

Prequel to EUPHORIA

"Behind the Scenes"

During one of Rue's first experimentations with drugs, an adverse reaction causes the whole school to erupt in chaos, and Rue is left to face the repercussions.

Streaming on HBO

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OVER BLACK

RUE (V.O)

You know us, sure. Pieces of our stories: the crazy, the ugly, the stuff we'd rather stay hidden. But what about the before? Before I was Rue who went to rehab, before Nate was the class-act asshole, before I tore my family up? You've had snippets, but aren't you wondering what the fuck is up with Fezco? Buckle up Wildcats, never before behind-the-scenes hitting your screens.

FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL-DAY-THE PAST

A scandal has happened at RUE BENNETT's high school. The students each tell their piece of the gossip, the CAMERA cutting quickly between them.

INSERT: MADDY PEREZ leading a pack of CHEERLEADERS behind her in the gym talks to us.

MADDY

I heard Rue Bennett got dragged through the halls in handcuffs.

INSERT: LEXIE HOWARD talks to us from a busy hallway, textbooks clutched over her chest.

LEXIE

I was with her that day. I'm the only one who knows what happened.

INSERT: BB rips her vape in an empty bathroom, taking a laughably long pull. A backpack holding a half-exposed carton of eggs hangs off one shoulder.

Subtitles below tell us her thoughts in lieu of words as she inhales.

'That bitch is a narc. What's worse than being a narc? Being a narc covered in egg.'

BB exhales a huge cloud of smoke out of her nose.

BB

Sick.

INSERT: CASSIE HOWARD talks to us from her locker.

CASSIE
I heard she tried to kill herself
third period and had to be carried out
on a stretcher.

She blows a bubble with her gum and closes the locker door.

INSERT: ROY and TROY talk to us in an empty cafeteria.

ROY
I heard she thought we were living in
a simulation--

TROY
And she thought Xanax was the red
pill.

Troy leans over and whispers in Roy's ear.

TROY
Do you think it worked?

INSERT: FEZCO talks to us from the basketball court, playing a game of pickup with other BOYS. He is about to pass the basketball, notices the camera, then drops the ball.

FEZ
Nah, man. Fuck this shit.

He walks toward the camera with his arm extended and continues forward until he covers the lens with his palm.

We linger on the black screen a moment.

RUE (V.O)
When you're on Xanax, things get a
little fuzzy.

INT. ANONYMOUS LIVING ROOM-EVENING

RUE appears onscreen, close up and blurry, as if she is recording herself on an old video camera out of focus. She seems to fiddle with something out of view.

The shot ZOOMS out and we are viewing her image on an old 1950's style TV, antennas and all. STUDENTS, their backs to us, lounge around, watching. One snacks on popcorn.

RUE
 (to the audience)
 Can you turn that dial to the right?

One of the students fiddles with a knob on the bottom of the TV. The image of Rue comes into focus.

RUE
 That's better.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY-DAY

Rue leads us down an empty hallway. She talks to the camera as she walks. We are inside the scene from the TV.

NARRATOR RUE
 There's an art to taking drugs-- especially for beginners. Pick a safe place, make sure you're with friends who can hang, no obligations to go to. It's a rule of thumb. But, alas, I chose first bell to bar out for the first time. I'd dabbled in other drugs, of course, but xannys weren't on my radar yet. I was a fucking freshman, man. Before you make any judgments, I thought getting fucked up was getting fucked up. What'd it matter what I took when the end destination is the same?

Two people cross Rue's path. It is LEXIE and Xanned-out RUE. Xanned-out Rue's arm is slung over Lexie's shoulder, and Lexie struggles to drag them both down the hall. Narrator Rue watches them pass.

NARRATOR RUE
 Everyone has their version of events.
 But let me show you mine.

CUT TO:

INT. WATER FOUNTAIN-EARLIER

Xanax Rue holds a white pill in her hand, examining it. Fez stands behind her.

XANAX RUE
 And this will get me fucked up?

FEZ
Makes you feel hammered, man.

She raises a skeptical eyebrow at him.

FEZ
No one will be able to tell.

XANAX RUE
Is that so?

She twirls the pill between her fingers.

FEZ
I've taken nine today and see...no one
suspects a thing. I could do a
motherfucking cartwheel right now.

XANAX RUE
I want to feel nothing.

Down the hatch it goes.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY-DAY

We are now in Xanax Rue's POV. The world around us is blurry,
on the verge of spinning. Enhanced colors. Kaleidoscopic.

XANAX RUE
(slurred nearly beyond recognition)
I think I'm gonna be sick.

She collapses on the floor. Lexie attempts to pull her up.

LEXIE
Rue, we gotta go. Now.

The bell rings and TEENAGERS fill the hallway. Most stare.
Some WHISPER. Lexie yanks Rue up and forces her to walk.

LEXIE
(to students)
Stomach bug.

NARRATOR RUE (V.O)
I only have snapshots of the day.
Everything else is wiped clean, like
the browser history on a 14-year-old
boy's laptop.

We see a blurry sequence of events.

Rue is lying down, a NURSE and Lexie peering over her.

She is looking at the inside of a trashcan, vomiting.

Her MOM, Leslie, appears overhead.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY-CONTINUOUS

Back to Narrator Rue who watches the scene unfold with us. Xanax Rue is being escorted out of the building through the cafeteria. It's lunchtime and STUDENTS eat, staring in silence. Her mom guides her, a hand on Xanax Rue's back. Rue smacks into the glass door of the exit face first. Hard.

At one table, Maddy, BB, Cassie and KAT sit. A glop of ketchup plops onto a tray from BB's burger that is suspended in midair. Cassie lifts her fingers and does 'The Hunger Games' hand salute in solidarity. The rest of the cafeteria follows suit. Xanax Rue exits and Narrator Rue talks to the camera.

NARRATOR RUE

That's why, if you're gonna do drugs,
do enough to forget. Because that shit
is *embarrassing*. And that, folks,
concludes our rendition of Rue's Xanax
Adventure. Thanks for watching!

Rue bows. The cafeteria explodes in GOSSIP around her.

Inset Title: **Euphoria**

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM-DAY

RUE (V.O)

Except, it didn't end there.

Rue and Leslie sit in a hospital waiting room. Rue's head is hung between her legs. PATIENTS do their best to ignore her, but some stare.

RUE

Where are we?

LESLIE

For the fifth time, Rue, we're at the hospital.

RUE
Is Dad okay?

Rue halfway lifts her head, drops it down again.

A RECEPTIONIST enters.

RECEPTIONIST
Rue Bennett?

Leslie stands.

LESLIE
That's us.

The receptionist holds out a pee-in-a-cup drug test to Leslie. She glances down at a clipboard.

RECEPTIONIST
This is a five-panel test. She just has to provide a urine sample then you're good to go.

LESLIE
The results can be sent to the school?

RECEPTIONIST
Yes ma'am.

LESLIE
Anything else I need to do for her?

RECEPTIONIST
She's stable. Just make sure she drinks a lot of water and gets a lot of rest. She may wake up with a headache, but that should be the worst of it.

LESLIE
Thank you.

The receptionist exits. Leslie rouses Rue.

LESLIE
Rue. C'mon, get up.

Rue SLURS something unintelligible.

LESLIE
You have to do this if you want a
(MORE)

LESLIE (CONT'D)
chance to get back into school.

Leslie lifts Rue to her feet. Rue stumbles but opens her eyes.

RUE
I'm at school?

Leslie sighs, grabs her purse, and slings Rue over a shoulder. They walk to the restroom.

INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM-CONTINUOUS

RUE (V.O)
No one told me taking a drug test was
an Olympic sport.

Rue examines the drug test. She unzips her jeans and sits on the toilet. The drug test falls from her hand into the toilet bowl, ruined.

RUE (V.O)
Granted, this was the first of what would be many. Fucking countless. If there is a Guinness Book of World Records for most drug tests taken, I would sweep. Fucking obliterate.

She opens the door and Leslie is waiting outside.

RUE
I messed it up.

Quick montage of Rue's drug test attempts.

She dips one in the toilet water.

Misses the cup as she pees.

Has a successful one, drops and spills the pee on the floor.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM-CONTINUOUS

Time passes. A lot of it. Show TRANSITION between actions. The sun gradually sets outside the window.

Leslie checks her watch.

Leslie reads a book. Leslie checks her phone.

Leslie closes her eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM-LATER

Leslie and GIA (12), Rue's sister, eat fast-food burgers in the waiting room. It is empty besides the two of them. Gia wears a soccer uniform and cleats, a soccer ball on the empty chair beside her.

The receptionist and Rue ENTER. Rue still looks fucked up. The receptionist holds Rue's successful drug test in a plastic bag.

Gia gasps and tears pool from her eyes.

GIA
Rue...

Rue throws up a peace sign and laughs at herself.

RUE
What up G?

Leslie walks to the receptionist.

RECEPTIONIST
Finally got one.

LESLIE
Thank you for your patience.

RECEPTIONIST
I know it doesn't feel like it, but I have seen worse.

RUE
Hey, Mom! I'm not the worst! Hell yeah. You hear that, Gia?

GIA
Rue.

LESLIE
I appreciate all your help. C'mon Rue, let's go.

Rue picks up the soccer ball and holds it over her head.

RUE
G, get the ball!

Gia pleads with her mother silently for help.

LESLIE
Knock it off.

Leslie knocks the ball out of Rue's hand. It bounces across the room.

RECEPTIONIST
Best of luck.

Receptionist exits. Rue belly laughs.

RUE
Get the ball, Gia, get the ball!

INT. LESLIE'S CAR-NIGHT

Leslie drives home. Gia is seated in the passenger seat. Rue rides in the back, her head out of the window like a dog.

RUE
This is weeeiiiiirrrrrddd.

Rue sticks her tongue out and pulls it back in.

RUE
You gotta try this.

Rue yanks on Gia's shoulder. Gia shrugs her off. Leslie turns up the radio until it's deafening. Rue slumps back into the vehicle. Gia rolls the window up and Rue closes her eyes and drifts to sleep.

INT. BENNETT HOUSE-NIGHT

The Bennetts walk into their home. Leslie hangs her keys up and kicks off her shoes. Rue stumbles forward and down the hallway. Gia lingers. Rue disappears into her bedroom. Leslie walks into the kitchen.

LESLIE
We have leftovers or frozen pizza.
Your pick, Gia.

INT. BENNETT DINING ROOM-CONTINUOUS

Gia and Leslie eat a silent dinner of frozen pizza.

INT. RUE'S BEDROOM-CONTINUOUS

Rue is sleeping in bed on top of the comforter. Gia enters.

GIA

Rue?

She walks to the bed and picks up a blanket and covers Rue with it. After a moment, she climbs in next to her and snuggles in close.

GIA

Why would you do this?

Rue stirs.

RUE

Hmmmm?

Rue opens her eyes, stretches, and props herself up on her pillow.

RUE

Hi, Gia, what are you doing here?

GIA

What?

RUE

What time is it?

She reaches for her phone on her bedside table. It isn't there.

GIA

Like, midnight.

RUE

What? How?

GIA

Are you braindead?

Rue laughs.

RUE

Yeah, but you already knew that.

GIA

Rue, I'm serious.

RUE
What's wrong?

RUE (V.O)
My dad was already dead, what else
could be this serious?

GIA
You're expelled.

Rue sits up fully. Gia starts crying and wraps her arms around Rue.

RUE (V.O)
Fuck.

INT. FEZ'S BATHROOM-MORNING

Fez showers. Rap music blares from his phone that sits in a cup on the sink to amplify the sound.

RUE (V.O)
If there's one thing Fez and I share,
it's a love for the finer things in
life.

Fez exits the shower, wraps a towel around his lower half, and goes to the mirror. It's cracked and hasn't been cleaned in who knows how long. He brushes his teeth.

RUE (V.O)
I'm fucking with you. We both have
dead Dads.

INT. FEZ'S FAMILY CAR-2008

YOUNG FEZ is sandwiched between his blue-collar, rough-around-the-edges-PARENTS in the back of a beat-up Sedan.

RUE (V.O)
The Housing Crisis really did Fez's
family dirty.

The car comes to a halt outside of a dusty apartment complex.

RUE (V.O)
His parents had bought a house way
outside their budget and it foreclosed
when the housing market crashed. Watch
"The Big Short" if you have questions.

FEZ'S DAD
Last time we move. Promise.

They exit the car. GRANDMA walks down the apartment stairs, waving. Her hair is in curlers and she smokes a cigarette.

RUE (V.O)
They had to move in with Fez's grandma, who chain-smoked more than Johnny Cash. Fez reeked, man, for like two years.

Grandma GREETS them, hugs are exchanged. She squeezes Fez so hard that his eyes bulge.

RUE (V.O)
Everything they had, they had in that shitty Corrolla.

Fez's family unpacks cardboard boxes from the car. There are very few. They carry them up the stairs.

INT. GRANDMA'S APARTMENT-CONTINUOUS

Fez's parents disappear into a bedroom. Grandma folds out the couch in the living room, sets down a stack of blankets.

GRANDMA
I got somethin' that might cheer ya up.

She hands him a wrapped box. Fez tears into it.

RUE (V.O)	FEZ
A motherfuckin' DS.	A DS!?

A Nintendo DS. Used, but who cares?

GRANDMA
Cashed in a whole week's unemployment.
Don't say the government will never do anything for ya.

She hugs him again. He can't stop staring at the DS.

GRANDMA
It won't be so bad here.

RUE (V.O)
And it wasn't. If anything it was
(MORE)

RUE (V.O) (CONT'D)
good. Boring, but boring was good for
Fez. His Dad got a job doing
landscaping for the Jacobs businesses
and even laid off the bottle for a
while.

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Fez and Grandma watching TV.

Fez and Grandma eating Lean Cuisines.

Fez and Grandma play Battleship.

Fez's parents in an explosive argument in the kitchen while
he attempts to sleep on the couch, headphones in, with the DS
under the covers.

EXT. JACOB FAMILY HOME-MORNING

Fez's Dad mows a nice lawn of a suburban home. He stops,
reaches into his pocket and takes a pull from a flask. MRS.
JACOBS walks outside in a bathrobe. They CHAT INAUDIBLY.

RUE (V.O)
Mrs. Jacobs and Fez's Dad were
banging. Or porking, as Young Fez
called it. When Mr. Jacobs found out
about it, well...

EXT. JACOB FAMILY HOME-MORNING

CAL JACOBS and Fez's Dad are shouting at each other. Fez's
Dad has a shovel in his hand and drops it as the fight
escalates. Cal shoves Fez's Dad and Fez's dad hits him back,
hard.

RUE (V.O)
It wasn't pretty.

FEZ'S DAD
Maybe if you fucked her like I fuck
her, we wouldn't be in this pickle.

Cal picks up the shovel and hits Fez's Dad in the head. Fez's
Dad drops and Cal hits him until blood splatters his face.
Cal stands, panting, over the body.

RUE (V.O)
No one knows what Cal did with the
(MORE)

RUE (V.O) (CONT'D)
body, but everyone knows he killed
him. Maybe it was an accident and
maybe it wasn't, but all Fez knew was
that he didn't have a dad anymore.

EXT. GRANDMA'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Fez and Grandma sit on the stairs of the apartment. Fez's family Sedan speeds away. Grandma watches, Fez can't bear it.

RUE (V.O)
Fez's mom left after that.

Grandma opens a pack of cigarettes and offers Fez one. He takes it, and she lights both of them. He explodes into a COUGHING FIT.

RUE (V.O)
It burned so good.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL-MORNING

Fez and a crowd of KIDS exit school busses and head toward the entrance. He waits until the PARENT MONITORS aren't paying attention and he sprints in the opposite direction.

One catches the flash of ginger hair.

PARENT MONITOR
Hey!

Fez runs faster, almost off of school property. He throws his hood over his head.

PARENT MONITOR
Hey, stop!

The parent monitor blows a whistle, but it's too late. He's too far to be caught.

RUE (V.O)
Fez wasn't exactly the school type,
but teachers took it easy on him. I
mean, he was an orphan, who cared if
he played hooky every once and a
while?

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL-DAY

Fez, slightly older, sits at a crowded cafeteria table next

to KYLE. Kids crowd them, and they open two Ziplock bags.

RUE (V.O)
Fez realized there was one advantage
to school.

Fez takes Silly Bandz from the bag. The kids are ravenous.

FEZ
I got the Justin Bieber pack.

KYLE
Limited edition. That's gonna be a
dollar apiece.

Kids begin throwing money and Fez and Kyle rapidly collect
the cash and disperse the Silly Bandz to the crowd.

RUE (V.O)
He was a motherfucking businessman
with a high-demand product. Kyle's dad
worked for Silly Bandz or some shit,
so they were stocked.

The BELL RINGS and the kids filter out of the cafeteria. Kyle
and Fez count their money, coins and crumbled dollar bills.

RUE (V.O)
They made fat cash.

EXT. GAS STATION-AFTERNOON

Kyle and Fez slurp on extra-large slushies and both play
their DSes in silence outside a gas station.

RUE (V.O)
Man had more ice cream and candy than
year than he ever had in his entire
life. He got eight cavities. Grandma
Fez was pissed about that dentist
bill.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL-MORNING

Fez and Kyle exit Kyle's family Range Rover. They walk to the
school door to see a note.

SILLY BANDZ BANNED.

They exchange a look.

RUE (V.O)
No problem. They just needed a new product.

INT. GRANDMA'S APARTMENT-NIGHT

Fez, now High School aged, sits at the kitchen table with Kyle and two DEALERS. Kyle dumps a bag of pills on the table. The dealers sort through large stacks of cash. Fez plays his DS. In the background the steady BEEP of a heart monitor.

RUE (V.O)
Fez's grandma got sick. Really sick. Catatonic. So the place was his, and so were any pills she didn't need. Turns out Kyle's Dad didn't work for Silly Bandz. He was a pharmacist who liked to be at the golf course more than with his family. They had the supply, the space to do their business uninterrupted, and tons of teenagers on a quest to get fucked up knocking at their door.

One dealer slips a 20 into his pocket. Fez's eyes flick over and he puts the DS down. He walks over and slips his hand into the pocket and retrieves the bill.

FEZ
The fuck?

The kid backs up slowly, puts his hands up in surrender.

RUE (V.O)
Don't fuck with Fez.

CLOSE UP of the DS, Mario onscreen. The sound of FIGHTING in the background.

INT. GRANDMA'S BEDROOM-LATER

Fez, bloody-knuckled, walks into Grandma's room. She is laying in bed, numerous machines hooked up to her. Her mouth gapes open, looking half-dead already.

RUE (V.O)
Fez had to take care of her like she had done for him. Medical bills are expensive, man. Fuckin US Healthcare. Everything he did, he told himself, he did for her.

Fez kisses Grandma's forehead gently.

INT. GAS STATION-DAY

Fez and ASHTRAY man the counter at the gas station.

RUE (V.O)
Kyle's dad, rich bastard, owned
practically everything it turned out.
Kyle hooked Fez up with a job before
he got shipped to Military School or
some shit. We never really saw him
again. But, as I mentioned, Kyle's dad
didn't give a shit about anything, so
the gas station was Fez's territory.
He could make some clean money and
well...

NATE JACOBS walks into the gas station. He grabs the first
thing he sees, a bag of chips, and sets it on the counter.

NATE
Yo, I think you have what I'm looking
for.

ASHTRAY
Pringles are \$2.39 motherfucker.

Nate looks to Fez who won't make eye contact.

NATE
C'mon, Fez, I'll pay you whatever.

FEZ
The fuck you looking for?

Fez finally meets his eye. Pure hatred.

RUE (V.O)
He could make some dirty money too.

MOMENTS LATER:

Nate walks away, stuffing a bag in his jeans. On his way out
he passes Rue, and checks her with his shoulder.

RUE
Asshole.

Rue walks to the counter.

RUE
What's up gentlemen?

EXT. HOUSE PARTY-NIGHT

RUE (V.O)
Two days before my Xanax Adventure,
Nate Jacobs had a party.

TEENAGERS, including Maddy, Cassie, Kat and BB, party poolside in Nate's backyard. Solo cups are in hand, liquor is poured down throats, music blares.

RUE (V.O)
Now I wasn't there, and neither was Fez, so this is hearsay, but enough people tell this tale that I believe it.

Nate and his FOOTBALL BUDDIES splash in the pool. Nate tackles a friend into the water.

NATE
Yo, who wants to get fucked up!

The crowd cheers.

CUT TO:

INT. NATE'S HOUSE-MOMENTS LATER

Nate separates lines of cocaine on a book with a credit card in a small bathroom. Maddy and Cassie flank his sides, a few football players crowded around them.

Nate rolls a dollar bill and snorts the line.

NATE
Fuck yeah.

The football players follow suit.

NATE
Maddy?

MADDY
No, no I can't!

Cassie shakes her head no.

Nate shrugs.

NATE
More for us.

The boys continue facing lines. The girls whisper.

INT. NATE'S HOUSE-LATER

Nate is chatting with Maddy, the two of their bodies pressed closely together. His stomach LURCHES.

MADDY
You gonna yack?

NATE
Hold on.

Nate sprints to the bathroom, slams the door shut, almost doesn't make it to the toilet before he has explosive diarrhea.

RUE (V.O)
Fezco put a nice heap of laxatives in the coke he sold Nate. Enough to clear his system.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM-DAY

Maddy stares at Nate's empty desk.

RUE (V.O)
Man missed two days of school because his ass was glued to that toilet.
 Fucked his stomach up pretty badly.
 His first day back was the day everything went down with me. I'm sure he was happy for the distraction.

Insert QUICK FASTFORWARDED VERSION OF XANAX INCIDENT.

INT. RUE'S BEDROOM-MORNING

Rue sleeps in bed.

LESLIE (OC)
Rue Evangeline Bennett!

Rue stirs. The door flies open and Leslie storms in.

LESLIE
Get your ass up.

Rue opens her eyes.

RUE
Go away.

LESLIE
Absolutely not.

Leslie opens each of Rue's blinds.

RUE
Moooooommmmm.

Leslie yanks the covers from Rue's body.

RUE (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm not wearing pants!

LESLIE
I don't know how much you remember, but you are suspended from school for drug use. I'm still waiting to see what you even took, but that doesn't matter right now. The school is going to let you have an expulsion hearing so you can plead your case. If you can do all the requirements, you might stand a chance to graduate and have a future.

GIA (OC)
If the drugs don't rot her brain first.

LESLIE
(to Gia)
I'm not talking to you.

Leslie goes to one of Rue's overflowing drawers and throws a pair of sweatpants at her.

LESLIE
Get up because we have family counseling in an hour.

RUE
Counseling? Like therapy?

LESLIE
Mhm.

Leslie exits.

Rue screams into her pillow.

INT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE-DAY

Rue, Gia, and Leslie sit on a couch in a counselor's office. A banner reading "Raldi Counseling Services" hangs on the wall. Picture frames of certificates adorn the room. Motivation quotes are everywhere. Two cats sit on top of bookshelves.

Across from them sits an elderly woman with tiny spectacles, Dr. RALDI. She sips coffee from a Dixie cup.

DR. RALDI

May I get anyone a bevvy before we begin?

Rue raises her brows into the camera.

RUE

(to audience)

A bevvy?

GIA

Do you have Sprite?

LESLIE

No soda before lunch.

DR. RALDI

How would a water do, Georgia?

Gia nods and Dr. Raldi retrieves a bottle of water from the mini-fridge and hands it to Gia. She sits back down.

DR. RALDI

Now, Ruth,

RUE

Rue.

Dr. Raldi squints at her clipboard.

DR. RALDI

Ah, yes. Pardon me. Old eyes. Now, Rue, I see you have quite an extensive list of diagnoses.

RUE
(to audience)
Is she serious?

Rue looks to Leslie for her to step in, but she doesn't.

RUE
Uh, yeah, I guess.

DR. RALDI
Have you been consistently taking your
medicine?

RUE
When I feel like it.

DR. RALDI
Did you feel like it today?

RUE
Not particularly.

LESLIE
I monitor her medications. She takes
them.

DR. RALDI
Why don't you feel like taking your
medications, Rue?

RUE
I'm sorry, what does this have to do
with anything?

LESLIE
Rue, answer the question.

RUE
Uhm. Well...they make me feel...

RUE (V.O)
Like I'm floating through a void of
consciousness with no way out of my
own stupid brain.

RUE (CONT'D)
...not like myself.

DR. RALDI
Do drugs make you feel like yourself?

Rue taps her leg.

DR. RALDI

We're all here today to try to heal, Rue. We're here for you. Sometimes someone can be so sick, so ill, that they're used to their own symptoms. They become a part of who they are. When they take medicine, poof, the person they thought they knew, the sick person, is gone. Health can be scary. Clarity can be scary when you aren't used to it. Do the drugs make you feel not like yourself, or do they make you feel clear?

RUE

I know we're required to do this and all, but we really don't have to dive into this made-up, psychological stuff. You can ask me why I did it and we can all go and enjoy our days.

DR. RALDI

That's one way of looking at it. We can also choose to be optimistic and view this as Divine Intervention.

GIA

(mumbled)

You could have died.

DR. RALDI

What was that, Georgia?

RUE

It's Gia.

GIA

I said she could've died.

DR. RALDI

You're right, she could have. Taking any unknown drug can lead to death. How did you feel when you saw Rue after she took the drugs?

RUE

I only took one pill, one.

DR. RALDI
Were you scared?

Gia nods.

DR. RALDI
What were you thinking?

GIA
I...I didn't know how bad she was.
Like, mentally.

DR. RALDI
Before or after she used the drugs?

GIA
Before.

Rue looks over at Gia.

RUE
What do you mean?

GIA
Like, she must have been really sad to
want to feel like that over feeling
normal. She couldn't even talk.

Gia chokes up.

GIA (CONT'D)
Her eyes were...she just wasn't there.
It was like I was looking at a
stranger.

DR. RALDI
Rue, how does that make you feel?

Rue shrugs and crosses her arms tightly across her chest.

DR. RALDI
Thank you for being honest with me,
Georgia. Rue will respond when she's
ready. Now, Mom, can you explain how
you felt when you had to go pick Rue
up from school?

RUE
Is this just to make me feel awful
about myself?

DR. RALDI

Of course not, Rue. Drug-users usually are disconnected from the reality of their actions. They may not think what they do affects anyone, but it does. I want you to listen to how your family feels for a change.

RUE

I know how they feel, okay? I was there.

LESLIE

No, you weren't Rue.

Leslie swivels to face Rue.

LESLIE

You can never understand how it feels to see your baby like that: puking, not even recognizing me. I was terrified.

Leslie sniffles, wipes her nose on her sleeve.

LESLIE

I feel like I failed as a mother.

DR. RALDI

Because you couldn't prevent it from happening?

LESLIE

I should've gotten her more help when her Dad died. Gia was so eager to speak to the child psychologist but Rue was just...resistant. Now I'm wondering if this wasn't a one-time thing.

DR. RALDI

Was it, Rue? A one-time incident?

Rue bristles, grabs her bag and walks to the door.

DR. RALDI

Where are you going?

RUE

I'm out of here.

LESLIE

Rue, stop.

RUE

I can't take this shit.

DR. RALDI

Rue, we can shift the conversation--

RUE

Nope.

DR. RALDI

(to Leslie)

In my professional opinion, it seems like Rue may be suffering from ODD.

Rue swivels.

RUE

What the fuck is that?

DR. RALDI

Rue, I don't permit the use of swear words in my office.

RUE

I'm sorry. What is that?

DR. RALDI

Oppositional Defiant Disorder. It usually manifests as rebelliousness, reckless behavior, a lack of accountability, and hostility to loved ones.

Rue opens the door.

RUE

Fuck you, man. You don't even know me.

GIA

Rue!

Rue exits.

EXT. COUNSELOR'S OFFICE-CONTINUOUS

Rue dials a number on her phone.

RUE
Fez? Fez? Can you pick me up?

A beat.

RUE
I'll drop you my location.

Fez rolls up with Ashtray minutes later.

FEZ
Get in.

Rue hops in the backseat and the car speeds away.

INT. FEZ'S CAR-CONTINUOUS

Fez and Ashtray smoke a blunt while they drive.

RUE
Let me hit that.

ASHTRAY
No way, Xanny girl.

RUE
You're like 6 years old, asshole, pass it.

RUE
Please, Fez, I need it after my shitty ass day.

Fez nods and Ashtray passes it back. Rue takes a pull and smiles. Sweet relief.

RUE
You'll never believe this shit.

ASHTRAY
Where the fuck you coming from?

RUE
School's making me do all this shit to get back in, and today was family counseling.

FEZ
How'd that go?

RUE
Gia and my mom are still in there if
that tells you anything.

FEZ
That bad, huh?

RUE
Worse.

She chiefs the blunt and tosses it from the window.

ASHTRAY
Yo, I didn't say finish it, Sleeping
Beauty.

FEZ
Relax. More where that came from.

Rue smacks Ashtray in the head. They pull up outside her
house.

RUE
Thanks for the lift.

ASHTRAY
You owe me.

RUE
Whatever.

She exits. Fez rolls down the window.

FEZ
Be careful man. You on thin ice.

RUE
Everything is fine.

She waves and the car races away. She reaches in her bag and
pulls out a small box of Tampons. She fishes inside and pulls
out a pill bottle. The label says 'Oxycodone'.

RUE (V.O)
Rule number two, always keep an
emergency stash with you at all times.

She dry swallows it and enters her house.

EXT. PARK GROUNDS-DAY

Rue, clad in a yellow vest, scoops trash with other people, students and adults.

The leader, a perky woman with a bullhorn, oversees.

WOMAN

Great job, y'all! You're making a difference!

Rue sighs and stops collecting trash.

RUE

(to camera)

Whop-de-fucking-do, picking up Doritos bags and Michelob Ultra Cans really makes me an upstanding citizen.

A MAN, early twenties, next to her shakes his head in her direction.

RUE

I feel you.

She continues stabbing trash.

INT. RUE'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Rue lays in bed, scrolling on her phone.

LESLIE (OC)

I'm proud of you, baby. Only one more week and you'll be back in school.

RUE

Thanks, Mom.

Rue digs in her nightstand and pops an oxy.

RUE (V.O)

Sweet dreams.

SERIES OF SHOTS x5:

Rue doing community service, coming back and popping oxys, different outfits indicating different days.

RUE (V.O)

There was only one hurdle preventing me from getting back into school.

INT. GIA'S ROOM-AFTERNOON

Gia lounges in a beanbag in her room, doing homework while Wizards of Waverly Place plays on her TV. A KNOCK and then Rue barges in.

RUE
Yo, G.

Gia doesn't glance up.

GIA
I'm busy.

RUE
Doing homework?

Gia nods.

Rue plops down next to Gia in the beanbag. Gia moves to make room.

RUE
Oh, algebra? This is easy breezy lemon squeezy.

GIA
Says you.

RUE
You have Mr. Robales, right? Tell him you're Rue's sister and you're golden.

Gia raises a brow.

GIA
Didn't you have to retake algebra?

RUE
Yeah, but he loved me. Let me help.

Gia passes the textbook to Rue. Rue glances between the homework sheet and the textbook.

RUE
Shit.

Gia playfully smacks her arm. Rue smacks her back. Rue notices the TV.

RUE
You know I was never allowed to watch
this?

GIA
What? This is my favorite show.

RUE
Dad's rule. Anything Wizards was
witchcraft. And fuck Harry Potter.

Gia giggles.

GIA
You couldn't watch Harry Potter?

RUE
Hell no. That's all you need to know
about me. Explains this fucked up mess
of a human being.

It's meant to be light-hearted but heaviness hangs in the
air. Gia squirms uncomfortably.

GIA
I'm proud of you.

Rue scoffs.

GIA
No, really. I know you've been trying
hard to get back into school.

Rue chews on her lip.

RUE
About that...

Gia snaps the textbook closed.

GIA
What?

RUE
I--

GIA
What did you do?

Gia stands.

RUE
I didn't do anything!

GIA
What did you do, Rue?

RUE
I just need a favor.

Gia's lip quivers.

RUE
I have to pass one more drug test
before my expulsion hearing and I
don't know if I'll pass.

GIA
But you haven't done any drugs.

RUE
I know.

GIA
Then why wouldn't you pass?

RUE
The Xanax isn't out of my system, yet.
They don't want me to go back, G. They
just think of me as hopelessly lost.
They're setting me up for failure by
making me take one and I'm gonna fail
and never be allowed back in school
again. I just need you to pee for me--

GIA
No.

RUE
Gia, please, I--

GIA
No Rue.

Tears begin streaming down her cheeks. LAUGHTER from the show
sounds in the background.

RUE
Please, Gia, I'm literally gonna be so
screwed.

GIA
Okay.

Rue pulls a drug test from her pocket and proffers it. Gia goes to take it but pulls her hand back.

GIA
You know what people have been saying to me, Rue?

Rue goes to fight back but bites her lip and shakes her head.

GIA
They tell me I have a druggie sister.
They told me that you passed out in the hallway and Lexie had to carry you to the nurse's office.

RUE
That's not true.

GIA
Yeah?

Gia squats down, eye to eye with Rue.

GIA
Don't lie to me.

RUE
It's not true. It's not true, I swear!

GIA
Mrs. Yang pulled me out of ELA yesterday and asked how I'm 'coping with dad'. I had no idea what she was talking about until she told me that if I ever thought about taking drugs or cutting myself to talk to her first.

Gia rises again and goes to her bed, lies down, and faces the wall.

GIA
I'm going to bed.

Rue rises and throws the drug test on the floor.

RUE
You have no idea what I'm going
(MORE)

RUE (CONT'D)
through.

Rue kicks the test.

RUE
I have a fucked up brain, Gia. I know you can't possibly understand that because you've always been the golden child, but it fucking sucks.

Rue storms to the door and grasps the handle.

RUE
You're a shitty ass goalie. Might as well quit while you're ahead.

Rue exits and slams the door on her way out.

INT. BENNETT HALLWAY-NEXT MORNING

SFX: alarm clock from behind Rue's closed door.

The door opens and Rue steps out, yawning. Her foot hits something. She glances down and sees the drug test, filled with pee. A note sits on top.

I believe in you -G.

She picks up the test, face contorting as if she might cry, but shakes it off and puts it in her sweatpants pocket.

EXT. BENNETT HOUSE-MORNING

Rue runs toward the SCHOOL BUS that has rumbled to a stop.

RUE
Gia, we're gonna miss it!

Rue runs up the stairs of the bus and grabs a seat. Gia walks behind and throws her soccer ball into a trashcan before getting on.

INT. LOCKERS-MORNING

Fez throws his backpack in his locker, is about to slam it shut, but Rue grabs the door from behind. She is dressed in a suit, too big, definitely her Mom's.

FEZ
Someone's happy. Ain't your hearing
(MORE)

FEZ (CONT'D)
today?

Rue bounces, practically dances.

RUE
Yeah, you think I'd wear this bullshit
if I didn't have it?

FEZ
Thought you had a drug test to pass.

RUE
I do.

Fez closes the locker, turns to walk away.

FEZ
See yo ass never, then,

RUE
I got piss.

Fez stops.

FEZ
How?

Rue beams.

RUE
I'm clear. Which means you are too.

FEZ
Who'd you get the piss from?

RUE
My sister. She was not having it but
she came around.

Fez shakes his head and walks away.

FEZ
That's fucked up, man.

RUE
The fuck you mean?

He shakes his head and disappears down a hallway. Rue sticks
two middle fingers in the air.

RUE
I don't need you anyway.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE-DAY

Rue and Leslie sit across the table from the PRINCIPAL, SUPERINTENDANT, and A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR, a file folder of paper on the table. The Principal slides reading glasses up his nose and reads one.

PRINCIPAL
So, Ms. Bennett, it seems you've made ample progress from when you were last in my office.

RUE
Y..Yes sir.

PRINCIPAL
Mom, I see we attended the mandated family therapy session?

LESLIE
Yes, sir we did.

PRINCIPAL
Any new revelations there, Rue?

Rue stares blankly. Leslie kicks her foot under the table.

RUE (V.O)
What kind of question is that?

RUE
Do you want me to answer honestly?

A beat of uncomfortable silence.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
Well, of course that's what we want, Rue. This is a safe space.

LESLIE
Rue has a history of mental health issues. I sent her files over in the paperwork. My husband and I got her all the help we could. As you know, he passed away a few years back, and since then--

RUE
This has nothing to do with Dad.

SUPERINTENDENT
What does it have to do with, Rue?

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
This is a safe space.

RUE (V.O)
To this day, that dumbass phrase
pisses me off.

RUE
I don't know, maybe, maybe I do have a
fu--miswired brain but I'm sick of
people blaming my Dad. Like it's his
fault.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
No one thinks it's your Dad's fault.

RUE
It's easier to say that all my actions
lead back to him, but that's not true.
This is my fault. Mine. There's no one
to blame but me.

Leslie squeezes Rue's hand.

PRINCIPAL
It takes real courage to own up to our
mistakes. I'm double your age and can
still struggle.

SUPERINTENDENT
I think that alone demonstrates the
maturity and responsibility we were
looking for to reinstate you.

LESLIE
You're going to reinstate her?

SUPERINTENDENT
If Rue can complete her community
service hours and stay drug-free, I
see no reason why she can't rejoin the
student body on Monday.

LESLIE
Thank you!

Leslie and Rue shake each hand in succession. Guidance Counselor pulls Rue into a non-consensual hug.

GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
If you ever want to talk about your Dad, you know where my office is.

Rue looks dead into the camera and rolls her eyes.

RUE (V.O)
If one more middle-aged lady offers me help I'm going to end it all.

INT. PIZZA PARLOR-NIGHT

Rue and Lexie sit in a booth. Leslie and LEXIE'S MOM drink a glass of wine at the bar.

A cake with "Congratulations Rue!" written in icing sits on the table. Rue goes to blow out the single-lit candle.

LEXIE
Wait wait wait!

She pulls two paper party hats from a bag on the booth and puts one on Rue, then herself.

LEXIE
Now blow!

SLOW MOTION of Rue blowing the candle out. Lexie claps. The moms turn around and raise their glasses.

The sound of EGGS SPLATTING on glass from OC jerks their attention away.

LEXIE
What was that?

RUE (V.O)
Fucking Nate Jacobs.

Rue bolts to the entrance. The wall of windows are completely covered in egg. She swings the door open.

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR-CONTINUOUS

Nate is in his truck, BB in the passenger, both of them holding cartons of eggs. Nate lobs one and it lands on Rue's feet.

NATE
Yo Rue, you feeling hungry for
breakfast?

BB
Narc!

BB begins throwing eggs in succession, one splattering on Rue's head. Yolk runs down her hair.

Leslie, Lexie, and Lexie's mom burst through the door.

LESLIE
What is this?

BB
Oh shit.

Nate drives donuts around the parking lot, tires screeching.

NATE
Welcome back to school, Rue!

Leslie puts her arms around Rue.

LESLIE
Let's get you cleaned up, baby.

LEXIE'S MOM
Losers!

NATE
Next time turn your Snapchat location
off.

Lexie's mom sticks a middle finger out. They speed away,
laughing.

LEXIE
Mom!

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT-AFTERNOON

A bell rings, announcing the end of the school day. Rue and other STUDENTS exit the building and disperse to the SCHOOL BUSSES and CARS in the parking lot.

Rue walks with her headphones in, minding her own business, until she spots Fez walking to his car. His backpack is stuffed and he carries a stack of textbooks in his hand. She catches up to him.

RUE
Yo. You moving out or something?

FEZ
My ass is expelled, man.

RUE
What? I never ratted on you, man, I
know rumors have gone around, but you
know me--

FEZ
Wasn't you.

They reach his car. It is covered in the remains of eggs that
couldn't be scrubbed off.

RUE
Shit, Nate got you too?

She lifts her Converse which is yellow-stained.

RUE (CONT'D)
He and BB got my ass last night.

FEZ
He got me expelled man.

Fez opens his back door and dumps the textbooks and his
backpack.

FEZ
I'm done.

RUE
They gave me a hearing, if you talk to
them--

FEZ
They got me for selling. I leave
peacefully or they take it to the
pigs.

RUE
Fuck. This is about the coke, isn't
it. Nate Jacobs shits his pants one
time and has to ruin a life.

Rue leans against the side of the car.

RUE
We'll get that fucker back, Fezco.

FEZ
I was failing anyway.

He gets in his car and turns the ignition on and rolls down the window to talk to her.

FEZ
Stay the fuck away from me, Rue. Lie low. I don't wanna see your ass end up like me.

RUE
Fez--

He drives away, throwing Rue's body from the car.

FEZ
(calling out the window)
I mean it Rue. Stay away.

INT. CONSCIOUSNESS-TIME DOESN'T EXIST

Rue's body floats midair in total darkness. Only she is illuminated. She twists and tumbles in the air as if her body is weightless.

RUE (V.O)
The thing about consciousness is that no one has really been able to define it. Philosophers and religious folks have tried for centuries. "I think therefore I am". Who decided that's true?

She somersaults as if her body is being blown in an invisible tornado.

RUE (V.O)
I have tried to escape my consciousness for as long as I can remember--quiet my screaming brain.

Enter into a rapid succession of memories, past and future, all slightly blurry and surreal.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM-FLASHBACK

A brief clip of 8-year-old Rue hyperventilating into a brown paper sack from Season One.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. CONSCIOUSNESS-CONTINUOUS

Rue grimaces at the memory.

CUT TO:

INT. RUE'S BEDROOM-A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

Rue is overdosing, lying in a pool of her own vomit, ragged breaths struggling to escape from her chest.

Gia opens the door.

GIA

Rue?

CUT TO:

INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM-FLASHBACK

Rue's FATHER, cancer-ridden, lies in bed, sleeping painfully. Rue picks up one of his pill bottles and pops one in her mouth. She lies back in bed and lays with her head on his pillow.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-FLASHBACK

Leslie and ROBERT, Rue's father, hold Baby Rue as they watch 9/11 from the hospital room TV screen.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY-FLASHBACK

Rue slumps in the hallway, fucked up from the Xanax.

LEXIE

Rue.

CUT TO:

EXT. BENNETT HOUSE-FLASHBACK

Six-year-old Rue and Robert Hula Hoop in the backyard.

ROBERT

Rue-Rue I believe in you-you!

The hula hoop slides down Rue's hips.

YOUNG RUE

I can't do it!

Robert puts the hula hoop back in Rue's hands.

ROBERT

Move your hips like this.

He circles his hips. She copies.

ROBERT

Now try again.

Rue does it again and succeeds.

ROBERT

I told you!

Rue SQUEALS and runs into his arms. He holds her above his head, spinning the both of them around in happy circles.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETARY-FLASHBACK

Rue, Gia, and Leslie somberly stare as a casket is lowered into the ground. Dark sunglasses conceal Rue's eyes.

GIA

Bye, Dad.

Leslie bursts into tears.

LESLIE

No, no, no. Don't leave me, Rob. I can't do this without you.

Leslie lunges for the casket. Gia holds her back. Leslie and Gia fall to their knees, sobbing uncontrollably.

Rue is high and numb, observing the grief from another mental place, safe from the emotion.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. CONSCIOUSNESS

Rue spins still. A casket 'poofs' into the blackness. She floats over to it and opens it. In it, she lies.

She screams and tries to pedal away, getting nowhere.

CUT TO:

INT. RUE'S BEDROOM-NIGHT

Rue awakes from this hellscape nightmare, panting, grasping her chest. She takes a moment to compose herself, slaps both cheeks and takes a long gulp of water. She addresses the camera directly.

RUE

This is why it's better to avoid consciousness. As Aristotle said, the brain is a fucked up place to be. Or maybe that was Socrates.

She collapses back into the pillows.

RUE

Anyone have an oxy?

INT. GIA'S ROOM-CONTINUOUS

Rue creeps into Gia's bedroom. Gia is sound asleep. Rue crawls into bed with her. Gia doesn't stir.

RUE

(whispered)

I'm so sorry. I'm so fucking sorry.

Rue sobs, as silently as she can. Gia, still mostly asleep, wraps her arm around Rue.

RUE

I love you.

OVER BLACK

RUE (V.O)

One more thing. Maybe I lied about Nate. I think asshole is just in his DNA.

FADE OUT.