

To Be Determined

By Shandi Sturgill

CAST OF CHARACTERS (Principals)

Shaina Saunders: Passionate about musical theatre. She can be sarcastic and has a smart mouth. She also loves hearing the newest gossip. However, she genuinely cares about those around her. She tends to be a goody-two-shoes and her parents being proud of her is very important.

Jesse White: A talented pianist and performer. He also has a strong interest in and talent for science, particularly botany. He has a strained relationship with his father. While the two love each other, they don't know how to relate. He is very confident and thrives on people liking him. Because of this he can have trouble knowing what he truly wants or what is just expected of him.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (Featured Ensemble)

Mr. West: The school guidance counselor, and head of the theatre department in Shaina and Jesse's hometown. He is warm and cares deeply for his students.

Gabi Oliver: A classic mean girl. She is interested in Jesse and makes no secret of it. She is manipulative and gossipy.

Carl Harrison: A good friend of Shaina's. He is personable and trustworthy so he always knows the going ons at Lincoln High.

Beginning and Ending

This is actually happening

The work of four years

Ends with the world broadening

And the crowd's cheers

Somehow everything's beginning and ending

It's one of those life moments

They say you're ascending

But the cliches are just irritants

Now life's changed with no portending

Everything's ending and beginning

It's like the chapter's ending

And you're caught as the page flips

The future's never been so impending

Now will everything slip through our fingertips

Somehow everything's beginning and ending

It's one of those life moments

They say you're ascending

But the cliches are just irritants

Now life's changed with no portending

Everything's ending and beginning

Once we walk out those doors

Everything changes there's no going back

Will our memories become lore

Can we make it on this new track

Somehow everything's beginning and ending

It's one of those life moments

They say you're ascending

But the cliches are just irritants

Now life's changed with no portending

Everything's ending and beginning

(2X)

Scene 1

MR. WEST

Another great year everyone. Thank you all for your dedication and time this semester. I've been extremely proud of our productions. You all know this will be the last show with the seniors in the department. It's always bittersweet, but I know they will make us proud in their next chapter. Now our department president, Jesse White, wants to say a few words before we strike.

JESSE:

Thanks, Mr. West. I don't want to get too sentimental, so I'll keep this brief. Being involved in theatre these last three years has been hugely important to me. I won't forget the friendships made and thank you Mr. West for allowing us a creative outlet. Now, let's knock this out and enjoy our summer.

(The students begin to mingle and talk amongst themselves. Shaina comes up and puts an arm around Jesse's shoulder. It should be apparent that there is an easy rapport between the two.)

SHAINA:

Well, I guess this is the end of being the big fish in a small pond.

JESSE:

You think college will really be that different?

SHAINA:

Maybe not, but you know it's going to mean building ourselves back up. *(with fake, over the top dramatics)* No more lead roles, it's back to being in the background.

JESSE:

Oh please, we're too talented for /that.

SHAINA:

/Well at least you are.

JESSE:

Plus I thought you wanted smaller roles since you didn't live in town anymore?

SHAINA:

Yeah, yeah I know. It just feels like it all comes so much more naturally to you and everyone else. *(only half joking)* Sometimes I wonder if I could even handle a lead role.

JESSE:

Stop fishing for compliments, Shaina.

SHAINA:

I'm not. It's just the more I think about it the more /I

GABI:

/Jesse! (She throws her arms around him) You were perfect. As always.

JESSE:

(Clearly uncomfortable, but unsure how to address it) Thanks Gabi. I'm glad you were able to come.

GABI:

Well of course I wouldn't miss it. Oh Shaina *(begrudgingly)* you were really good too.

SHAINA:

It's Shaina. But, uh, /thanks.

GABI:

/So, Jesse, which college did you decide on? You know it would be so great if we end up at Columbia together! I've heard they have a great music program.

JESSE:

Oh, really. *(he hesitates)* That's good to know, but, I don't know that I'll major in music.

GABI:

Don't be so needlessly modest. Shannon, don't you agree he should pursue becoming a pianist?

SHAINA:

Seriously? We've been in school together since Kindergarten. It's Shaina *(she stresses the correct pronunciation of her name)*. It's Jesse's decision. Not to mention he's been offered that teaching scholarship he'll have to take into consideration.

GABI:

I had forgotten about that!

SHAINA:

(Under her breath) Probably because you haven't thought of a way to kiss up to him about it yet.

JESSE:

Shaina!

GABI:

You know, Shaina insecurity isn't attractive.

SHAINA:

And what am I insecure about exactly?

JESSE:

Good Lord will you both stop! No one wants to hear you two fighting. No, I haven't decided on a major. And I don't know why everyone seems to think they can have a say in what I do. *(He storms off to the others working on strike. This can be happening off stage.)*

SHAINA:

Thanks a lot.

GABI:

Me? That storm off was all your fault.

SHAINA:

You're delusional. Everyone knows he doesn't want to talk about college. His parents have been hounding the hell out of him about what he'll major in, and they'll lose their minds if he chooses something in the arts. You just couldn't help but bring that topic up could you?

GABI:

I didn't think about that. I need to go talk to him.

MR. WEST:

Shaina! We need your help in the green room with costumes please.

SHAINA:

I'll be right there, Mr. West. Can you please just leave it alone, Gabi.

(SHAINA and Mr. West exit. Gabi exits the opposite side)

End Scene 1

Scene 2

SHAINA:

I figured you'd be long gone by now. Did you not drive today?

JESSE:

(Standoffish) No, there's something going on with the engine. So my car's in the shop. Mom's coming to pick me up.

SHAINA:

Look, Jesse, I'm sorry Gabi and I brought everything up. I know you've been under a lot of /pressure.

JESSE:

/Do you though? You have parents who are willing to let you choose whatever you want to major in.

SHAINA:

That's not fair! Mom may have come around about me choosing theatre, but dad hasn't. He's all but said he won't support me.

JESSE:

Yeah, but, *(sighs)* God, why does growing up have to be so complicated?

SHAINA:

I guess because it feels so permanent. But it's not like you can never change your mind. Nothing's set in stone.

JESSE:

True. But I...I just don't know how to deal with all this pressure.

SHAINA:

Well, as analytical as you are, let's weigh your options. Have you heard anything back yet from your applications?

JESSE:

Yeah. I got my acceptance to Columbia a couple of days ago. I haven't heard from Missouri University of Science and Technology yet though.

SHAINA:

Oh, Gabi will be thrilled.

JESSE:

Please, don't.

SHAINA:

Kidding, kidding. What about Juilliard? We worked so hard filming your audition.

JESSE:

Yeah (*He hesitates, not sure how to broach the subject with her*). I got accepted.

SHAINA:

That's amazing!

JESSE:

I would love to go to Juilliard and study music, but I just don't know how to make it work. Not even taking into account how ridiculously high tuition is. But I also really do love biology, and I think I would like going to Missouri S&T. That's what's driving me insane. Have you heard anything back yet?

SHAINA:

I think I'm going with Missouri State. I like the looks of their musical theatre program. Plus their Tent Theatre will give me some performance opportunities over the summers.

JESSE:

How is it so easy for you?

SHAINA:

What do you mean?

JESSE:

It just seems like it was so easy for you to know what to do with your life. Like you just know what your purpose is.

Shaina:

Well, it's not quite as simple as you think. I just honestly can't think of anything else I want to do with my life.

Where Do I Go

Jesse: Voices are coming from all around
 Growing so loud
 That I can't even hear the sound
 Of my own intuition

Jesse: So where do I go
& Shaina How do I choose
 Can you ever know
 Which path means you win
 And which means you loose
 Why can't there be a neon sign
 Or someday to diffuse
 The pressure of growing up
 So what's my next move
 Someone tell me, where do I go

Shaina: All I can feel is fear I'll make
 A move that can't be undone
 That'll prove to be a mistake
 Then my life's thrown off track

Jesse: So where do I go
& Shaina How do I choose
 Can you ever know
 Which path means you win
 And which means you loose
 Why can't there be a neon sign
 Or someday to diffuse
 The pressure of growing up
 So what's my next move
 Someone tell me, where do I go

End Scene 2

SCENE 3

SHAINA:

Have you sat down and really talked everything over with your mom and dad?

JESSE:

We've talked about it some. I don't know why I freeze up when we try to discuss it. I just feel like it's going to start some huge fight if I really dive into what I want.

SHAINA:

You've never been one to shy away from a little conflict before. Remember when you and Everett started going at it after final call backs last year?

JESSE:

It wasn't that serious.

SHAINA:

Oh really? Because I remember thinking I was going to have to break you guys up.

JESSE:

You make it sound so dramatic. We weren't going to actually fight or anything. *(During this line Carl enters)*

CARL:

It figures you two would be out here. What are y'all gossiping about?

JESSE:

Reliving the drama about the casting for Treasure Island.

CARL:

(Laughs) Oh my God, I'd forgotten about all that. You and Everett were really pitted against each other huh? Too bad Gabi doesn't know how to keep her nose out of everyone's business.

JESSE AND SHAINA:

What do you mean?

CARL:

I'd heard Gabi egged Everett on. She told him that Adam told her he and Mr. West decided the role of Jim wouldn't go to you, Jesse. I'm still not sure if she told Everett they'd cast him in the role, or if he just assumed.

JESSE:

Look, I wouldn't have had a problem with him if he hadn't started going on about how he's the only one of us with talent.

SHAINA:

I'm sorry can we just go back a second? She was talking to Adam? As in our assistant director Adam?

CARL:

Yeah. You didn't know that?

SHAINA:

Nope I most certainly did not. I can't believe that. She's so damn shady.

JESSE:

Will you two quit being so gossipy? *(chuckles)* It's gonna come back and bite us in the ass.

(Mr. West enters)

MR. WEST:

Jesse, can I speak to you for a moment before you go?

JESSE:

Sure. I'll be right there.

(Mr. West exits and Jesse returns his attention back to Carl and Shaina.)

SHAINA:

Do you think he's going to be talking to you as the school guidance counselor? Or as the head of the theatre department?

JESSE:

I have no idea, but I guess I'll see y'all later.

(Jesse exits)

CARL:

Maybe he's right? You know, karma and all that.

SHAINA:

Yeah, but think about Gabi and all the negativity she puts out. Technically doesn't gossiping about her just balance the karmic scales?

CARL:

Sure, whatever you say.

(Shaina and Carl exit)

End Scene 3

Scene 4

JESSE:

Hey Mr. West. You wanted to see me?

MR. WEST:

I did. Come on in, Jesse. Have a seat. How are you feeling about graduation?

JESSE:

Trying to wrap my head around it still. Not gonna lie, I'm kind of afraid of being one of those people who peak in high school.

MR. WEST:

I think everyone fears that to some extent. But you've really proven yourself the last four years.

JESSE:

Thanks. It was a lot of work balancing AP classes and productions. I'm just glad I was able to juggle it all.

MR. WEST:

It was a lot of responsibility to take on. I'm sure your parents must be proud.

JESSE:

I think they are. At least academically.

MR. WEST:

I know you've been asked this a million times by now, but have you submitted an acceptance anywhere yet?

JESSE:

Shaina and I were actually just talking about that. I'm really torn between Juilliard and Missouri University of Science and Technology.

MR. WEST:

I should have known you two would be talking about things. Both of those schools would be a good fit for you.

JESSE:

If only I could make a decision without feeling like I'm letting someone down.

MR. WEST:

Well, unfortunately that's inevitable. But you'll know what to do. Every cliché got a little bit of
/truth

JESSE:

/(good naturedly) Honestly, Mr. West if you tell me to listen to my heart or my gut.

MR. WEST:

I know, and you'll have to make some compromises, for sure. But, just remember you can't live
to meet other people's expectations.

JESSE:

I know, but it's the age old dilemma. My parents were thrilled when I showed a... proclivity for
biology. They pretty much immediately started talking about me becoming a doctor or even an
epidemiologist. And I get it, those are good, stable, lucrative careers. Then on the other side is
my love for performing and music. I mean, to know I'm a good enough pianist to study at Juilliard
is huge.

MR. WEST:

But you're concerned they wouldn't support you choosing that path.

JESSE:

Oh I know they wouldn't. It doesn't matter how much I may love it (*a beat as something finally
dawns on him*) or feel like it's what I'm meant to do with my life.

MR WEST:

Jesse, I think right there's your answer.

JESSE:

*(Looks down as his cell phone goes
off)*

That's my mom. I gotta run. Thanks for everything, Mr. West.

END SCENE 4

SCENE 5

SHAINA:

Hey, Mr. West. Everything's finished for strike. Is there anything else you need me to do before I head home?

MR. WEST:

Actually, I wanted to talk to you about your plans for after graduation. Do you have a minute?

SHAINA:

Sure. Ya know, I'm going to turn in my acceptance for Missouri State tonight. I'm planning to get my gen eds out of the way, and then declare a major in musical theatre.

MR. WEST:

I'm glad to hear you have a game plan in place. I'm assuming you want to pursue a career in performing?

SHAINA:

That's my goal, but I don't have any illusions about it. And I'm starting to second guess myself about it a lot. I mean, do you think I could make it? Or would I just be wasting my time?

MR. WEST:

In all honest I do think you have the talent. But it's a difficult path, and it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a plan b. In fact there's another path I wonder if you've considered.

SHAINA:

Really, what is it?

MR. WEST:

Well, I've spoken with Miss Call and looked over your work from this year. It's not very often that a student gets asked to complete an AP exam when they're not enrolled in the class.

SHAINA:

I appreciate that, Mr. West. I'm not sure I'm seeing the connection though.

MR. WEST:

You obviously excelled in your English classes. That in addition to the play you wrote and submitted for your Senior Project, have you considered writing?

SHAINA:

Honestly I hadn't. (*hesitates*) I guess I was focusing on performing or nothing.

MR WEST:

I understand. It's easy to feel that way, especially at your age. But don't blind yourself to the fact that there are more ways to be a star than starring in a principal role.

SHAINA:

I think I get what you're saying. No one would complain about having a career like Stephen Schwartz or Jason Rober Brown.

MR. WEST:

And being able to create your own performance opportunities will be a huge asset to you.

SHAINA:

Thanks Mr. West. You've definitely given me a lot to think about.

MR. WEST:

I'm glad, but I've kept you long enough. Have a good weekend, and I'll see you at graduation.

END SCENE 5

(After leaving Mr. West's office, Shaina enters the auditorium. Lights up on her center stage as music starts playing.)

Background

I know I should be happy
My work's getting praise
But no matter how I try
It feels like something's missing

I guess some of us
Are always meant to be alone
To go through life being just a little unknown
So I just stay on the outside
With this gnawing feeling
Could all I'm destined for be
To fade into the background

I'm ashamed to admit I've always
Felt like a ghost
Someone who's barely there
Everyone just looks through me
While I'm banging on the door
Begging to get in

Can I just once
Be seen as a star
Right now I can't make sense
Of how the thing
I planned on being my place in the world
Somehow only brought me loneliness

I've always been
The smart girl
The good girl
But playing by the rules just gets you nowhere

I guess some of us
Are always meant to be alone
To go through life being just a little unknown
So I just stay on the outside
With this gnawing feeling
Could all I'm destined for be
To fade into the background