only get better the more I work on it. With each draft of this script I feel myself becoming a better writer. I am not accomplishing that alone, though. As I will discuss in the next chapter, I am becoming better because of the program, my professors, and my peers.

Chapter Nine: Sense and Sensibility

When I began the screenwriting graduate program at the University of Texas I had written one short and one feature length script. My entire background was in academia, having achieved my bachelors in history. However, there is more to this story. I came to the University of Texas incredibly disheartened about my ability as a writer. I had been rejected from three other schools, forced to take a year off, and had my first feature harshly criticized by a screenplay competition (though that may have been my own fault as I submitted it before it was ready).

Following undergrad I applied to the London Film School. I did not get in. After getting rejected from the only graduate school I applied to I decided I would give this one more shot. I would apply to three more schools and if I did not get into any of those then that was it. I would continue studying history or move on to something else. Those schools would be Columbia, NYU, and my longshot was the University of Texas.

After everything I had heard over that year concerning my writing and the small class size offered at Texas I was convinced I had no hope of getting in. I did not research the program in fear I would just get my heart broken again. I knew enough to want to apply and want to get in. Imagine my surprise when the first school that contacted me was Texas.

I didn't get into NYU or Columbia. It killed me at first (figuratively of course). However, after talking with Professor Kelban I began to feel that maybe it was all for the best. I asked him point blank why I was accepted. What he said is something I still remember. It was my voice and it was needed in the program. It was something I needed to hear at that time. It was the spark and the best to start my new path.

When I came into the program I was green. I did not know how to be creative on the spot. My parents were artists but I did not have the build in mentality to go and create. I had no idea what a midpoint was or act breaks. The first few weeks I was terrified. It was like kindergarten all over again, relearning how to read and write. That was me two years ago. I had a few ideas tucked away in my head but I did not know how to create more. I had a crippling fear of hitting a creative block. What I hope all of this shows is that I was timid as a writer. Professor Kelban had given me a boost of confidence that I had no idea how to use yet.

Over the course of my two years at the University of Texas I figured it out. Technically speaking I know what I am doing as a screenwriting now. I know what act breaks are and I know what a midpoint is. Most importantly, though, I've learned how to construct strong character arcs. When I began writing scripts five years ago character arcs were not the first thing I thought of. Sure, making sure the character grew at the end was important to me, but it was not my first thought. Character arcs are the first thing I think of now. My scripts rely on strong arcs now. It is how I begin scripts now, where my character begins and where they end.

As I said early I came to this program from academia and I was just a little lost when I started. I did not know how to bring my burgeoning creative side with my academic side. Because of the workload of the program I quickly learned I have a difficult time being creative under pressure. That's how I learned to combine my two sides. In getting my bachelors degree I planned out every paper weeks before they were due and I paced myself when it came to writing. Within my first year I learned I had to do the same thing with my scripts. I quickly found that the way I worked in undergrad would foster my creativity. Writing would be easier, but more than that, coming up with new ideas wasn't as difficult as it was before.

I began this chapter discussing my timidity coming into the program. I can tell you now that I have confidence in spades. I'm still figuring out how to use it but I'm not afraid of it anymore. My first workshop I barely spoke. I did not know how I could even begin to help my classmates with input. They seemed so far ahead of me. How could I possibly know what needed fixing in their scripts. After the first semester things began to click. My classmates may have a few more scripts under their belt but I knew what I was doing now. As my classes went on my confidence in my ability and knowledge grew. It did not come from getting a ton of positive feedback from my classmates and professors. It came from trying things, taking a leap, and either falling or soaring. I had the freedom to do that. Without that freedom Jane Austen would have never become a character in this project. I'm not scared to think out of the box and because that my creativity has blossomed. I know the stories I want to tell and I'm not afraid to find new a different ways to tell them.

I began this program green, thinking I would be a screenwriter in the vein of Diablo Cody or Wes Anderson. I would write small indie scripts, personal stories at times filled with sass or none at all. Now, thought, that could not be farther from where I see myself. My goals have changed. I want to work in television, something I never would have thought of two years. But more than that, through the encouragement of my classmates and professors I don't want to write personally small films all the time. Last October I began to think about expanding my horizons. In our adaptation class I pitched an adaptation of Kurt Vonnegut short story as a super hero comic book movie. It was something I came up with on a whim. It never crossed my mind to write a comic book movie. After class Maya Perez pulled me aside. She knew my style, the small personal stories I told, but my pitch stuck with her. She thought I could write a super hero

movie. She reminded me not to limit myself and take chances. There something about someone else having faith in you. It pushes you to have faith in yourself. I took what Maya said to heart and my dreams began to expand. I soon found myself thinking bigger.

There's a freedom to this program, which if you embrace what you're taught you'll find. In my two years at Texas my voice as a writer grew stronger, my goals grew bigger, and my skill continually grew. I can safely say that I would not be the writer I am today had it not been for the University of Texas. I do not know if I would have given television a chance or thought to write bigger stories. I had a voice when I started this program. At the end of it, through the guidance of my professors and the advice of peers, I knew the writer I wanted to be. Because of the program I have no fear in accomplishing the goals I have set for myself.

Appendix A: First Outline/Treatment of *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life*

SAMPLE OUTLINE

By
Teresa Warner

Vehicle: Half-hour TV show

Title: HOW JANE AUSTEN
RUINED MY LIFE

THE WORLD OF THE STORY

The story takes place on the campus of a very small liberal arts college just outside downtown Atlanta, called Oglethorpe University. Its sits near the perimeter of Atlanta proper, which becomes the only place most of the students can escape to. An escape that only last a few hours, a couple of times a semester. Really what's the point in leaving campus? There's almost always a party going on, when you need one.

Oglethorpe has a student population of around 800, with female students outnumbering male students three to one. The small student population combined with the self-contained aspect of the university makes it the perfect breeding ground for gossip. Everyone knows everyone else's business. It is also an incredibly liberal campus with a diverse and progressive student body and a faculty more than willing to accommodate them.

A Division III school, the sporting event crowds tend to be outnumbered by those at the plays put on by the legendary theater department. While the traditional frats exist they're joined by Chi Phi, which is made up of guys you'd never expect to find in a fraternity. More often than not most of the school ends up at one of the frats on Fridays...unless it's during midterms.

It's a world where the students think they know more than they actually do. They're finally living out from under their parents thumb and they're taking full advantage of it. Being between the ages of 18 and 22 most of the girls at Oglethorpe have a sheltered view of boys and love in general. A view that's been fostered by movies, TV shows, and popular novels in the vein of Jane Austen (her's, adaptations of her work, continuations of her books, and even parodies). These girls are left either deluded about their romantic relationships or jaded when it comes to the opposite sex. It's here in college, when

they are finally forced to grow up and make every mistake imaginable that they start to figure out that Jane Austen might have ruined their lives.

THE CHARACTERS

AUDREY PRICE (18) - In her first 18 years, Audrey Price had arguably never really lived. She was the girl who stayed home on Friday nights and read her newest book, the girl who always had a book with her where ever she went. During the lunch hour at school you would be hard pressed to find Audrey in the cafeteria. It was more likely she was in the library. It all started when she was about 3. That was when her grandfather taught her to read. After that it was like she couldn't't stop. She read every book she could get her hands on and her parents only supported this. Her first time at a public library, Audrey broke the record for the number of books checked out by one person. No one has come close since.

Audrey's parents are both artist. Her mother is a printmaker and her father is a photographer. They lived in Asheville, North Carolina because of the artist community there and Audrey's father specialized in landscape photography. In the art world he was billed as the next Ansel Adams. Most family vacations revolved around the locale her father wanted to photograph next. Audrey's mother was something of an art legend in Asheville. Her detailed prints of Asheville were in every shop, restaurant, and hotel. Audrey never really felt like she fit with her parents. She was the bookworm with no artistic talents. She attempted drawing but ended up mutilating a stick figure. She didn't fare much better with photography. Just trying to put something in focus seemed like a foreign language to her. She obviously didn't get the art gene.

When she was 12, she read Pride And Prejudice for the first time. It was then that her love of reading created her love of Jane Austen. By the time Audrey read Mansfield Park for the second time (only a year later) it was clear that Austen was Audrey's favorite author. As she got older, Mansfield Park became her favorite book and Fanny (the book's main character) becomes her favorite character. The quiet naive girl in love with her cousin/best friend reminded Audrey of herself (though she made sure to steer clear of any cousins).

Audrey had a few acquaintances in high school. The people she worked with on newspaper and Lit. Magazine and that was about it. Except for Andrew. He was just the boy down the

street, who she had known longer than she could remember. They'd grown up together and somewhere along the way Audrey kind of fell in love with Andrew. Not that she would admit it to anyone anytime soon. All through high school it had been Audrey and Andrew. They went to every school dance together (as friends of course). Friday nights were movie nights; Saturdays were reserved for Doctor Who, and Thursday's they binged on half hour comedies while doing homework. Sure, Andrew missed a few whenever he had a girlfriend but he was always back with Audrey eventually.

Things were close to changing though. They wouldn't just be living down the street from each other. They were graduating from high school and going off to college. They weren't a few houses away from each other. They would be down the hall. Not only was Audrey going to have to confront her crush, she was also going to have to stop living through her books.

ROSE DASHWOOD (18) - Rose Dashwood couldn't wait for college. It was going to be amazing even if she was only 15 miles from home. This was the closest she had come to full independence and she was determined to take advantage of every second of it.

Since she was six years old Rose and her mother, Mary, had lived with Mary's parents. It all happened after Rose's father ran out on them. He simply left them...took off. He wasn't the best dad and all Rose really remembered about him was that he was drunk....a lot. And when she was honest with herself she admitted she barely remembered that either. What she did remember was her grandfather showing up a week after her father left. He was there to bring her and her inconsolable mother back home. In that moment, as he packed Rose's things, he became her hero. That's how it was for the next nine years.

Rose's mother never really got over what her husband had done. Rose never really noticed though. Her grandparents were the buffer between her and her mom. That buffer wouldn't be there forever though. When Rose was 15 her grandparents died. First her grandmother then two months later her grandfather. Her grandparent's death devastated Rose and her mother. What made it ever harder though was this was the first time Rose and her mother had ever been on their own together.

For the next three years, as she finished high school, Rose found herself being the caretaker of her mother. She took over her grandparent's role and far too early became the adult in the family. After awhile Rose couldn't help but resent her mother.

Rose wasn't alone in dealing with her mother. For the two years after her grandparents died she had the support of her

high school boyfriend, Jason. He was perfect, or so she thought, when her mom was too depressed to cook he would bring her dinner; before she got her license he would take her grocery shopping (because her mom never would). But when he went away to college her senior year, Rose learned that Jason wasn't that perfect. Their relationship seemed to be on a constant yo-yo, but Rose couldn't bring herself to let go.

That's when Rose became obsessed with movies. They were her escape. Animated movies, rom-coms, action movies, she loved them all. As long as it had a happy ending, where the hero got the girl and still saved the world. She hated any movie that ended sadly. She found that out when she and her mother went to see "Atonement" one Christmas. While her mother loved the movie all Rose could focus on was how disappointed she was with the end. Rose knew why she loved these movies. It was everything she wanted in her life. Like her grandfather had done all those years ago, Rose wanted someone to save her. She wanted to be free and college was her start to getting that.

LUCY BENNET (18) - Lucy Bennet grew up in Baltimore Maryland with her mother, father, and older sister Alice. Her parents met in the 80's while they were both protesting various things in Washington D.C. Ten years later, in the early 90's they finally settled down (sort of) and had two daughters. Lucy was named after Lucy Burns and her sister was named after Alice Paul. From a young age Lucy idolized her namesake and everything Lucy Burns stood for. When she was 16 she met Gloria Steinem. She almost hyperventilated and barely said two words.

Lucy was a combination of both her parents. That was clear when she was ten and she begged to go to her first march. It was for gay rights and though Lucy didn't really understand the difference between gay and straight, she knew it was important to the two guys who lived next door and babysat her on the weekends. She got more extreme as she got older. Her parents indulged her but her older sister, Alice, found it exhausting.

The activism gene seemed to have skipped Alice. She had no taste for it and the sisters really had nothing in common. Alice was smart but she always got caught up with boys. Lucy watched her older sister lose herself in every boyfriend she had. It always ended the same, Alice coming home in tears and locking herself in her room. Lucy would always hear her crying through their bedroom wall. She may not have understood her sister but she did love her. So Lucy would go and hold her sister until she fell asleep. There were quite a few nights the girls mother found them cuddled in bed together, Alice still

sniffing away tears. Lucy was always there for Alice but being there convinced her to never be like her sister.

Even though Lucy had a new cause every week, at her core she was a feminist. After all her heroes were and she couldn't help it after the example of her sister. She decided to take women's studies in college and follow in her parent's footsteps. The next time she met Gloria Steinem she would say more than two words.

In 8th grade Lucy attempted to join marching band. The only instrument that caught her eye was the drums. The band director tried to steer her toward something else, thinking that she was too small to lift the drums. Lucy took the challenge (though none was really given) and mastered the drums the summer between middle school and high school. She made the marching band in high school with ease. During high school Lucy played in various punk bands in the Baltimore/D.C area, finding another way to protest. By the time she left for college she was something of a legend in the punk scene and she couldn't help but wonder if college was the right choice. When her parents made it clear it wasn't a choice at all, Lucy went along with it. She only hoped her new roommate wouldn't notice the drum set in their dorm.

JULIE WOODHOUSE (18) - Julie Woodhouse got into College on a full sports scholarship. Her grades got her into the liberal arts school outside of Atlanta that she had been dreaming of going to for years and her skill in the swimming pool made it so she would never have to pay for school. She had spent four years working her ass off for this. She spent days soaked in chlorine only to end the day with her nose stuffed in a book as her Dad/Coach stood over her shoulder, reminding her what all this hard work was for. All that being said, Julie still knew how to have a good time.

In high school Julie was known for being able to party the night before an exam and still blow the exam curve the next day. It was common knowledge that after every swim meet (no matter the outcome) Julie would always try to find a way to blow off steam, usually in the form of a party and a boy.

It all started toward the end of her sophomore year. It was the last swim meet of the year. It was also the first one Julie ever lost. She remembered lifting her head out of the pool, knowing three other girls had already touched the wall. She punched the wall and fractured two fingers. When she got out of the pool her dad pulled her into a tight hug. She thought at first she'd get some comfort but no, he just

whispered one thing in her ear. "You're lucky that was the last meet or that little stunt would've cost you."

Once her hand healed her dad started her on two-a-days. He was tougher on her than he'd ever been. That was when Julie started to hate swimming and one day Julie snapped. It was just an off day but her dad didn't care. He screamed and yelled, pushing Julie further and further. When Julie had enough she got out of the pool and left. She went to the house of one of the girls on her swim team, needing a break from perfection.

She found it in the form of a party and lots of alcohol. That night Julie got drunk and with the encouragement of her teammates (and a little liquid courage) she locked herself in a room with one of guys from a rival school's swim team. The next day all Julie would say was that she had a very good time. In that moment Julie found her way of blowing off steam...she almost became a legend and a pariah at her school. By the time she graduated she wasn't exactly known for her modesty. Not that she cared. Guys were allowed to do whatever they wanted with however many girls they wanted, so why couldn't she with however many guys she wanted.

By the summers end, Julie only saw swimming as a way into college. It was a means to an end...an escape. Hard work wasn't worth anything if there wasn't a good time at the end of it. By the time college came around Julie's father was worse. He had the Olympics in his sight and only saw Julie getting her degree in biology. Julie had other things in mind and college was her way of escaping, from swimming, her father, and every expectation people had of her.

Episode I

Teaser

AUDREY PRICE gets to Oglethorpe to move into her new dorm, by herself. She's on the phone with her mother, squashing her worry about Audrey moving to college alone.

She passes other students moving in with their parents who are acting more or less embarrassingly.

In her distracted state she runs smack into someone. Her phone broken and her stuff everywhere Audrey starts picking everything up not even looking up at the person she ran into. When the person hands her smashed phone back, Audrey looks up and see's

her best friend ANDREW. The two share a laugh and Andrew offers to help her to her dorm.

At Audrey's dorm room: Andrew carries multiple heavy boxes..."Did you really have to bring all your books?" "I couldn't leave them at home." "And what would you've done if I hadn't shown up?" Audrey smiles and pulls up her phone "Have a working phone." The two friends joke a little more before Andrew leaves to go back to his own dorm, just down the hall. He kisses the side of her head and leaves. Audrey wistfully watches him go...is there something more there.

As Andrew leaves, ROSE DASHWOOD enters the room. She catches the look on Audrey's face but doesn't say anything. Audrey introduces herself. When Rose realizes this is her new roommate...she tackles Audrey with a hug. This was not something Audrey was prepared for.

ACT I

While Rose and Audrey are still hugging, and Audrey is looking for an escape from said hug, their other two roommates, JULIE WOODHOUSE and LUCY BENNET show up. Julie: "Um, we interrupting something?" Rose turns to them and in the same fashion tackles Julie with a hug. She attempts to do the same with Lucy, but Lucy uses her snare drum to block it.

The girls don't seem to be arguing about anything. The closet space is just enough (Audrey brought more books than clothes and Rose is a bit of a clothes horse). Neither minds the other's posters (Rose with her classic movie posters and Audrey with her Doctor Who?). It isn't until they get to the bookcase that there's a problem...there isn't enough space for Audrey's books and Rose's DVD's. Argument insues. Audrey: "It's a bookcase that means books not DVD's."

The girls continue fighting until they hear a crash from the common area. It's Lucy...the high hat to her drum kit has fallen on the ground. Julie stands at the door looking a little freaked out. Audrey: "We can just go buy another book case."

Trip to Wal-Mart: the four roommates go together but pair off as they walk through the store.

Rose has found a pink bookcase. It sticks out of the girls cart. Rose has filled their cart with everything pink imaginable. Audrey carefully removes things as they go. Except the pink microwave. Rose caught her before she could.

Julie meets up with them having lost Lucy. They find Lucy in the music section checking out guitars. Julie: "Can we switch rooms?" Both Rose and Audrey shake their hands aggressively.

Back at the dorm Rose has disappeared and left Audrey to put the bookcase together herself. The sound of drums can be heard across the dorm room. Andrew stops by and helps Audrey put the bookcase together.

Julie stops by as the two are finishing the bookcase. She can't take the drumming anymore and wants to get food. Upon seeing Andrew though, Julie's interest is peaked. Andrew makes an excuse to leave, but mention's a party later that night at one of the frats.

On the way to the cafeteria Julie bugs Audrey about Andrew, mentioning that he's cute. Audrey gets super awkward and Julie busts her. "You have a thing for him don't you?" Audrey denies it but the wheels are already turning in Julie's head. She changes the subject to the party tonight. Audrey doesn't look to excited.

ACT II

The girls begin to get ready for the party. Julie begins plotting with Rose about Audrey and Andrew. Both girls have the same theory, Audrey has feelings for Andrew and tonight's the night.

Audrey can't find anything to wear for the party. Her clothes seem more suited for a trip to the library not a frat house. Rose steps in and lets Audrey borrow some of her clothes.

Lucy gets annoyed waiting for the girls. She's been waiting for hours it seems when the Rose and Julie are finally done getting Audrey ready.

As the girls leave they run into Andrew and his roommate. Andrew compliments Audrey and the group heads to the party.

The frat party is a mixture of everything that Oglethorpe is. It's at the Chi Phi house, which has a huge back porch off the above ground basement where the music is pouring out of it. Everyone from school seems to be there. Audrey hesitates at the door but a little shove gets her through the door, stumbling. Thanks to a save from Andrew, Audrey doesn't fall down the stairs.

The group splits upon entering the frat, each going their own way.

Julie is going a little crazy on the makeshift dance floor area. She's already a little buzzed.

Audrey and Andrew are talking with each other, having fun. Audrey doesn't notice when something catches Andrew's eye. He goes to get Audrey a drink.

Rose goes to get herself a drink...notices a cute upperclassman

Lucy killing it at beer pong against some frat guy, being a tab bit aggressive.

Audrey's lost Andrew. Julie and Rose try to give her a pep talk. It doesn't go well. Audrey gets more nervous. Julie leaves to get her a drink. This situation calls for some Dutch courage.

Lucy joins Audrey and Rose. Julie comes back with a drink for Audrey.

Audrey: "What the fuck did you just give me?"

Julie: "It's better if you don't know."

Audrey takes a deep breath and goes to find Andrew.

Julie goes back to the dance floor.

Rose and Lucy stand together. Rose spots the guy from before.

Audrey continues searching for Andrew.

Rose bugs Lucy to check and see if he's looking her way. But when Lucy turns and looks straight at him Lucy freaks out.

Audrey finally spots Andrew. He is talking to some random girl. She starts to make her way over but stops when Andrew grabs the girl and starts making out with her.

Rose and Lucy are still arguing about the guy when Audrey rushes up to them. Audrey: "I gotta get out of here." Both girls try and get it out of her what happened but Audrey won't say anything. Rose puts her arm around her. They leave the party with Lucy.

TAG/END

Audrey and Rose lay on their beds watching "Clueless," while passing cartons of ice cream back and forth to each other.

There's a knock, it's Lucy dragging her mattress.

Lucy: "Julie brought a guy home, can I sleep here?"

Rose: "Why not just use the couch?"

Lucy: "They started there."

Rose: "Oh..."

Lucy lays her mattress down and starts watching the movie with them. She notices the ice cream.

Lucy: "You guys are like a cliché and a half"

The girls ignore her and switch cartons.

Lucy: "Can I have some?"

Audrey: "It's cliché only ice cream."

Few moments pass and Audrey passes the ice cream to Lucy.

Appendix B: Second Draft of Outline/Treatment of *How Jane Austen Ruined My Life* (notes for workshop included)

SAMPLE OUTLINE

By

Teresa Warner

Vehicle: Hour TV show

Title: HOW JANE AUSTEN
RUINED MY LIFE

THE WORLD OF THE STORY

The story takes place on the campus of a very small liberal arts college just outside downtown Atlanta, called Oglethorpe University. It sits near the perimeter of Atlanta proper, which becomes the only place most of the students can escape to. An escape that only last a few hours, a couple of times a semester. Really what's the point in leaving campus? There's almost always a party going on, when you need one.

Oglethorpe has a student population of around 800, with female students outnumbering male students three to one. The small student population combined with the self-contained aspect of the university makes it the perfect breeding ground for gossip. Everyone knows everyone else's business. It is also an incredibly liberal campus with a diverse and progressive student body and a faculty more than willing to accommodate them.

A Division III school, the sporting event crowds tend to be outnumbered by those at the plays put on by the legendary theater department. While the traditional frats exist they're joined by Chi Phi, which is made up of guys you'd never expect to find in a fraternity. More often than not most of the school ends up at one of the frats on Fridays...unless it's during midterms.

It's a world where the students think they know more than they actually do. Like any other college environment, they're finally living out from under their parents thumb and they're taking full advantage of it. Being between the ages of 18 and 22 most of the girls have a sheltered view of boys and love in general. A view that's been fostered by movies, TV shows, and popular novels in the vein of Jane Austen (her's, adaptations of her work, continuations of her books, and even parodies). These girls are left either deluded about their romantic relationships

or jaded when it comes to the opposite sex. It's here in college, when they are finally forced to grow up and make every mistake imaginable that they start to figure out that Jane Austen might have ruined their lives.

THE CHARACTERS

AUDREY PRICE (18) - In her first 18 years, Audrey Price had arguably never really lived. She was the girl who stayed home on Friday nights and read her newest book, the girl who always had a book with her where ever she went. During the lunch hour at school you would be hard pressed to find Audrey in the cafeteria. It was more likely she was in the library. It all started when she was about 3. That was when her grandfather taught her to read. After that it was like she couldn't stop. She read every book she could get her hands on and her parents only supported this. Her first time at a public library, Audrey broke the record for the number of books checked out by one person. No one has come close since.

Audrey's parents are both artist. Her mother is a printmaker and her father is a photographer. They lived in Asheville, North Carolina because of the artist community there and Audrey's father specialized in landscape photography. In the art world he was billed as the next Ansel Adams. Most family vacations revolved around the locale her father wanted to photograph next. Audrey's mother was something of an art legend in Asheville. Her detailed prints of Asheville were in every shop, restaurant, and hotel. Audrey never really felt like she fit with her parents. She was the bookworm with no artistic talents. She attempted drawing but ended up mutilating a stick figure. She didn't fare much better with photography. Just trying to put something in focus seemed like a foreign language to her. She obviously didn't get the art gene.

When she was 12, she read Pride And Prejudice for the first time. It was then that her love of reading created her love of Jane Austen. By the time Audrey read Mansfield Park for the second time (only a year later) it was clear that Austen was Audrey's favorite author. As she got older, Mansfield Park became her favorite book and Fanny (the book's main character) became her favorite character. The quiet naive girl in love with her cousin/best friend reminded Audrey of herself (though she made sure to steer clear of any cousins).

Audrey had a few acquaintances in high school. The people she worked with on newspaper and Lit. Magazine and that was

about it. Except for Andrew. He was just the boy down the street, who she had known longer than she could remember. They'd grown up together and somewhere along the way Audrey kind of fell in love with Andrew. Not that she would admit it to anyone anytime soon. All through high school it had been Audrey and Andrew. They went to every school dance together (as friends of course). Friday nights were movie nights; Saturdays were reserved for Doctor Who, and Thursday's they binged on half hour comedies while doing homework. Sure, Andrew missed a few whenever he had a girlfriend but he was always back with Audrey eventually.

Things were close to changing though. They wouldn't just be living down the street from each other. They were graduating from high school and going off to college. They weren't a few houses away from each other. They would be down the hall. Not only was Audrey going to have to confront her crush, she was also going to have to stop living through her books.

ROSE DASHWOOD (18) - Rose Dashwood couldn't wait for college. It was going to be amazing even if she was only 15 miles from home. This was the closest she had come to full independence and she was determined to take advantage of every second of it.

Since she was six years old Rose and her mother, Mary, had lived with Mary's parents. It all happened after Rose's father ran out on them. He simply left them...took off. He wasn't the best dad and all Rose really remembered about him was that he was drunk....a lot. And when she was honest with herself she admitted she barely remembered that either. What she did remember was her grandfather showing up a week after her father left. He was there to bring her and her inconsolable mother back home. In that moment, as he packed Rose's things, he became her hero. That's how it was for the next nine years.

Rose's mother never really got over what her husband had done. Rose never really noticed though. Her grandparents were the buffer between her and her mom. That buffer wouldn't be there forever though. When Rose was 15 her grandparents died. First her grandmother then two months later her grandfather. Her grandparents' death devastated Rose and her mother. What made it ever harder though was this was the first time Rose and her mother had ever been on their own together.

For the next three years, as she finished high school, Rose found herself being the caretaker of her mother. She took over her grandparent's role and far too early became the adult in the family. After awhile Rose couldn't help but resent her mother.

Rose wasn't alone in dealing with her mother. For the two

years after her grandparents died she had the support of her high school boyfriend, Jason. He was perfect, or so she thought, when her mom was too depressed to cook he would bring her dinner; before she got her license he would take her grocery shopping (because her mom never would). But when he went away to college her senior year, Rose learned that Jason wasn't that perfect. Their relationship seemed to be on a constant yo-yo, but Rose couldn't bring herself to let go.

That's when Rose became obsessed with movies. They were her escape. Animated movies, rom-coms, action movies, she loved them all. As long as it had a happy ending, where the hero got the girl and still saved the world. She hated any movie that ended sadly. She found that out when she and her mother went to see "Atonement" one Christmas. While her mother loved the movie all Rose could focus on was how disappointed she was with the end. Rose knew why she loved these movies. It was everything she wanted in her life. Like her grandfather had done all those years ago, Rose wanted someone to save her. She wanted to be free and college was her start to getting that.

LUCY BENNET (18) - Lucy Bennet grew up in Baltimore Maryland with her mother, father, and older sister Alice. Her parents met in the 80's while they were both protesting various things in Washington D.C. Ten years later, in the early 90's they finally settled down (sort of) and had two daughters. Lucy was named after Lucy Burns and her sister was named after Alice Paul. From a young age Lucy idolized her namesake and everything Lucy Burns stood for. When she was 16 she met Gloria Steinem. She almost hyperventilated and barely said two words.

Lucy was a combination of both her parents. That was clear when she was ten and she begged to go to her first march. It was for gay rights and though Lucy didn't really understand the difference between gay and straight, she knew it was important to the two guys who lived next door and babysat her on the weekends. She got more extreme as she got older. Her parents indulged her but her older sister, Alice, found it exhausting.

The activism gene seemed to have skipped Alice. She had no taste for it and the sisters really had nothing in common. Alice was smart but she always got caught up with boys. Lucy watched her older sister lose herself in every boyfriend she had. It always ended the same, Alice coming home in tears and locking herself in her room. Lucy would always hear her crying through their bedroom wall. She may not have understood her sister but she did love her. So Lucy would go and hold her sister until she fell asleep. There were quite a few nights the girls mother found them cuddled in bed together, Alice still

sniffing away tears. Lucy was always there for Alice but being there convinced her to never be like her sister.

Even though Lucy had a new cause every week, at her core she was a feminist. After all her heroes were and she couldn't help it after the example of her sister. She decided to take women's studies in college and follow in her parents' footsteps. The next time she met Gloria Steinem she would say more than two words.

In 8th grade Lucy attempted to join marching band. The only instrument that caught her eye was the drums. The band director tried to steer her toward something else, thinking that she was too small to lift the drums. Lucy took the challenge (though none was really given) and mastered the drums the summer between middle school and high school. She made the marching band in high school with ease. During high school Lucy played in various punk bands in the Baltimore/D.C area, finding another way to protest. By the time she left for college she was something of a legend in the punk scene and she couldn't help but wonder if college was the right choice. When her parents made it clear it wasn't a choice at all, Lucy went along with it. She only hoped her new roommate wouldn't notice the drum set in their dorm.

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In high school Julie was known for being able to party the night before an exam and still blow the exam curve the next day. It was common knowledge that after every swim meet (no matter the outcome) Julie would always try to find a way to blow off steam, usually in the form of a party and a boy.

It all started toward the end of her sophomore year. It was the last swim meet of the year. It was also the first one Julie ever lost. She remembered lifting her head out of the pool, knowing three other girls had already touched the wall. She punched the wall and fractured two fingers. When she got out of the pool her dad pulled her into a tight hug. She thought at first she'd get some comfort but no, he just

whispered one thing in her ear. "You're lucky that was the last meet or that little stunt would've cost you."

Once her hand healed her dad started her on two-a-days. He was tougher on her than he'd ever been. That was when Julie started to hate swimming and one day Julie snapped. It was just an off day but her dad didn't care. He screamed and yelled, pushing Julie further and further. When Julie had enough she got out of the pool and left. She went to the house of one of the girls on her swim team, needing a break from perfection.

She found it in the form of a party and lots of alcohol. That night Julie got drunk and with the encouragement of her teammates (and a little liquid courage) she locked herself in a room with one of guys from a rival school's swim team. The next day all Julie would say was that she had a very good time. In that moment Julie found her way of blowing off steam...she almost became a legend and a pariah at her school. By the time she graduated she wasn't exactly known for her modesty. Not that she cared. Guys were allowed to do whatever they wanted with however many girls they wanted, so why couldn't she with however many guys she wanted.

By the summers end, Julie only saw swimming as a way into college. It was a means to an end...an escape. Hard work wasn't worth anything if there wasn't a good time at the end of it. By the time college came around Julie's father was worse. He had the Olympics in his sight and only saw Julie getting her degree in biology. Julie had other things in mind and college was her way of escaping, from swimming, her father, and every expectation people had of her.

JANE AUSTEN VOICE OVER - Alright guys I need some advice/ideas on this. My idea is that Jane Austen will introduce each episode in a voice over. I think it's best if we only hear her with Audrey, so every episode will start with Audrey. Austen is Audrey's obsession not the other girls. But if you guys think it would be better for all girls please let me know. I haven't decided fully what the voice over will consist of. I'm torn between creating original lines for Austen or just talking lines from her books. Which do you guys think is better? I've also been watching way to much *Pushing Daises* and the voice over in that gave me an idea that starting in Audrey's past with the voice over and then moving into what's going on in the present. Those are my ideas for the voice over...if you guys have other ideas please let me know!!!

Episode I:

"Selfishness must always be forgiven you know, because there is no hope of a cure." - *Mansfield Park*

Teaser

Open on AUDREY in her room. It's only half packed. Clothes are still stacked on the bed along with shoes and other knickknacks, taking up any space there would be to sit. The bookcases (of which there are many) are bare. Audrey sits in the corner, reading *Mansfield Park*. Voice of Jane Austen comes over, either quoting the book or introducing Audrey. Off screen we hear Audrey's mother yell if she's done packing. Audrey doesn't answer. Caroline, Audrey's mother, comes into the room seeing Audrey is no where near done. Caroline gives her daughter grief about not packing and also wonder's why she's not bringing her favorite stuffed animal, a bunny named Edmund (the character Fanny Price falls in love with in *Mansfield Park*). Audrey snubs her nose at the bunny; she's an adult now. Caroline asks if she's ready. Audrey says everything's planned out. This is where we see how organized Audrey is to the point she has researched and picked her roommates out to perfectly match her personality. Caroline teases her but Audrey is convinced everything will be perfect.

The next day or a few later, Audrey gets to Oglethorpe with her parents in tow. She goes to pick up her keys but something's wrong. The keys she gets are for a different room and different roommates.

Audrey: Um...there has to be a mistake...I hand picked my roommates...

RA: (awkwardly)...um...they asked for a new fourth...

This is not how Audrey planned on starting college.

ACT I

LUCY BENNET arrives at Oglethorpe with her sister ALICE BENNET. **Another question: should each girl get their own introduction or will that take to much time?** Lucy and Alice barely even looked like sisters. Alice brings up her sorority and tells Lucy she'll be getting a bid in a few weeks, because she's her little sister. Lucy attempts to rebuff her sister but Alice doesn't listen. They go off to find Lucy's dorm.

Audrey get's to her dorm with her parents. No one else is there, as always she's the first to arrive. The room is

lackluster. Overly used furniture in the common/living room. She goes into her room, it's small. She's greeted by two twin beds, two desks, and one bookcase.

Before the family can even begin to unpack ANDREW, Audrey's best friend, stops by. Andrew wonders why she isn't down the hall? (He knocked on the door she wasn't there). Audrey fills him in only slightly...Audrey: There was a mix up. Caroline interrupts the two friends asking when they are finally going to make her happy and admit they love each other. Audrey blushes like mad, but Andrew plays along. Andrew leaves, he has his own unpacking to do.

Lucy and Alice finally arrive at the dorm. The awkward first meeting between roommates occurs. Alice plays up being the responsible big sister to Audrey's parents. She promises to keep an eye on Audrey. Audrey's parents leave, allowing her time to bond with her roommates. They'll be back tomorrow for their last goodbye. Audrey turns to talk to Lucy and Alice...get to know them better. Alice takes off, sorority stuff to take care off and Lucy simply walks away. Again this isn't how Audrey expected her day to go.

Audrey is in her room alone unpacking. Half her books are on the bookcase but there's still a ton of boxes left. She stops in the middle of unpacking when she hears a loud, preppy "hello." Rose Dashwood has arrived. Audrey barely steps out of her room when she is tackled with a hug. Audrey feels super awkward about it. Lucy comes out of her room and Rose goes to tackle her with a hug...it doesn't happen...Lucy doesn't hug.

Audrey and Rose begin unpacking their stuff. Things are going well until Rose begins to put her DVD's on the bookcase. The girls fight...it get's intense (**I will develop this more in script**). Audrey starts throwing the DVD's out of the room. One hits the final roommate, JULIE WOODHOUSE, in the face. Julie makes a smart-ass comment. Audrey tries to apologize and follows her out of the room. Rose takes the opportunity to take all of the books off the bookcase and put's up her DVDs. Audrey's apology is interrupted by the sound of drums from Lucy/Julie's room.

ACT II

Audrey and Rose decided to go to Wad-Mart together, though getting there seems to cause yet another argument (**if this is getting to be to much let me know please and thank you**). They argue over who will drive and where to go. Rose would prefer not going to Wal-Mart. Audrey: I don't feel like driving around for three hours while you search for a hot pink bookcase that doesn't exist!

Trip to Wal-Mart. Rose runs through the store (not literally), going from the movie section, to make-up, then groceries, filling the cart with things the girls need. Audrey leaves at one point to go and get a bookcase, having had it up to here with hyperactive/ADD having roommate.

Back at the dorm: Lucy and Julie try to get to know each other a bit better. Unlike their counterparts they aren't arguing...they're just having the most awkward conversation ever. Soon both girls come to realize they have nothing in common.

Back to Wal-Mart: Rose has found Audrey attempting to pull a giant boxed bookcase off the shelf. Rose: need some help? Audrey turns to her and as she does the bookcase falls to the floor landing on Audrey's foot. This trip is going well. Rose helps Audrey, though barely containing her laughter. Audrey: You do not know me well enough to be laughing about this. Audrey looks in the cart. It's filled to the brim. No space left for the bookcase. Audrey: New rule, you're not allowed to do the shopping.

Back to the dorm: Audrey wants to put the new bookcase together but Julie and Rose are ready to pre-game. Audrey looks to Lucy for back up but finds none. Audrey attempts to put the bookcase together by herself but as Rose and Julie get louder Audrey becomes more frustrated. Giving up she storms out of the room without so much as a word to her new roommates. (**Another idea I have is that Audrey goes to meet her parents for dinner only to come back and find the girls pre-gaming...but is that to much coming and going? thoughts?**)

Walking down the hall toward's Andrew's room, Audrey runs into the original roommates she picked out. They walk past her with their new fourth. Audrey gives an awkward wave. Nothing.

Audrey unloads on Andrew. What are best friends for right? In her complaining about how her first day has gone she doesn't really notice that Andrew's had a few drinks. His flirtousness isn't as joking as it usually is. Audrey tears up about how her first day of college has gone. None of this was what she planned. It's an unmitigated disaster. In his slightly drunken haze Andrew comforts/quiets Audrey by kissing her. Not realizing this is only happening because Andrew is drunk, Audrey goes along with the kiss. As Andrew pushes things further, Audrey goes along with it. They are both awkward and fumbling (Andrew due to alcohol and Audrey due to her nerves), but this is everything Audrey's wanted...why stop now?

ACT III

With the sun streaming in through the cheap dorm room blinds, Audrey wakes up in Andrew's bed. Alone. But that's not about to bring down her mood. The smile she had when she fell asleep is still there. She checks the alarm clock near the bed and curses. Her parents are probably already at her dorm (**set this up in act I**). Quickly scribbling a note to Andrew, she gets dressed and sneaks out of the room.

The door to her dorm is wide open and before she can even see inside she hears her mother's voice. Stealthily peaking inside, Audrey sees her parents talking with Rose. Comically/outlandishly she gets Rose's attention. Rose sneaks outside and the two devise a plan to get Audrey back into the room without her parents notice...surprisingly it works.

Audrey's parents take all four girls out for breakfast. Lucy keeps trying to get Audrey to fess up to where she was the night before, but Rose has her back.

Audrey's parents leave and she gets ready for Andrew coming over. Even though she has yet to hear from him.

Audrey sits alone half way through a Doctor Who episode...no Andrew. Rose comes into the room and watches the show, all the while asking an insane amount of questions. When Audrey checks her phone for the zillionth time, Rose: Expecting someone?
Audrey: Um...nah..it's nothing.

First week of school. Audrey's first class: Jane Austen Lit class. Audrey is super excited, no one else can match it.

After class Audrey runs into Andrew. It's awkward. Audrey's just a little too excited and Andrew's a little too twitchy. Audrey asks about Saturday. Andrew gives an excuse that even Audrey has a hard time buying.

Rose's first class also doesn't go well. She gets to a classroom two minutes before it starts, only to realize she's in the wrong class. Rose has to sprint across campus (its a small campus but still that's not enough time). Rose doesn't make it to the class on time. Entering class only five minutes late, the professor begins to chew Rose out, until Rose is saved when the cute TA comes in and he makes an excuse that Rose was helping him find the classroom. The professor relents and Rose is lost in her new crush. **(Question: should I show all the girls in their first class...I feel like that could get a bit tedious. Also should the voice over pop in at various times throughout the episode detailing the girl's mistakes? It's not really in here a ton right now because I'm still trying to figure it out and I see it as more of a script thing).**

ACT IV

Julie's at the swimming pool getting some practice in. It's tough and Julie pushes herself. We finally see her serious side, if only for a moment. Julie goes to the girls locker room and overhears some girls talking about Andrew. She peeks over the shower wall (she can see who they are, we can't) and one of the girls say's she hooked up with Andrew Saturday night **(the girls all know who Andrew is to Audrey at this point that will be established in the script).**

Julie goes to Rose. Julie: We've got a problem. Both girls debate telling Audrey. Audrey interrupts them, causing Julie and Rose to clam up. Awkwardly Audrey goes to her room to do homework. With some pushing from Rose, Julie invites Audrey to go to the cafeteria with them to eat.

Lucy meets the girls at the cafeteria. Alice stops by their table and brings up the frat party that night. Julie perks up at that. Alice also reminds Lucy about rush week and her impending bid, before taking off. Rose's attention is grasped...she wants in and she's going to get Lucy to help her.

While eating the girls that dumped Audrey sit down at a table near by. Audrey notices and begins to eat faster, trying to get

her roommates to hurry up. Rose asks what's with her. Rose spills. Julie gets a good look at the other girls and elbows Rose. They were the girls she overheard!

Getting ready for the party. Rose and Julie are spending forever getting ready. Lucy sits on the couch bored out of her mind, having been ready since they got back from the cafeteria. Audrey doesn't really feel up for a party, but Rose and Julie convince her. As Julie and Rose start to they try and get Audrey to have a drink too, to loosen her up. Audrey doesn't drink.

At the party. It's chaotic, music blasting in every direction, it's as if the whole school is packed into this smallish frat house. Audrey tries not to lose Rose, as she feels a bit overwhelmed. It is her first party after all. Julie takes off the second they get there, heading straight for a drink and the dance floor. Lucy ducks and dodges from her sister. Audrey stays attached to Rose's side. Rose spots her TA across the deck on back of the frat house. She gets Audrey to look and see if he's seen her...she's a bit obsessed already.

Audrey finally spots Andrew. She leaves Rose to go talk to him, just as Rose's TA spots her. Audrey starts to talk to Andrew, he's jumpy and acting different from the Andrew she knows. They're interrupted quickly by the girl that replaced Audrey in her original dorm room. The girl wraps her arms around Andrew. He does the same avoiding looking at Audrey. When they pull a part Audrey looks down at their intertwined hands. Things begin to click into place for her. She quickly excuses her self.

Audrey goes to get a drink...then another...and another. Rose spots her throwing back shots and bitterly leaves who she was talking to. She finds Julie. They go to Audrey to already find Lucy with her. Lucy's trying to convince Audrey that punching this girl in the face is not a good idea. Audrey's slurring her words. Lucy: What did you think, if you just waited around he would eventually fall in love with you? Audrey: (drunkenly) well maybe...it happened in Mansfield Park. Rose: (mumbles) only person who could do that drunk. Lucy: That's a book Audrey! It's not real life! Audrey grabs another drink, downs it, and takes off. Julie smacks Lucy and the girls go after Audrey again.

They find her about to confront the girls that dumped her. Lucy debates letting her scream at these girls, she might need it. Rose: and when she gets sober? The girls decide it's best to get her home.

Last scene: Audrey throwing up in the toilet. Rose holding her hair back. Audrey's cursing Rose and promising to never drink again. Rose just pats her back soothingly. Audrey lays her head on the toilet seat. Rose accidentally gets a look at what she threw up. Rose: What did you eat??!! Audrey begins to throw up again.

THEME

Jane Austen is probably the biggest theme of the show, more specifically though, it is how the Jane Austen ideal of love and relationships has permeated society. The amount of adaptations of her novels and continuations of her novels is astonishing and it has effected the way young women approach relationships. Audrey's character is who we see this through the most, but we can see the other side of the coin in Lucy in that she shuns these ideals. The girls will make mistakes because of this and grow up learning from these mistakes. That's another big theme of the show, growing up and figuring out whom you are. These four girls are only 18 and they are on their own for the first time. That's just a situation that spells all kinds of trouble. In making mistakes in friendships and also in their love life, the girls will figure out who they are but also grow up.

Appendix C: Notes From Committee Meeting Concerning First Draft

HJARML notes

- The girls could have more Austen qualities
 - Kind of lose who they are after the teaser
 - Audrey: more of a caricature of someone who everyone can relate to more (Lizzie Bennet)
 - Kind of don't get her yet and her relationship with Andrew yet
- Teaser too long
 - Abbreviated
 - Playing up the Jane Austen of it all...should they all be Jane Austen fanatics who find each other.
 - Great I'm a weirdo in high school and now I'm weirdo...find these girls
- Murky...between popular and Greek make it more clear
 - Audrey sees it but everyone else doesn't?
- Clearer goal in the episode
 - Goal to find roommates?
 - Best first week of college or weekend???
 - Audrey needs to have more sassiness and strike back against Andrew/medan
 - More lizzie Bennett
 - More hopeless romantic
 - WATCH FELICITY PILOT!!!
 - FUN RYAN MURPHY VERSION OF THAT
- Andrew/Audrey
 - More the p&p of it all...
 - At college: omg he wants's to hang out with me etc.
 - All her dreams have come true until Megan...Low point at end of act II
 - Girl at graduation looks 15/16 she runs away in tears and Audrey super happy
- Abortion too much???? YUP
- Gives her speech
 - Teachers like we love you but not classmates
 - College is gonna be different, going on and on to parents
 - Fantasy sequence to start everyone love the speech but no...
- After the girls kick her out/Andrew jilts her, Audrey in line at lunch and Jane as lunch lady tells Audrey everything will be fine, Jane embroidered on uniform
- Too nonchalant about Andrews and sex needs to be freaking out more
 - Andrew not redeeming!!!
 - Flipping whole thing, showing up for popcorn nothing's changed for him, show up and just be a dude. (Maybe hardly remembers sex???) Brings it up during the movie (you gotta be so drunk that you have sex with me).
 - In the room, Andrew has a bum first day too.
 - Both saying the same thing in the same way.

- Make Audrey drink
 - Fine I'm in college...one beer (lightweight)
 - Sleep together depressed away from home lonely
 - MY SO CALLED LIFE
 - Focus on Audrey
 - Don't need to cut to other girls, teaser just about Audrey
 - Julie and Lucy to similar
 - Give them flavor
 - Where they're from
 - Mix it up...
 - Loser characters that Audrey gets stuck with
 - Walk of shame to the loser part of dorm
- Play up idea that going to college you find your people
- Meet the love interest or see him in the pilot
- MEET THE LOVE INTEREST AT THE END OF THE EPISODE
- ACT 1: KICKED OUT OF ROOM
- ACT 2: BF ADMITTING TO SEX BUT NO BIG DEAL
- ACT 3: GOES HOME I DON'T HAVE A HOUSE!
- ACT 4: MEETING THE LOVE INTEREST
- I can stay at home, no we already paid for the semester (rose drives her back?? or the one who has the least amount in common with her LUCY)
 - Big goodbye cruel world thing huge speech flips everyone off, mean to Megan!
 - Break year (British term)
 - Audrey has a huge plan then leaves, then she comes back walk of shame, but the roommates accept her. Dress up her room.
 - Play with the walk shame visually!!! Like 4!!!
- Professor who is the Jane Austen is more like her obi wan
 - Play up Audrey wanting to be a writer.
- Might get tricky with Jane Austen popping up with all the girls
- DON'T BE AFRAID TO USE THE BEST STUFF IN THE PILOT
 - Cinderella thing (townie type) is the love interest instead (an unexpected guy)
- Think about the Andrew thing...it is golden retriever type of character
 - Maybe not best friend?? Though that raises emotional stakes.
 - Betrayal is worse
 - ANDREW: THIS IS A JANE AUSTEN BOOK
 - Andrew's back story
 - A little bit of a loser in high school and now in college he gets more popular
 - Growth spurt over summer shuns the geeky-ness in college
 - Andy in the teaser Andrew in college.
 - Audrey can hold this over him
 - Andrew nerd in HS Audrey holds it over him

Appendix D: Third Draft of Show Bible

HOW JANE AUSTEN RUINED MY LIFE BIBLE

We like to believe we know who we are at 18. We've made it through high school, the worst years of most peoples lives; we should know what we want and who we are. But do we really? Simple answer, no. In reality that's what college is for, figuring all that crap out. This show will follow four girls as they attempt to do that, as they break out of their parents shadow and the expectations they have for themselves...much like the characters in a Jane Austen novel. Each girl is actually based on the main character from an Austen novel.

Who where Jane Austen's characters, before Jane Austen wrote them? What made these women into the women Jane wrote (Yes I realize I'm talking about fictional characters)? That's what "How Jane Austen Ruined My Life" will explore. The girls in this show will be tested, changed, and made stronger, but it's not the guys in their lives that change them. It's each other. Over time they do become like their Jane Austen counter points. Strong women who are unapologetically themselves. But of course they'll be some bumps and bruises along the way, where they really do believe Austen ruined everything. Though who knows, when all is said and done they may rethink that.

***In each Jane Austen book there is a "Mr. Wickham" type and a "Mr. Darcy" type. While there is one "Mr. Darcy" for each of the girls, they'll have to go through their fair share of Wickham's to find him (or in some cases, realize their "Mr. Darcy" is right in front of them). In Austen era, one cad might be all you encounter, but that isn't not the reality in the modern world. As Audrey will say (at some point): You don't have just one Mr. Wickham you have like 300.

****Also just because a guy is a "Mr. Wickham" type at some point doesn't mean they can't become a Mr. Darcy. Unlike Jane Austen, the show will recognize that guys go through a phase of "Mr. Wickham-ness" No guy is absolutely perfect all the time. Andrew will be a clear example of this as he is a Mr. Wickham for Audrey...but a Mr. Darcy for someone else.....

WHY JANE AUSTEN

Why not one of the Bronte sisters? Or someone else in literature? It's simple really... she's a massive part of our cultural conscious. You may not realize it but you've seen a Jane Austen film. *Clueless* ring a bell? The movie was based on the Austen classic Emma. A 90's movie that's so popular that currant rappers are remaking it for music videos, and the references aren't going over their audiences' head?

How about the BBC *Pride and Prejudice* that turned Colin Firth into the man everyone woman dreams about. *Bridget Jones Diary*? That includes Firth reprising his Mr. Darcy and Hugh Grant as a classic Mr. Wickham.

To this day Jane Austen has a presence in film and media. Long since dead, she continues to shape young women's expectations of men and romance, even though times have changed drastically. At the end of the day we're all searching for our Mr. Darcy. Is anyone really searching for a Heathcliff?

THE CHARACTERS

Audrey Bennet (18, based on Elizabeth Bennett)

Audrey Bennet would forever and always be a hopeless romantic. It was ingrained in her soul from the moment she was born. Realistically it had nothing to do with her parents. They were the classic met in college and got married, like so many other stories. Though that is as classic as her parents got. Perhaps it wasn't so much as how her parents met but how they were together. Audrey saw from a young age what it was like to find your other half. The person that can finish your sentences even your thoughts. That's how her parents were. She'd watch them critique each other's artwork in ways that no one else could. Their fights always ended with paint being thrown at someone, a mess being made, then both adults dissolving into laughter. Before she even knew what love meant, Audrey was convinced of what true love looked like.

There always seemed to be the expectation that Audrey would follow in her parents' footsteps and become an artist. Her mother was a printmaker/painter and her father a photographer. The house was full of art supplies. Finger painting, photography, any type of arts and crafts was encouraged constantly. At first Audrey embraced it. Making a mess with paint is literally every kid's dream. But after a while Audrey didn't have anything new to paint. There was only so much cobalt blue and alizarin crimson could do. Quickly the paint tubes dried up and Audrey moved on...to books.

The moment she learned how to read Audrey was addicted. She'd read all her Berenstain Bears books so many times she had them memorized. As hard as her parents tired (and really it wasn't that hard) Audrey would stay in the house and read book after book after book. The world opened up to her in the pages she read and before long she graduated from picture to books to chapter books. It was as if overnight the little girl had become a complete and utter bookworm.

When Audrey was 8 she got her first library card. Every Saturday she spent at least three hours at the library, selecting her books for the week. Within a month the ladies there knew her. They smiled at her warmly each time she checked out her massive stack of books. They understood what was happening. Though, they were the only ones. The other kids at the library and school even gave Audrey a bit of a wide berth. They didn't read like her. They played outside or watch television. Audrey didn't do any of those things. She lived in her books and at that time they would be enough.

There's always that one book that will change your life. The book that begins to define everything about you, because you carry it with in your heart. You absorb it into your soul and you can never let it go. Audrey found that book at 12. It was *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth

Bennet becomes her hero (like she did for so many girls) and Mr. Darcy was Audrey's Holy Grail. That's what love was going to be like. At least that's what Audrey believed. She gobbled up every Jane Austen book she could get her hands on, though *P&P* would always be her favorite. Once a year Audrey re-reads *P&P*, reminding herself what Elizabeth Bennett would do in given situations.

It was around the same time that Audrey's mother gave her a journal. Audrey didn't ask for it. Hell she didn't even know what to do with it. It was one of those things that mothers figure out before their daughters. She somehow knew Audrey would need a journal. All she told Audrey to do was to write. And eventually Audrey did. She wrote down everything. Her thoughts, her secrets, her observations of everyone around her. Until eventually little stories began to take shape. They were simple at first, but as she got older the stories became more complicated. She began to model her writing after Jane. Writing similar things...young girls searching for love. It was naive and hopelessly romantic, but that was what she knew. She filled up journal after journal and quickly began to believe this was what she was meant to do with her life. Write. That is until junior year of high school.

Audrey submitted one of her short stories to the Lit Mag. She worked on the short story all summer, re-writing it multiple times. She had no need to; the Lit Mag accepted practically everything. Barely anything got turned down. After submitting the advising faculty member and the lit mag staff called Audrey in. For a moment she was on cloud nine...until they told her the piece wouldn't be featured in the magazine. They rattled off their reasons as Audrey tuned them out. They couldn't find her voice in the piece. It sounded as if someone else had written it entirely. After the meeting the faculty member pulled Audrey aside. He told her to get out and live. That's where she would find her stories. Audrey stopped writing after that. She began to believe that the only thing she was good at was reading.

When the time for college applications rolled around Audrey knew what she was going to do. She would major in Literature and become a literary agent. It's like that only saying goes... those that can't do, teach. Those that can't write, read. At least that is Audrey's belief.

Audrey had a few acquaintances in high school. The people she worked with on newspaper and Lit. Magazine and that was about it. Except for Andrew. He was just the boy down the street, who she had known longer than she could remember. They'd grown up together and somewhere along the way Audrey kind of fell in love with Andrew. Not that she would admit it to anyone anytime soon. All through high school it had been Audrey and Andrew. They went to almost every school dance together (as friends of course). Friday nights were movie nights; Saturdays were reserved for Doctor Who, and Thursday's they binged on half hour comedies while doing homework. He was her best friend and like most girls in high school Audrey believed they were destined to be together. They were going to the same college...it's going to be perfect.

Rose Dashwood (18 Based on Marianne Dashwood)

Rose always had a tendency to trust too easily. Gullible to a fault, Rose always saw the good in people instead of the bad. Ever since she was a little girl. It all started with her dad. He

died when she was four. It shouldn't have happened. The minute she was born, Rose was a Daddy's girl. He was the only one who could get her to stop crying, put her to sleep, bath her, or anything else. If her mother even tried Rose would dissolve in a mess of tears. It's not that her mother was harsh or anything. Rose just instantly felt that connection to her father that couldn't be explained. She remembers the night he died, even though she was only four. She still has nightmares about it to this day. It was raining, as was normal in south Florida. Her dad was a motorcycle cop and was on duty that night. He was supposed to be home by 9 pm. Rose had a horrible habit of waiting up for him. Her mother would try to put her to bed but she'd just sneak back out of the room and wait. When the clock hit 9:30pm Rose knew something was wrong. The rain started pounding harder as the phone rang. There was an accident...Rose and her mother were needed at the hospital. Without saying a word her mother scooped her up and drove to the hospital.

They were too late though. Rose's father had passed away by the time they got there. He skidded on the slick pavement into on coming traffic. The helmet protected him but the internal bleeding was too much. All Rose has ever been able to focus on is that she never got to say goodbye. It kills her to this day.

Rose's mother never recovered from the accident either. She withdraws from everyone around her, including Rose. Mother and Daughter soon moved in with Roses grandparents.

Rose never really noticed that mother was almost constantly depressed. Her grandparents were the buffer between her and her mom. That buffer wouldn't be there forever though. When Rose was 15 her grandparents died. First her grandmother then two months later her grandfather. Her grandparents' death devastated Rose and her mother. What made it ever harder though was this was the first time Rose and her mother had ever been on their own together.

For the next three years, as she finished high school, Rose found herself being the caretaker of her mother. She took over her grandparent's role and far to early became the adult in the family. After awhile Rose couldn't help but resent her mother.

Rose wasn't alone in dealing with her mother. For the two years after her grandparents died she had the support of her high school boyfriend, Jason. He was perfect, or so she thought, when her mom was too depressed to cook he would bring her dinner; before she got her license he would take her grocery shopping (because her mom never would). But when he went away to college her senior year, Rose learned that Jason wasn't that perfect. Their relationship seemed to be on a constant yo-yo, but Rose couldn't bring herself to let go.

Jason's calls started out everyday, then every few days, soon though it she'd be lucky to get a text once a week let alone a call. Rose found herself getting depressed with her mother. She'd lost her support system...just like her mother had. The dishes began to pile up in the skin and junk food filled the cabinets. The house was falling apart.

It was at the time that Rose became obsessed with movies. They were her escape. Animated movies, rom-coms, action movies, she loved them all. As long as it had a happy ending, where the hero got the girl and still saved the world. She hated any movie that ended sadly. She found that out when she and her mother went to see "Atonement" one Christmas. While her mother loved the movie all Rose could focus on was how disappointed she was with the end. Rose knew why she loved these movies. It was everything she wanted in her life. It

was watching Sabrina, Funny Face, and Breakfast at Tiffany's that Audrey discovered her idol... Audrey Hepburn. She was inspired by her life, the way she stayed positive and kept pushing. Rose resolved to do the same. Her positivity could make your teeth hurt. It could be grating and nightmare to deal with...until you need a cheerleader. Then Rose was the best person for the job...and that's why everyone kept her around as a friend.

Julie Woodhouse (18 based on Emma Woodhouse)

Julie Woodhouse is use to being second best...that doesn't mean she likes it. Her childhood was a constant competition, fueled by her father. A failed college football star, Julie's father pushed his own dreams on his children (as parents are apt to do). The football dreams landed on Julie's older brother, Ben. He willingly accepted them and excelled at the sport. Breaking every one of his father's records in no time flat.

It became obvious on a family vacation what Julie was good at. It was a trip to Myrtle Beach. Julie was only 4 and just finished a few weeks of summer camp at the Y, where she learned how to swim. Her dad was busy with her brother, teaching him a better throwing motion or something, to be bothered with the fact that his daughter was the top of her swimming class. When he saw it with his own two eyes though...well everything changed. Julie started every morning of that vacation in the pool. Before breakfast she jumped in and swam around. The rest of the day was spent in the ocean (under her parents supervision naturally), splashing around in the waves, seeing how long she could hold her breath, etc. Her mother joked she was a water baby. Julie smiled, though she didn't understand what it could possibly mean. Her father, however, he saw another champion in the making.

And that's when Julie's childhood ended. After that trip Julie was placed in every swimming class imaginable. Her life became about the sport, meets every two weeks, training 24/7. The older she got the more intense her father became and his intensity didn't end with swimming. It was her father's belief that Julie had to succeed in the pool and the classroom. She spent days soaked in chlorine only to end the day with her nose stuffed in a book as her Dad/Coach stood over her shoulder, reminding her what all this hard work was for. Slowly but surely Julie began to fall out of love with swimming, though she never stopped.

She could still remember what it was like before swimming...her father barely realizing she was there, living in her brothers' shadow. After swimming...well she was still in the shadow a bit but she had her own opportunity to shine. She wasn't ready to give up her father's attention just yet. Though there comes a moment when living in half a shadow just isn't enough. For Julie...she had two.

The first happened around the end of junior year. It was the last swim meet of the year. It was also the first one Julie ever lost. She remembered lifting her head out of the pool, knowing three other girls had already touched the wall. She punched the wall and broken two fingers and fractured her wrist. When she got out of the pool her dad pulled her into a tight hug. She thought at first she'd get some comfort but no, he just whispered one thing in her ear. "You're lucky that was the last meet or that little stunt would've cost you."

Once her hand healed her dad started her on two-a-days. He was tougher on her than he'd ever been. Julie spent the summer before her senior year in a swimming pool. Family vacation was canceled that year...all because she lost one match.

The second moment happened during physical therapy that summer. It was the only time she was on her own. Because the injury was to her right hand, Julie's physical therapy was a little different. It involved art. When not with her father, Julie spent her time painting, sketching, and drawing. That love of swimming that Julie had as a child...she found that love again, with painting. She painted everything. Landscapes, people. She would sketch weird little abstract drawings. Other than her physical therapist...no one knew. After therapy ended, Julie kept a stash of art supplies in the back of her closet. Late at night she would take them out and draw whatever came to mind.

When it came to filling out the courses for her freshman year of college, there was a moment when Julie almost added an art class to her schedule. That was until her father appeared behind her shoulder. Art would stay in the back of her closet. She would be the bio major he wanted and continue swimming competitively.

Lucy Farris (18 Based on Eleanor Dashwood)

Lucy Bennet grew up in Baltimore Maryland with her mother, father, and older sister Alice. Her parents met in the 80's while they were both protesting various things in Washington D.C. Ten years later, in the early 90's they finally settled down (sort of) and had two daughters. Lucy was named after Lucy Burns and her sister was named after Alice Paul. From a young age Lucy idolized her namesake and everything Lucy Burns stood for. When she was 16 she met Gloria Steinem. She almost hyperventilated and barely said two words. It wasn't the best impression to leave.

Lucy was a combination of both her parents. That was clear when she was ten and she begged to go to her first march. It was for gay rights and though Lucy didn't really understand the difference between gay and straight, she knew it was important to the two guys who lived next door and babysat her on the weekends. She got more extreme as she got older. Her parents indulged her but her older sister, Alice, found it exhausting.

The activism gene seemed to have skipped Alice. She had no taste for it and the sisters really had nothing in common. Alice was smart but she always got caught up with boys. Lucy watched her older sister lose herself in every boyfriend she had. It always ended the same, Alice coming home in tears and locking herself in her room. Lucy would always hear her crying through their bedroom wall. She may not have understood her sister but she did love her. So Lucy would go and hold her sister until she fell asleep. There were quite a few nights the girls' mother found them cuddled in bed together, Alice still sniffing away tears. Lucy was always there for Alice but being there convinced her to never be like her sister.

Even though Lucy had a new cause every week, at her core she was a feminist. After all her heroes were and she couldn't help it after the example of her sister. She decided to take

women's studies in college and follow in her parents' footsteps. The next time she met Gloria Steinem she would say more than two words.

In 8th grade Lucy attempted to join marching band. The only instrument that caught her eye was the drums. The band director tried to steer her toward something else, thinking that she was too small to lift the drums. Lucy took the challenge (though none was really given) and mastered the drums the summer between middle school and high school. She made the marching band in high school with ease. During high school Lucy played in various punk bands in the Baltimore/D.C area, finding another way to protest. By the time she left for college she was something of a legend in the punk scene. Though her parents had no idea.

As much as Lucy was like her parents, they weren't home enough to realize it. Because of their absence Lucy has developed an independent streak. She's intense, sharp, biting. Basically Kat Stratford before Patrick Verona.

Lucy had it all planned out. She was bound and determined to get her parents attention. She had applied to as many schools as she good and being Lucy she had gotten into all of them. It's hard to sense a bad attitude over 4.0 and amazing extracurriculars. What can she say...she's an over achiever. Lucy had no plans of going to college. She was going to go on tour with her band. She, at 18, was going to drive around the US in passenger band with 3 guys. She'd be playing in seedy bars and sleeping in shitty motels. It was every 18-year-old dream...right?

The announcement didn't go as planned. Lucy expected fire works, screaming, even a stern look. Instead she got nothing. A couple nods, uh-huhs, and "that's nice dear," before her parents turned back to their paperwork, planning their next big protest. It was one of those times when you feel like you're screaming at the top of your lungs but no one can hear you. Lucy's plan didn't work.

Without a second thought Lucy switched tactics. She gave up the band. She loved music, it had saved her life more times that she could count but at 18 she just wanted her parents to notice her. She'd give up everything for that. Lucy was going to college. There was no reaction from her parents. Her resolve didn't stop her from bringing her drum set though.

Andrew Knightly (18 George Knightly)

Andrew Knightly was a straight up nerd. He was the moment he was born...well probably not born but from a very early age. See his mom raised him by herself. His dad split for Andrew's first birthday. Andrew never met him. And by the time he was 10, Andrew didn't care to meet him. Andrew's mom tried her hardest, but raising a kid on your own and working a full time job. Let's just say Andrew was parked in front of TV more times then he probably should've been.

Not that Andrew would complain. That's where his love of sci-fi was born. It started early on Saturday mornings, before his mom even woke up. He knew how to work a TV remote probably before he could tie his shoes. He'd been flipping channels one morning...no more than 3...and came across Star Trek: Next Generation. He recognized the voice of the Reading Rainbow guy. That's what made him stop. The show, traveling across space, searching the unknown, that's what made him a fan.

In that instant a sci-fi nerd was born. Andrew gobble up everything. Star Trek, Star Wars, Marvel/DC comic books, Doctor Who, Battlestar. As he got older the books came too. Lord of the Rings, The Hobbit (basically all Tolkien), Jules Verne, Harry Potter (though even Audrey didn't know how much he loved those books). Kid was a nerd before he even had a chance.

In fourth grade Andrew was put in the gifted program. He had a head for numbers that showed in the fact that he always finished her math tests before everyone else and scoring a perfect hundred. The classes were accelerated just a bit. That's where he met Audrey. She had a head for words. At nine she had a college reading level, but math she didn't get at all. Andrew took pity on the shy girl who sat in the back of the classroom. He helped her with her homework and Audrey accepted his nerdy-ness...up until her no but his mom really had. It was the start of friendship that would (for Andrew) last forever. Overtime Audrey's family became Andrew's family.

Andrew took every AP class in high school. Well not ever mostly the math related ones and the English one's Audrey dragged him into, just in case she ever needed a partner. Unlike everyone else his age, Andrew figured out what he was going to do early. He wanted to be an architect. Maybe it was all the sci-fi shows, creating new things, futuristic building. He applied to every school he could, and he got into most. But there was something missing in his packet of building designs. Sure he could plan out a sturdy building, but there was nothing creative about it. He's just a little too much Captain Picard and not enough Captain Krik. He got, but the finical aid packet left a lot to be desired. His mom saved as much as she could but some schools, Andrew's top choices, just weren't an option. Andrew settled for his safety school. The bottom of the mother-fucking barrel. The only consolation...Audrey was there.

The summer before college started out as a dark one for Andrew. He had gone stag to his own Prom (not for lack of trying), settled for a school he didn't really care about, he was fed up. Tired of being everyone's second choice. Andrew spent that summer away with his grandmother. He couldn't change the school thing, but there was one thing he could change. Andrew wasn't going to college a nerd that was for damn sure.

James Fitz William (18 Based on Mr. Darcy)

A completely practical person, James Fitz William doesn't have time for frivolity. He's Andrew's roommate and not very much is know about him. However, the mystery around James doesn't make him more interesting. Instead it just comes across as snobbish. From the furniture in the dorm (all of it being his) it's obvious he comes from money. He frequently disappears only saying he's visiting his sister. Audrey and James butt heads constantly. However, James is interested in her but Audrey never really picks up on it. Things have happened in his childhood (which we will discover in later seasons) have made him untrusting of those around him. Also because it is just him and his sister (his parents died when he was young) he grew up very

quickly. He came from a strict family and the freedom Audrey grew up with is something he is unfamiliar with but also jealous of. He finds that annoying in her to begin with but later comes to see that as her strength...that freedom drawing him to her.

END OF SEASON ONE...AFTER ONLY A FEW INTERACTIONS JAMES WILL CONFESS TO AUDREY THAT HE LIKES HER...TO HER UTTER SURPRISE.

Jane Austen: Jane appears throughout the show as various people. She will address the audience at times but also talk to Audrey. Audrey will have NO idea she's talking to Jane Austen. What she says will either be an Austen quote or something Austen-y. Each time she appears and interacts with Audrey she will have a nametag that reads Jane. It must be clear that Audrey has no idea who Jane is other than just another member of the college staff.

Where they are at the end of the season:

Audrey: She has a decision to make. A summer on the road with her parents or the summer internship at The New Yorker that she swears she never applied for. With girls and Andrew (maybe he put her application in...that's what she thinks but it's really Julie) pushing her to take the internship (he must've sent the application...right!?) and James confessing his interest in her (where the fuck did that come from) New York seems like the way to go. She's faced her first year of college. New York can't be that bad. Andrew takes her to the airport (her parents in new Mexico as her mother is going through a Georgia O'Keefe phase). Their friendship rebuilt from where it was at the start of the season.

Julie: Julie's done with swimming, straight up done. She's excelled at it all year, being the anchor for her team and the reason they've made it to nationals. Everyone is here cheering her on, except for one person. Her dad. He has meetings with agents for her brother. The biggest moment of her life and he's not there. It hits her like a ton of bricks...who the fuck is she doing this for? Not herself. Things are going to be different, she'll finish the season but after that she's doing what she wants. Her year ends meeting with her advisor and changing her major. Now lets just see how long she can put off telling her dad.

Rose: After a year of waffling between whether or not Daniel, her TA (we'll meet him in episode 2), will actually date her, Rose stands up to him. She's had enough of his crap. They are soooooo done. This all happens for two reasons. He's screwed her over for the millionth time, but she's also failing the class he TA's. Some of it is because Daniel is just incredible distracting; the other part though is that in her head Rose made the classic mistake of acting stupid to get the guy. With the failing grade looming over her head and the prospect of being a freshman twice... Rose doesn't like who she's become. The girls help her through her final and she somehow gets a passing grade (by the skin of her teeth). Next year things will be different, no more boys. At least she says this now.

Lucy: Lucy is once again faced with a choice. Her parents have gotten her a summer job with an Environmental Lawyer in DC. It has nothing to do with what she wants in life. She has no idea how environmental law even got into her parents head, but they insist it will be good for her. Opportunities, connections and all that jazz. Then there's the band she's joined in Atlanta. She was miserable when she wasn't playing and then she found the band and everything felt right again. They're going on tour for the summer...overseas. Not being about to turn down music a second time Lucy says no to her parents. She finally gets a reaction. They yell and scream, not because she's throwing her life away (not that she is) but because they pulled some strings, this lawyer is doing her a favor. It doesn't change her mind. UK better get ready for Lucy.

Andrew: Andrew ends the season having had a few girlfriends but nothing that stuck, Megan being the longest. The roommates are slowly starting to accept him, Lucy giving him the hardest time. Andrew offers to take Audrey to the airport, which she of course accepts. Alone Andrew begins to see that his best friend has changed...she's confident, driven, and not that quiet 18 year-old she once was. A flash of a feeling...butterfly's or indigestion? Can guys even get butterflies? Whatever it is...the closer they get to the gate the worse he feels. It's the hug goodbye that does it...hitting Andrew like a ton of bricks as Audrey waves goodbye. He might be beginning to fall for his best friend. Crap.

THE WORLD OF THE STORY

The story takes place on the campus of a very small liberal arts college just outside downtown Atlanta, called Steventon University (not real). It sits near the perimeter of Atlanta proper, which becomes the only place most of the students can escape to. An escape that only lasts a few hours, a couple of times a semester. Really what's the point in leaving campus? There's almost always a party going on, when you need one.

Oglethorpe has a student population of around 800, with female students outnumbering male students three to one. The small student population combined with the self-contained aspect of the university makes it the perfect breeding ground for gossip. Everyone knows everyone else's business. It is also an incredibly liberal campus with a diverse and progressive student body and a faculty more than willing to accommodate them.

A Division III school, the sporting event crowds tend to be outnumbered by those at the plays put on by the legendary theater department. While the traditional frats exist they're joined by Chi Phi, which is made up of guys you'd never expect to find in a fraternity. More often than not most of the school ends up at one of the frats on Fridays...unless it's during midterms.

It's a world where the students think they know more than they actually do. Like any other college environment, they're finally living out from under their parents thumb and they're taking full advantage of it. Being between the ages of 18 and 22 most of the girls have a sheltered view of boys and love in general. A view that's been fostered by movies, TV shows, and popular novels in the vein of Jane Austen (her's, adaptations of her work, continuations of her books, and even parodies). These girls are left either deluded about their romantic relationships or jaded when it comes to the opposite sex. It's here in college, when they are

finally forced to grow up and make every mistake imaginable that they start to figure out that Jane Austen might have ruined their lives.

***Apart from Steventon there will be trips to University of Georgia (the real school). That'll be for football games with Julie's brother and also so a different, more tradition college experience.

Episodes: While Audrey is the main character the show is very much an ensemble, with one girl being the focus each episode. For example Episode 2 will really be about Rose getting into Chi Omega.

Episode 102:

With classes underway the girls try to adjust to college life, though that's easier said than done. Rush week is starting and Rose is determined to be a part of it. So when she finds out that Lucy is a Chi Omega Legacy, Rose decides to take full advantage of her roommate. At least she tries to, bargaining for Lucy's help may come back to bit Rose in the ass. Pledge week is bad enough but when Lucy and Rose discover that Megan is also pledging Chi Omega. Suddenly pledging isn't just about getting into Chi Omega. The girls resolve a plan to sabotage Megan.

Rose also makes a fool of herself in her History of Film class. Arriving late on the first day only for the professor to berate her in front of the entire class. Thank god she was saved. Daniel Willoughby, the TA, covers for her, swearing she was helping him find the classroom. And with that Rose is smitten.

Navigating college becomes a bit harder for Audrey, who has become known as the girl who had the freak out before classes even started. On Steventon's small campus news travels fast and between dodging and Andrew's call and the guy in her class who will not stop looking down on her, Audrey isn't finding time to adjust to college life. Julie begins to try and take Audrey under her wing, coaching her and giving her more advice than Audrey knows what to do with. Between coaching Audrey and classes Julie can barely find time to practice for the swim meet. Three hours of sleep and straight coffee for breakfast don't spell victory.

The episode culminates in a party. All of the girls are roped into going by Rose...and Lucy...the plan has to work to sabotage Megan. Plus Rose figures Audrey's in need of a party, after everything she went through. Rose and Julie give Audrey a much needed makeover and while it gets the attention of some guys, it just gets the ire of James William, the guy from her Jane Austen class. The party continues to be a disaster when the big plan for sabotage backfires in the Rose and Lucy's faces. Why is it things can never go according to plan?

EPISODE 103

After weeks of not practicing, Lucy is losing her mind. her hands have begun to hurt from not playing and her drum set has become decorated with clothes. She needs to play and she needs a band, which is surprisingly not hard in the Atlanta area. She spends the week ignoring

her class work and practicing on her drum kit like a mad woman, driving her roommates crazy. Rose decides to go back home for the week, only coming back to campus for her classes. When Lucy and Audrey blow up at each other (over Lucy's drumming that is preventing Audrey from studying), Audrey decides to drop in on Rose and escape from campus too.

Julie has almost disappeared from the dorm, spending every day in the swimming pool. She has a meet and she needs to be ready. Plus her parents are going to be there. She has to be perfect. When she's not drumming Lucy brings her a food but the breaks never last long.

Upon getting to Rose's house Audrey learns more about her roommate than she ever expected too. The house is a mess and Rose's schoolwork sits in the corner, untouched. Rose is spending most of her time in the kitchen, cooking meals to last a few weeks. Rose expects Audrey's judgment. Instead, Audrey simply begins to help Rose clean and cook the house.

The girls come back for Julie's meet and Lucy's big gig. Julie's mom sits on the sideline, happy to be there for her daughter, but her dad is a little too close to the pool...it's clear he's more of a coach than a dad. The meet doesn't go as planned. Lucy gives in second, 0.1 seconds between her and the first place swimmer. But by her father's cold treatment...that's not good enough.

The roommates resolve to get Julie to take a break and what's more perfect than Lucy's gig. At the show each of the girls have a good time forgetting their own problems and simply enjoying the music. Lucy kills it at the gig. Turns out the show is a test run and the band has asked her to join them. When she announces her news to the group they all happy for her

EPISODE 104:

Julie wakes up one morning determined to get out of the dorm. Without giving her roommates much information, she tells them to pack a bag for the weekend, they're getting out of this town. The girls give in when Julie starts packing their bags for them. A few hours later the roommates find themselves at The University of Georgia on game day face to face with Julie's family. Lucy, Rose, and Audrey figure out why they were brought along, buffers.

While tailgating Julie's family dynamics are revealed. Her father addresses her recent loss, comparing her to her brother, UGA's quarterback. He continually reminds her that she isn't living up. Lucy's surprising football knowledge doesn't help things, as it impresses Mr. Woodhouse. It's not going to be an easy weekend for Julie. After the bulldogs win Julie finally gets to see her brother SAM WOODHOUSE. Without their parents it's obvious the two siblings are close but the family dinner is filled with buckets of awkwardness. When Julie's father once again reminds her of how she failed, Julie flips out and storms out of the restaurant. Rose, Audrey, Lucy look between each other before Audrey finally volunteers.

Audrey finds Julie attempting to walk back to Atlanta. The two girls have a heart to heart and for once Audrey gives Julie advice, concerning handling her loss and her father. Audrey and Julie go back to the table and Julie stands up to her dad, sort of, she gives it her best shot. The next day as the girls are driving back to Atlanta, they all figure out that Rose disappeared the

night before. Julie: “You slept with my brother didn’t you?” Rose: “Would it make you feel better if he started it?”

EPISODE 105:

Halloween has come to Steventon University and with it (naturally) parties galore. However, everything isn’t all party, party, party for Audrey. Professor Stone is inspired by the holiday and the new Jane Austen parodies she’s just discovered. The class will separate into teams...each taking a Jane Austen story and putting a creepy twist on it. She assigns the teams. Of course Audrey is with James. The one who cannot stand her. While the girls are off searching for Halloween costumes, Audrey is stuck working on the project...with James...in his dorm. It’s then that she learns the horrible truth. The Mysterious roommate that was a no show from Andrew’s dorm...just so happens to be James. Life has a funny sense of humor.

Spending most of her time at Andrews’s dorm (though she’s not hanging out with him) has certain people on edge. Megan, paranoid that Audrey is going to try something, plans to take evasive manouvres.

The other girls go hunting for costumes, with Julie promising to get Audrey a great costume. Knowing that Daniel will be at the party, Rose goes for Audrey Hepburn from “Funny Face.” It’s a film thing but not to slutty to turn of a “mature” guy like Daniel.

James doesn’t seem into going to a party, instead waiting to work on the project. Audrey, dying for a frivolous Halloween, begins to argue with him. It’s obvious the two have a different opinion of fun. Audrey wants to dance, and yes drink. James doesn’t seem the point of all that. Audrey storms out saying he can finish the project by himself then! She’s going to be a normal 18 year old and have a life.

The party starts out great. Audrey’s a tiny bit uncomfortable in her skintight Cat Woman costume but she’s making do. Until Rose sees something she wishes she didn’t. Daniel making out with a girl in a mouse costume (though it looks more like lingerie). Rose proceeds to get drunk. She’s a mess, but her roommates do their best to take care of her. And that is when Caroline and Megan strike. Teasing Rose about her costume and her drunkenness. The girls have no of it.

A screaming match turns into a fight when Caroline begins slut-shamming Rose and Audrey (that seems to be Lucy’s button). At the end of it Caroline limps away crying, a chunk of hair missing, while Audrey and her roommates walks back to their dorm, a little beat up but all smiles.

The next day Audrey heads back to Andrews dorm...to see James. She apologizes for yelling at him and says she’s there to finish the project. Though it turns out he didn’t work on the project either. He spent the holiday with his sister. He invites her in and they get to work. As the two work, James looks over at Audrey, he stares and slightly smiles at her. She doesn’t notice.