

FIRST KISS

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CAFE - DAY

A trendy Lawrenceville cafe, full of artists and poets in their mid-to-late twenties sitting on ironic couches and sipping espressos. A microphone at the center of the floor.

ADAM SCHOENBERGER, 14, dressed for a spelling bee, walks up to the microphone and adjusts the height down to his level.

ADAM

I'm Adam Schoenberger, and this is my poem. Ode to Stella.

Freeze on Adam.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

This is the worst part of being a fourteen year old aspiring poet in Pittsburgh.

Pan around the cafe; artists and poets wait and listen with expectant expressions. KYLE, 14, and JENNY, 14, sit at a coffee table and cheer loudly for him.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

There are always enablers.

At one table, STELLA, 19, waitress, the kind of pretty that makes your heart ache, takes orders. She pauses to watch Adam with a nervous/amused anticipation.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

And there's always a Stella.

Adam clears his throat.

ADAM

Stella. Stella, Stella, Stella,  
How I wish I could tell ya,  
You make my heartstrings sing in  
acappella, Life without you,  
Stella, Stella, Stella,  
Would be like pizza without  
mozzarella,  
You're such a bella to this fella,  
Stella, Stella, Stella.

(pause)

Thank you.

Adam looks over to Stella for a reaction. Stella has a hand over her mouth, her shoulders shaking in silent laughter. Around the cafe, hipsters laugh. Adam slumps.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
This isn't my first foray into the  
world of poetry.

MONTAGE

Adam steps up to the microphone.

ADAM  
A Limerick for Lisa.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Sixteen Couplets for Rachel.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Sonnet for Ophelia.

Again.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Haiku for Desiree.

BACK TO PRESENT

Adam slumps, dejected, onto a couch near Kyle and Jenny, who give him sympathetic looks.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
My romantic overtures have been,  
thus far, unsuccessful.

Stella walks over with a cup of coffee. She smiles kindly at Adam and sets it down.

STELLA  
On the house, for my favorite poet.

Stella ruffles Adam's hair and walks away. Adam takes it like a knife to the heart. Kyle and Jenny glance at each other.

KYLE  
Hey, I thought it was better than  
your last one. The one for, uh -

JENNY

- Charlotte. This one was better.  
Funnier.

They're not helping. Adam exhales slowly, stands, and leaves.

EXT. LAWRENCEVILLE STREET - DAY

Adam stands at the sidewalk. Beside him, Jenny and Kyle engage in a heated make-out session. Adam watches them with an expression of distaste.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

The coupling of Kyle and Jenny was a bewildering development at the start of eighth grade. I'd known Kyle since he peed himself in the back of Miss Fisher's classroom in kindergarten. The fact that he had a girlfriend and I didn't was just further evidence that the universe hated me.

A car HONKS and pulls up. The window rolls down. KRISTY LADNER, 19, a casual, caustic beauty, sits at the wheel. A car behind her HONKS. She turns around, leans out the window.

KRISTY

(loud)

Fuck you, fuck your car, and find some fucking manners, I'm driving here.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

Kyle's sister, Kristy. She was the subject of four incomplete poems crumpled under my bed. My inexpert rhymes couldn't seem to capture her perfection.

She turns, smiles and waves to Adam. Kyle and Jenny get in the backseat.

KRISTY

How was the poetry reading?

ADAM

Soul-crushing.

KRISTY

How's the weather been?

ADAM  
Emotionally crippling.

KRISTY  
(smiles)  
I missed Pittsburgh.

Adam gets in the car, they drive off.

INT. WINCHESTER THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL DINING HALL - DAY

Kyle, Jenny, and Adam sit at a table and eat lunch together.

KYLE  
You still coming to my party on  
Friday?

ADAM  
I don't know, I might be working on  
my poetry...

KYLE  
It's a Spin the Bottle party. And  
don't tell anyone I told you this -  
but I heard Amy Richardson wants to  
kiss you.

ADAM  
Really?

Adam turns. AMY RICHARDSON, 14, fresh-faced and pretty in a way she isn't aware of yet, sits across the dining hall. She looks up, meets Adam's gaze, and smiles. Adam turns away quickly.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
My mind raced. Amy Richardson  
wanted to kiss me? Did I want to  
kiss her back? I'd never kissed  
anyone before. What if I did it  
wrong and she told everyone and I  
died of shame? What if I did it  
right? This could be the making of  
me.

Adam picks up his books and stands.

ADAM  
I have to go.

KYLE  
Where?

ADAM  
Research.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam sits at his computer and pulls up a search engine. He types in, "HOW TO KISS A GIRL?" Adam clicks through options rapidly, frowns in intense concentration.

INT. PHIPPS CONSERVATORY - DAY

A YOUNG COUPLE kisses and separates. Adam watches them, brow furrowed.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Adam sits between two couples, both intensely making out.

EXT. FLAGSTAFF HILL - DAY

Adam watches a couple having a picnic, kissing.

INT. CARNEGIE LIBRARY - DAY

Adam sits at a table, reading. He looks up, sees another couple making out against the stacks.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
Sure, I was starting to feel kind  
of like a voyeur, but it was for a  
greater good.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam sits with an empty bottle on his floor. He marks a place on the floor with a piece of tape. He spins the bottle, it lands off the mark. He tries again.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
For love, for honor, for a pretty  
girl who wanted to kiss me.

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - LATER

Adam lies asleep in bed, his lips kissing an invisible partner. He tosses and turns.

INT. KYLE'S ATTIC - NIGHT

A warped dream vision of Kyle's Spin the Bottle party. Amy spins the bottle, it spins more rapidly than physics should allow. Adam's heart BEATS loudly. The bottle lands on Adam. Amy smiles, leans ever-closer, closer, and closer -

INT. ADAM'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adam wakes up in a cold sweat. He looks at the calendar; it's Friday.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
And suddenly, it was D-Day.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Adam brushes his teeth, dresses, ties his tie, with the air of a man going to his death. He shuts off the light.

INT. WINCHESTER THURSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL DINING HALL - DAY

Kyle and Jenny make out aggressively, Adam sits next to them. He looks across the dining hall. Amy chats animatedly with her friends. She catches his eye, says something to her friends, and they all burst into giggles.

Adam looks away and pulls at his tie nervously.

EXT. SQUIRREL HILL - HOMEWOOD CEMETERY - DAY

Kyle and Adam walk up a long hill.

ADAM  
Was Jenny your first kiss?

KYLE  
No. Teresa Culkin, sixth grade, remember? Then she went to cheerleading camp and dumped me. Skank.

ADAM  
What was it like?

KYLE  
I dunno. Cool, I guess. She let me give her a hickey once.

Adam staggers, sits down in a grassy spot beside a tree.

ADAM  
I feel nauseous.

KYLE  
And remind me why you're sitting in  
a graveyard?

ADAM  
It's my poetry spot. I come here to  
contemplate.

KYLE  
Whatever, man. Just save some  
contemplating for Amy tonight.

Adam flinches.

ADAM  
Please... can we just not talk  
about her anymore, for a while?

Kyle shrugs, sits down beside him. The sun sets, time passes.  
Kyle goes home. Adam sits in the cemetery by himself.

EXT. HOMEWOOD CEMETERY - NIGHT

Adam stares at the vast stretch of old headstones before him.  
He pulls his notebook from his bookbag, opens it to an empty  
page. He takes a pen and writes across the top of the page,  
"POEM FOR AMY". He stares at the words for a long beat.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
I couldn't think of anything that  
rhymed with Amy.

Adam sits, ponders. Finally, he shuts the notebook. He  
stands, walks away.

EXT. KYLE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam stands outside of Kyle's house, all anxiety and nerves.  
He moves to ring the doorbell, pauses, retreats. A beat. He  
nods to himself, finally rings the doorbell. The door swings  
open, Kristy smiles at Adam.

KRISTY  
Hey, Adam. Everyone's upstairs.

Adam follows her into the house.

INT. KYLE'S ATTIC - NIGHT

Adam enters. About a dozen teenagers sit in a circle around an empty wine bottle. Adam scans the circle - Amy isn't there. He looks around the circle, there are girls, girls, girls. He sits down next to Kyle.

ADAM

Who are these people?

KYLE

Some of Jenny's friends from Ellis. We're playing seven minutes in heaven - whoever you land on, you spend seven minutes in my closet doing whatever. Only rule is you can't come out early and you can't stay in over time.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

I had been so preoccupied by the thought of Amy Richardson, it hadn't occurred to me that I might have to kiss someone else.

KYLE

Your turn.

Adam reaches for the bottle, hesitates. The door opens. It's Amy. She smiles, sits down across the circle from Adam.

AMY

Hey.

Adam gives her a small muscle-spasm of a smile. He readies the bottle for a spin - and there it goes. Adam watches, transfixed. The bottle lands... on an empty spot. Adam breathes. A moment of relief, then -

AMY (CONT'D)

My turn.

Amy reaches out and spins the bottle with purpose. It lands on Adam. The circle OOOH's them. Amy stands, Adam follows.

INT. KYLE'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Adam shuts the closet door behind him. He and Amy are alone.

AMY

Hi.

ADAM

Hi.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

Did she expect me to start kissing her right away? Or were we supposed to ease into it with witty banter?

ADAM

So, you come around here a lot?

AMY

We're in a closet.

ADAM

Yeah, it was a joke.

AMY

Oh.

Adam looks away, Amy watches him. A long beat, then -

AMY (CONT'D)

Adam, do you want to kiss me?

ADAM

What? Yes. No. Maybe. Why?

AMY

It's okay if you do. I like you, Adam.

ADAM

Oh. Cool. Thanks.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

It was agony. My cinematic research hadn't prepared me for my first kiss in a closet while all my friends waited on the other side.

Adam pulls at his tie, Amy waits for something that isn't coming. She gives him one more verbal nudge -

AMY

Do you like me?

ADAM

Yes?

Amy smiles. Adam has a short internal battle with himself, then -

ADAM (CONT'D)  
I've never kissed anyone before.

AMY  
Me neither.

ADAM  
Oh.

AMY  
You wanna be my first kiss?

ADAM  
(smiles, straightens)  
Yeah.

AMY  
Okay. On three. One... Two...

They lean in. Adam closes his eyes. The door opens.

JENNY  
Alright, love birds, time's up.

Amy smiles, mouths "sorry". She squeezes Adam's hand.

INT. KYLE'S ATTIC - NIGHT

Adam and Amy rejoin the circle to some whoops and whistles.  
Kyle spins the bottle.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
We didn't kiss, but there was  
promise in the air. I could feel it  
beating against my chest. Amy  
Richardson -

The bottle lands on Amy. Kyle leads her into the closet. As  
the door shuts, Adam sees them kiss.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)  
- was a heart-breaking tramp. I  
hated her. After she had squeezed  
my hand! I had been betrayed,  
stabbed in the back and the heart  
all at once.

Adam stands.

JENNY  
Where are you going?

ADAM  
You're okay with this?

JENNY  
It's just a game.

Adam shakes his head, leaves the room.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Adam walks outside, sits down on the porch swing, dejected. He loosens his tie, takes out his notebook from his pocket. He opens it to the blank page with Amy's name on it. He stares at the page for a long beat.

KRISTY (O.S.)  
Rough night?

Adam jumps, shuts his notebook quickly. Kristy smiles at him from the doorway, then sits down across from him on the porch.

ADAM  
Kyle kissed my girlfriend. Well -  
not my girlfriend. My intended.

KRISTY  
Your intended?

ADAM  
Amy Richardson. I was writing a new  
poem about her.

KRISTY  
Jake Richardson's little sister?  
Now I feel old.

ADAM  
How's college?

KRISTY  
(archly)  
How's middle school?

ADAM  
Good.

KRISTY  
You guys playing spin the bottle?

ADAM  
Seven minutes in heaven.

KRISTY

Seven minutes in heaven. I had my first kiss during that game. Peter Kostecki. He's studying in Germany now.

ADAM

I don't think it's a very good game.

Kristy watches him, smiles slightly.

KRISTY

Yeah, not the best way to have your first kiss.

ADAM

I didn't kiss her.

KRISTY

Why not?

ADAM

Doesn't love mean anything anymore?  
(a beat) Our seven minutes ran out.

Kristy laughs. She leans over, kisses Adam softly on the lips.

KRISTY

Keep fighting the good fight, Adam.

Kristy stands and leaves. A slow smile grows on Adam's face.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

That was my first real kiss. In years to come, I'd have other romantic experiences - enough to fill a forest of notebooks with bad poetry and terrible lyrics. But nothing was ever quite the same as the Night that Kristy, Kristy, Kristy, Leaned in and kissed me.

FADE OUT.