

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.)

That's me. Adam Schoenberger, fourteen years old, aspiring poet and lover extraordinaire.

Pan to a table where 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 that's 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.

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 through the heart. He exhales slowly, stands, leaves.

EXT. LAWRENCEVILLE STREET - DAY

JENNY, 14, and KYLE, 14, engage in a heated make-out session in the backseat of a car. Adam stands with his hand on the open car door, watching 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.

Adam shuts the door and moves to the driver's passenger side.
KRISTY LADNER, 19, greets Adam from the wheel.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

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

KRISTY

How was the poetry reading?

ADAM

Soul-crushing.

KRISTY

How's the weather been?

ADAM

Emotionally devastating.

KRISTY

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 watches an old movie, Jimmy Stewart kisses the hell out of Donna Reed. Adam frowns in intense concentration. He tries kissing the side of his hand, frowns, testing it. Adam pauses the movie, studies it.

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. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Kyle and Jenny make out aggressively, Adam sits next to them. He looks across the bus. 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.

INT. CARNEGIE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

The electric buzz of a class field trip. Adam, isolated from the crowd, stares up at the skeleton of a TYRANNOSAURUS REX.

His attention is caught by a PRETTY MUSEUM GUIDE who leads a nearby tour. Her name tag reads HANNAH. You can almost hear the bad poetry composing itself in his head. Adam pulls out his notebook and pen, writes "POEM FOR HANNAH" at the top of the page -

AMY (O.S.)
Do you like dinosaurs?

Adam jumps. Amy walks over and stands beside him, smiling. She looks up at the T-Rex.

AMY (CONT'D)
I think they're pretty cool. Big.

ADAM
I think there were small ones, too.

Amy waits for Adam to say something else. He doesn't.

AMY
Are you going to Kyle's thing tonight?

ADAM
(playing it cool)
Yeah, I, uh, I might stop by.

AMY
Good. I'm glad.

She smiles, touches him lightly on the elbow, walks away. Adam stares after her. The T-Rex skeleton looms behind Adam.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)
In that moment, nothing in the entirety of the Jurassic period could be as terrifying as Amy Richardson.

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. (a beat)
What would you do if there was a real zombie apocalypse?

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.

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.

OLDER ADAM (V.O.)

Sitting in the cemetery that night, I came the closest I ever have to enlightenment. Like a soldier hours away from the final battle, I finally understood the task before me.

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 Shady Side. We're doing 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 OOOOH's them. Amy stands, Adam follows.

INT. KYLE'S CLOSET - NIGHT

Adam shuts the 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)
Do you want to kiss me?

ADAM
What? No. Yes. 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)
Good. Are you going to kiss me?

Adam has a short internal battle with himself, then -

ADAM
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, shuts his eyes.

KRISTY (O.S.)
 Bad night?

Adam opens his eyes, jumps up. 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 wrote six poems
 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 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 that would inspire more 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.