

Sophia Graham

Age: 13, Grade: 8

School Name: Altamont School, Birmingham, AL

Educator: Dan Carsen

Category: Dramatic Script

Letters

Int. Scene one- At a counselor's office

NATALIE is sitting at her counselor's office, talking about something that is clearly troubling her. She is on the verge of tears.

Lara

...Look Natalie, you can't blame yourself for something like that. You had no idea what would happen.

natalie

But if I had just... Lara you just can't understand. She's dead and it's my fault.

Lara

This might sound a little childish, but I think the best thing for you to do is write to yourself about what you would do differently.

Natalie

So, you want me to write letters to my younger self?

Lara

Essentially, yes. We're out of time for today but I think we need to talk about this again. It's not healthy for you to carry around that amount of guilt.

Natalie

Have a good week.

Lara

I'll see you next Tuesday.

NATALIE grabs her purse and walks out of the office.

Int. scene two- at Natalie's House

NATALIE walks into her house later that night and goes into her office. She looks down at her desk and a piece of paper sitting on it. She sighs and then begins writing. Once she is done, she reads it aloud to herself.

Natalie

Dear younger self,

On Thursday, September 12, 2009, you're driving our daughter, Grace, home from school. You run into traffic on the interstate and decide to take the backroads. Don't. If you do, while you're driving home, a deer jumps out in front of your car and Grace dies.

Signed, Your wiser self.

She seals the letter and address it. She looks down at it and says to herself,

Natalie

This is stupid.

She gets up and begins to walk out of the room but turns around and grabs a stamp from a box on her desk and puts it on the letter. She now walks out of the room and turns off the light. Behind her, the envelope glistens and then disappears.

Int. Scene three- at natalie's house

NATALIE yawns and sits up in her bed. She slips her feet into slippers and put on a robe. She walks down the hall and into the kitchen. She grabs a mug from the counter and pours a cup of coffee. From behind, she hears,

Grace

Good morning mom.

NATALIE turns around and drops the mug, causing it to shatter. Tears begin forming in her eyes.

Natalie

Oh my gosh, Grace, you're here! You've grown since I last saw you! I missed you so much.

NATALIE walks over and gives a very confused GRACE a giant hug.

Grace

I literally saw you last night, mom. You're acting weird. And since when do you drink coffee?

Natalie

Oh right. I forgot I didn't drink coffee before you...

Grace

Are you sure you're feeling okay?

Natalie

Yeah, I'm fine.

She suddenly remembers the letter and abruptly begins walking out.

Natalie

I need to go check on something.

She walks back down the hall into her office and sits down at the desk to find that the envelope had been opened and there is no longer a letter inside. The stamp is also missing from the outside. Once she realizes this, she frantically grabs the stamps from her desk and takes them out of the envelope they are in. She examines them and then notices a message on the back. She reads it aloud.

Natalie

As you have noticed, and you would have if you are reading this, these are no ordinary stamps. They allow to address letters to not just any place, but any time in the past. The only rules, you can only use each stamp once and you can't send a letter to the same day. There are only three enclosed in the package, so use them wisely. Good luck.

NATALIE laughs a bit to herself and picks up her pen to write another letter, but is stopped by Grace yelling from down the hall.

Grace

Hey mom? Are you going to make breakfast?

Natalie

Oh right! Down in a second!

NATALIE walks out of her office and turns the lights off behind her.

Int. scene four- at Natalie's house

NATALIE walks in with GRACE that night.

Grace

I'm excited for the fall dance next Wednesday.

Natalie

Are sure you don't want to go with someone?

Grace

No. Just no. You don't know the guys in my grade.

Natalie

Okay, I understand. Don't you have some homework to do?

Grace

Yeah. You know how Mrs. Bryant loves giving way too much math homework.

Natalie

I'm going to do a little work myself. Back in a second.

NATALIE walks down the hall and into her study. She sits down and begins writing another letter. Once she is done, she reads it to herself.

Natalie

Dear younger me,

I have one more piece of advice for you. There's a man you meet in college named Nick. For some reason, you let him go for Grace's father. Don't. Other than Grace, Nick is the best thing that ever happened to you. Don't make the mistake of letting him get away.

Signed, a more experienced you.

NATALIE sighs and seals the letter, addresses it, and then puts her second stamp on it. She leaves it on the desk and then walks out of the room.

Int. Scene five- At Nick's house

NATALIE wakes up in a different bed, in a different house. She is thoroughly confused with her surroundings and walks out into a large entryway and goes to what she assumes is the kitchen. She comes into NICK cooking pancakes for their two children. NICK gives her a kiss on the cheek when she walks over to where is he standing.

Nick

Morning honey. I made you a protein shake, it's in the fridge.

NATALIE walks over to the large refrigerator and gets out the protein shake as promised. She take a sip and comments.

Natalie

This is really good. Thank you.

Nick

It's what I make every morning, but you're welcome.

NATALIE goes over to the table where her kids are sitting, waiting patiently for pancakes. The younger one says.

Avery

Mommy! Daddy is making us pancakes!

Natalie

So I see.

Luke

How did you sleep?

Natalie

Fine. How about you?

Luke

Good. Maxwell licked me awake at about six thirty, but really good other than that.

At the mention of his name, their border collie MAXWELL runs over and sits at NATALIE'S feet. She reaches down and scratches his ear. She stands up and finishes her protein shake and sets the glass at the sink. NICK notices something is off and asks.

Nick

Hey, are you okay? You seem distracted this morning.

Natalie

Yeah. I'll be fine. I just didn't sleep very well.

Nick

Okay but if you need anything, please tell me. (short pause) What are you doing today?

Natalie

Going to work, as always.

Nick

You got a job? I'm so proud of you! Where are you working?

Natalie

Do I not usually have a job?

Nick

No. You generally stay home. If you want a job, I could certainly help you find one, it's just that you never expressed an interest before today.

Natalie

No it's fine. I'm fine. I think I need to go lay down for a second.

Nick

If you feel like you need to, please do. I can get the kids to school today.

Natalie

Thanks Nick, you're the best.

She walks out of the kitchen and goes back upstairs. She grabs her phone from the nightstand and calls someone.

Natalie

Hey Lara. I know it's a long shot, but what's the chance you could see me today? It's important.

Int. scene six- at Lara's office

A very stressed NATALIE walks into LARA'S office and sits down.

Natalie

Thanks for getting me in Lara.

Lara

Of course. I can't say that we've met before.

Natalie

No, we have. Just not in this reality.

Lara

Oh?

Natalie

What I'm about to tell you is going to sound insane, but I need you to believe me.

Lara

I'll do my best.

Natalie

Two days ago, I came in here because I needed help dealing with the guilt of my daughter dying in a car crash because I took a different route. You told me to write a letter to my younger self and I did. I didn't know that I had accidentally addressed it with a magical stamp that sent it to my younger self. I woke up the next day and my daughter Grace was there. That night, I wrote another letter telling myself not to let go of my dream guy Nick. I woke up today and now I live in a huge house with Nick, two sweet kids, a border collie named Maxwell, and tons of free time. It's what I thought my perfect life would look like but it doesn't have Grace in it. I have one stamp left. I can use it to get Grace back but then I have to leave behind everything else. What should I do?

Lara

That's an incredibly difficult decision. I think that deep down, you know what you want. I can't make this decision for you. If you think you can be happy knowing Grace existed and not having her in your life, then stay with what you have now. If not, then I think you have your answer.

Natalie

Okay. Thank you.

NATALIE gets up and walks out of the office.

Int. scene seven- at Nick's House

NATALIE walks into NICK'S mansion and goes up to her study, which still has the desk and stamps in it. She sits down and writes her final letter. She puts the letter in the envelope, addresses it, and picks up the final stamp. She sighs before placing it on the letter and walking out one last time.

Int. scene eight- at Natalie's house

NATALIE wakes up in the morning and takes a deep breath before opening her eyes and watches the ground as she walks to the kitchen.

Shots show only her slippers as she does this so there is no way to see what house she is in.

She smiles and walks out into the kitchen, finally looking up, to where Grace is eating cereal.

Natalie

Morning, sweetie.

Grace

Morning mom. How did you sleep.

Natalie

Really good. You know something, Grace? Real is a lot better than perfect.

Grace

That makes sense. It's really random, but it makes sense.

Natalie

I love you.

Grace

I love you too, mom.

Natalie

Come on. We have to get you to school.

They walk out the front door and NATALIE turns around to survey their house. She smiles and sighs before turning the lights out and closing the door behind her.

Shots of natalie driving grace to school and then work, going through her day, and coming home at the end of the day.

As the shots are playing, we hear NATALIE saying,

Natalie (v.o)

Dear younger me,

I've learned a lot of things in the past few days. In the reality i created, I have the perfect husband, perfect kids, perfect dog, and perfect life. But I've realized that sometimes perfect is too easy and hard times, even if they hurt, help make you a better person. So let Nick go, have Grace in your life, and even if things aren't always perfect, that's okay. You'll make it through because you are much stronger than you think.

Signed, your humbled self.