

“Some Great Reward”

TV series pitch by Jan Wilson

Drama with a strong undercurrent of dark humor. Ten one-hour episodes.

Tagline: They don't call it *drama* class for nothing.

Logline: Jill's unconscious desire for a father figure draws her to the intriguing new high school drama teacher. She's a late bloomer and no beauty, so Jill is determined to use her intellect and sense of humor to impress this beguiling mentor.

Setting: An Albuquerque high school in 1985 – MTV is still pretty new and in its heyday. Non-stop videos of Cyndi Lauper, Eurythmics, Aerosmith, Phil Collins, Depeche Mode, not to mention Tina Turner's big comeback and newcomer Madonna. *Back to the Future*,

Goonies, and *Out of Africa* were the hit movies, but you had to rush home if you wanted to watch *Family Ties* or *Dynasty* because VCRs were only recently becoming a household item. Walkmans were all the rage, you can now listen to your own music on tape without a stereo! A glorious time to be a teenager, aside from the usual drama and emotional crises that plague everyday high school life.

Story: In a class full of pretty, outgoing, sexually blossoming young ladies Jill hopes to use her playwriting skills to impress Roger, their intriguing new drama teacher. Jill's thrilled that he's not fooled by the other girls' shallow demeanor. He takes her under his wing and a true friendship forms. When he mentions that he's putting on a play in the city's summer festival she puts her obsession with the band Depeche Mode on hold and sets her sights on having her play produced, proving to everyone that their unconventional relationship is built on mutual respect and nothing inappropriate. But Jill's young age blinds her to certain truths.

Tone: A darker, more dramatic version of *Freaks and Geeks* starring a younger, less neurotic version of Hannah from *Girls* set in the drama club with dubious teachers, raging hormones and the teenage angst we all somehow managed to live through. *Freaks and Geeks* meets *Girls* with a dash of *Glee*. With the popularity of *Stranger Things* audiences' nostalgia for the '80s has been revived.

Audience: Young audiences will relate to the young leads and older audiences will relate to being a teen in the '80s. And audiences of all ages will relate to going through the drama and trauma of surviving high school.

Conflicting desires: The drama is driven by the fact that our hero Jill has to choose between two equal but irreconcilable ideas: Jill wants to be the one who comes to Roger's aid to prove all the others wrong who say that Roger has dubious motives spending so much time with female students during after class rehearsals. But on the other hand she has a deep crush on him and being seduced would make her feel accepted and appreciated. She herself isn't always sure which outcome she's rooting for, both can lead to pain, both can lead to satisfaction.

Surface conflict: Jill wants to get her teacher's attention and approval by writing her skits and plays, and hopefully having him choose hers to perform, yet she's plagued with insecurity about her skill.

Deeper conflict: She struggles to become aware of her father figure fixations and how will she tackle and subdue them in order to live an emotionally healthy life.



“Some Great Reward” Episode Guide

By Jan Wilson

Jill's voiceover dialogue is in bold italics.

Episode One - “Something to Do”

March 1985

The first thing Jill Woyzech, 17, does after waking up in her messy teen's bedroom is take the VHS tape out of her large VCR and immediately pop in another blank tape and push 'record.' ***“MTV has been playing the new video by Depeche Mode, but it's hard to catch. Now for the first important decision of the day. Standard speed, slow speed or super slow speed?”*** She goes on to explain that using the slow speed will cover more hours, but be of lower quality. If she uses the faster speed it'll be good quality but she'll only be able to record for two hours instead of six. ***“This is a difficult decision. I've got a better chance of catching a Depeche Mode video in the afternoon after the heavy metal shows, but it'll be not-so-great quality.”*** She decides. Flips the button to SLP. ***“Better safe than sorry. I can always get a better quality version later. This isn't obsession. It's appreciation and loyalty.”*** Her Depeche Mode concert shirt fits more snugly than it should due an extra 30 pounds or so.

Jill's dad, a plumber and contractor, has the kitchen torn up and is in the process of remodeling. Dad has caused a never-ending mess of a missing kitchen sink, cabinets torn down, dishes, food and pots and pans stacked on the kitchen table. Mom serves breakfast on the coffee table today. Remodeling is a long process so their meals are taken in a new place each day. Today the coffee table, tomorrow the patio table, the next day the desk in the office. Mom teases him about the project but they both know she'll love her big new kitchen, if it's ever finished.

Jill stands at her locker. The inside of the door is covered with Depeche Mode stickers, Depeche Mode photos from magazines, Depeche Mode magnets, Depeche Mode's “Some Great Reward” cassette cover taped to the inside door. She's a girl of singular focus and loyalty.

As Jill slams her locker closed her best friend Teddy Garcia's open locker is seen next to hers. It's an explosion of color and images. Farrah Fawcett, Jaclyn Smith and Charlie's other Angels. Bo Derek, Blondie, and Tina Turner. Every square inch is covered with glamorous women. And he's even used acrylic paint to fill in the gaps with tiny little masterpieces of abstract art.

Teddy closes his locker revealing pretty Danielle Brooks at her open locker door next to his. A mirror, which she's using to reapply her eyeliner, a pocket for emergency mascara and lip gloss. Several school photos of cute guys, you just know they are seniors.

Today is like any other day in high school in Albuquerque, New Mexico. A quick sampling of boring classes, lunch with friends, an arrogant bullying teacher no one stands up to, feigning cramps to avoid P.E. activities, passing notes in class.

But Jill's life is thrown a curve ball when a new scruffily handsome young actor-director, Roger Addison, takes over their drama class when good ol' Mr. Markowitz takes a leave of absence due to health issues. She's instantly smitten, as is her best friend Danielle. Even Marty notes Roger's charisma. Roger says it's okay to call him by his first name, so they do and it feels cool.

Mom and Dad are happy to see Jill is more enthused with school. Mom knows a schoolgirl crush when she sees one. Dad thinks Jill is just being a good student, but Mom enlightens him. Mom had many crushes herself when she was a girl. “Though never one on a teacher like Jill's crush.” Dad is not happy to hear this.

In Jill's bedroom Teddy does homework as she works on yet another skit. Teddy's sure she'll be a playwright someday, only true writers do extra homework for fun. Teddy reminds Jill that Depeche Mode is doing one of their first big American tours soon. They're both dying to see them in concert. Trouble is the closest the band comes to Albuquerque is either Dallas, which prompts a mutual “yuck” from both of them, or Los Angeles. “Hmm! Better!” They both have their driver's license, they're both “responsible good kids” so Teddy's sure they can convince their parents to let them drive to L.A. to see the concert. This once in a lifetime opportunity is their new passion project.

Roger's casual and laidback teaching style is a hit with the kids. Jill even asks if instead of reciting a poem in class as a voice projection exercise they can do song lyrics instead. Roger says yes. After spying a bumper sticker of The Who on Roger's car Jill recites a Who song instead of a Depeche Mode song. This not only shocks the class that it's not Depeche Mode, but it allows her to bond with Roger who instantly recognizes the song. If Jill didn't know better she'd say Danielle was a little jealous not being the center of attention for once. Substance over style wins, a coup for shy Jill.

When Roger jokingly wonders aloud why someone as shy as Jill took drama class Jill shrugs and her reply sums up their relationship in three short words: "Danielle made me." Danielle and Teddy refer to Jill as "L.B." but the nickname is not yet explained.

Their arrogant psychology teacher, Mr. Deakins, drops a few hints that Roger has a bit of a bad reputation. But he's smart and cautious enough to not spell anything out. Jill scoffs at this. "Yeah right, Roger's been here all of two days and Deakins is trying to convince us he knows stuff about Roger. Jealous!" Teddy takes the opposite tack. "Yeah, OR Roger's been here all of two days and already has a suspicious reputation. Red flag!" But Jill and Danielle maintain that Mr. Deakins is jealous of Roger because Roger hangs out with some of the students and talks to them on their own level and the students like Roger better than Deakins.

Roger is directing *Hamlet* at a small local theater. He's up for a great job at Juilliard as a resident director and directing a killer version of *Hamlet* will cinch the deal. He longs to get out of small Albuquerque and make his mark in New York. He reads one of Jill's monologues called *The Ugly Dress* and is impressed and touched at the depth and raw emotion she expresses over body image issues and self-esteem problems. She likens her extra weight to an ugly dress she's forced to wear. **"But unlike a young girl who makes a one-time fashion misstep who can step out of her ugly dress at the end of the day, I cannot remove mine. An unwanted uniform I wear daily."**

Roger announces to the class that they will perform *Spoon River Anthology* for the year's spring production. There are plenty of roles for everyone and he encourages everyone to try out. He mentions to the class that this summer he is in charge of a drama festival and will be directing several short plays. Jill's eyes grow wide when she hears Roger mention that he intends to choose three new plays from new playwrights. She has found her new obsession...uh...goal.

After school Roger tells Jill that he loved *The Ugly Dress* and he urges her to read it in class. She says it's too personal, she would be way too embarrassed. She's even surprised she let him read it. "If you're going to be in drama you've got to learn to put yourself out there, risk ridicule, have the courage to be yourself and make yourself known without any fear or embarrassment." "But I'm not going to be a professional actress or anything like that." "It'll help you in real life as you get older, believe me. This isn't just about class or getting an education for a career. I'm preparing you for life. I'm hoping you'll learn from my mistakes. You're a sensitive soul, I can tell. And that's wonderful. I want to see you shine. But you're gonna get clobbered in real life if you don't figure out how to toughen up. Remember, what doesn't kill you makes you stronger." She thinks about this, and adds, "But the healing process is a bitch!" He laughs. This is the beginning of the little life lessons Roger decides to impart to Jill as he takes her under his wing. He tells her she should read *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* by Tennessee Williams. When she presses him for a reason he finally admits that she reminds him of the main character, Alma. **"You know I just have to read it now."**

Jill eschews the spotlight so she's fine with letting Danielle hog most of the attention in class and onstage. Little does Danielle know that Roger saves some private after school time to continue Jill's life lessons. Roger is constantly amused by Teddy. "You'd be a great cabaret act." Later Teddy notes, "He didn't say I'd be great IN a cabaret act, he said I'd BE a great cabaret act." Jill yearns so badly to impress Roger in the same way outgoing Danielle and Teddy do, but she's still too inhibited.

Roger asks for volunteers to perform any extra skits they've been working on. He looks at her. **"He'd be so proud of you, this is your chance, do it! Not only impress him, but the class as well. Show your stuff and make everyone stand up and notice your abilities!"** She wusses out. "The Ugly Dress" is too personal. She just can't bring herself to raise her hand. Her big opportunity to impress him is lost. Danielle raises her hand, jumps up onstage and does a funny improvised bit that has the class laughing. The usual teenaged silly stuff. Everyone laughs. Roger chuckles. Jill sits, stewing in self-loathing and disappointment. **"You are such a lame ass. You'll never have the**

guts to speak up and shine.”

Any student of any grade can audition, but lead roles always go to the seniors since it's their last year. With Jill too embarrassed to audition in front of Roger and the other girls only moderately interested Danielle is pretty much guaranteed to get the lead this year. Lots of time parading onstage to keep Roger's attention. But Danielle's ego takes a direct hit when she realizes there is no lead role for her. There's no lead role for *anyone*. *Spoon River Anthology* is comprised of many small roles and everyone plays one or two or even three parts, but there is no lead role. No spotlight for Danielle.

Jill feels like she's letting Roger down again when she's too inhibited to audition, yet another lost opportunity to impress him. But much to Jill's delight Roger makes her assistant director for the play which means lots of time with the director: him.

Jill is so proud and happy she got assistant director job. She rushes home and tells Dad, who is tiling the kitchen floor. "Is Roger going to be there?" is his only response.

Jill shows Teddy something revolutionary - - how to record movies using two VCRs. They rent a second VCR, which entails leaving a large deposit at a video store, carting the big heavy thing home. They rent it for two days. They use her VCR as the second one, hook up the cables and Teddy is amazed to see that one machine plays and the second one records! Now they can rent movies and record them instead of waiting for them to come on TV. Revolutionary!

Jill still spends time after school obsessively fast forwarding through the VCR tapes that record all day when she's at school, hoping to find the elusive new rarely played Depeche Mode video.

Danielle flirts and cavorts in class, her day in the sun. She's definitely the outgoing diva of the class, and like Jill, she is determined to befriend Roger and hang out with him too. Danielle usually gets what she wants, and sometimes drags Jill along for the ride.

Jill is secretly glad to be dragged by Danielle into an after-school trip to Taco Bell when she realizes Danielle invited Roger along too and much to their surprise, he agrees to go. Danielle seems a tad jealous when Jill ends up getting a ride home with Roger instead of her, but Danielle's pretty confident that mousy Jill won't do much to entice or impress Roger.

As Roger drives away with Jill he says he's got something at his house he wants to show Jill, and she agrees to swing by his house to get it. She's both excited and a bit scared to hear him mention he lives alone. As they drive down his street her mind is racing. ***"What if he assumed the wrong thing? Does he think we were offering sex? Wait, he would've brought Danielle here if that's what he was after, not me. Or, or would he? But what's he wanna show me? Oh my god, was that was like his clever way of saying he wants to show me his thingy? What would I do? Do I want to...?"*** She starts to calm down when reality sets in. ***"Yeah, right, he has his choice of Danielle or me to seduce and he's gonna pick me. Danielle had her car at school and I didn't, that's why he's giving me a ride home. And I'm sure I'll sit in the car while he runs in to get whatever it is he wants to show me. Jeez Jill, get a grip."*** She almost laughs at herself for such absurd thoughts. ***"Sitting in his car while he runs in the house, no big deal."*** He parks, hops out, takes a few steps. Doubles back, pokes his head back in his window. "Well, come on, come inside with me." After a few seconds of frozen indecision Jill gets out, follows him inside the dark house. The door shuts behind her.

Episode Two - "Lie to Me"

mid-March 1985

Inside Roger's darkened house Jill stands by the front door waiting Roger to quickly retrieve whatever it is he wants her to see. "Come on in, sit down." He turns a light on. She sits and tries to relax while taking in all the details of his house. ***"What if he comes out half naked? Oh my god, what if he comes out waving his thingy at me? What do I do if he sits right next to me? What if - -"*** Roger reappears, fully dressed, carrying an old dog-eared script. ***"Oh, a script! He's showing me a script?"*** He hands it to her. She reads the cover: *Eccentricities of a Nightingale*. He finally sits down...in the easy chair, not next to her. "It's my copy from when I directed it a few years ago. I want you to have my copy." ***"Whew. Not seducing a student. Encouraging her with literature. Cool."*** Her relief is tinged with a tad of disappointment.

At dinner Mom sets up small patio furniture tables in the living room to eat off of; the coffee table

is now laden with boxes of light fixtures for the remodel. Dad finds out that Jill was in Roger's house - - she simply can't resist bragging about it - - and he isn't too happy about it even though he believes her chaste story. He expresses his concern to Mom. She says if he really feels something is up he should follow through on it. A passive-aggressive hint that he has issues of him not finishing things. The disaster area kitchen remodel mess is a glaring example.

During class they break up into groups to work on their skits. Roger sits with Jill and critiques the latest scene she wrote. "There's not enough conflict in it, but it has promise. You need more drama. You're not dramatic enough." ***"Not dramatic enough? Me?! Ha, that's pretty funny to hear. I shout and get upset if an animal gets killed in a movie, I threw a hissy fit and acted like it was the end of the world when Mom and Dad wouldn't let me go see Aerosmith with Danielle, I cried all night when Danny Jenkins stood me up, and now I'm being told I'm not dramatic enough. Boy, that's a switch."***

Another student asks Jill if she knows or suspects Teddy of being gay she says no. "Heck he's obsessed with Bo Derek and Charlie's Angels, does that sound like he's gay?" "Uh, *yeah*. He doesn't want to sleep with Farrah Fawcett, he wants to BE her." She scoffs at this. Someone points out, "You've been best friends with him for two years and he's never hit on you or kissed you or wanted sex from you?" "Uh, NO ONE'S tried to kiss me or have sex with me. Does that mean every boy in school is gay?" Jill just doesn't think in those terms yet. We find out that Jill's nickname L.B. stands for Late Bloomer.

At the movie theater where Teddy and Jill work part-time at the concession stand they are excitedly planning their impending trip to L.A. to see Depeche Mode. Still unauthorized by the parents, but they've got it all planned out and know exactly how to phrase everything to where they will be allowed to go. They've got maps, Teddy's grandparents address where they'll stay while in L.A., and money put aside for gasoline and tickets.

Dad finds a lame excuse to show up at the school's theater late one night checking up on Jill after she volunteered to stay and help Roger repair and replace some of the theater seats. He sees that she's not alone with Roger, so he eventually goes home. Jill is embarrassed beyond belief when Roger says he understands why Dad would do that, the whole adult male/female student thing. Luckily Danielle barges in just in time, desperate for her fix of attention. Jill simply sits back and observes, almost with amazement, how easily Danielle takes center stage by telling a very dramatic story of how she almost ran out of gas and borrowed \$4 from a guy at the gas station. Not the most riveting tale, but as usual Danielle entrances everyone with her sheer volume and vulgar hilarity and, of course, her shapeliness.

Episode Three - "People Are People" (Bottle episode Jill and Teddy)

mid-March 1985

Jill and Teddy hang around after school in art studio. As they slip into the studio they pass Mr. Deakins in the hallway. "Hey, are you supposed to be going in there? Where's is Mr. Barker?" Teddy explains that the art teacher, Mr. Barker, leaves it unlocked so Teddy can go in after school and work and then Teddy locks it up afterward. "Well," Mr. Deakins relents, "I guess it's alright then, I'll allow it." "Thanks," Teddy says, and they go inside. Jill is perturbed. "*He'll* allow it? No, it's alright because Mr. Barker *already* allowed it, you arrogant knob!" "Knob?" "British slang." She says she heard the lead singer of Depeche Mode say it once in an interview and she looked it up to see what it meant. "Your pee-pee."

They are alone as Teddy paints on large canvasses in the art studio. Very distinctive (if not a bit "flamboyant" shall we say?) paintings of very stylized, glamorous men and women. But he's definitely got a unique talent. Jill watches him paint and tells Teddy she isn't going to do the L.A. trip to see Depeche Mode so she can help with Roger that weekend build sets for *Hamlet* at his community theater. Teddy is really pissed off that she waylaid their big trip just so she can hang out with Roger. She says they can go to another show but Teddy tells her the next shows are in Japan. Teddy chastises her for putting aside her big dream just to hang around Roger at his show doing menial labor. Though Jill hasn't yet realized Teddy is gay, she has plenty of ammunition against Teddy for

his tendency to squelch his artistic talents, not understanding why he hides the artwork. She assumes he is just being modest and pushes him to be more open about his art.

Jill obsesses with Teddy over why Tennessee William's Alma character reminded Roger of her, she worries and frets and does the overanalyzing that all teens do. "So? What'd you think?" Teddy asks after she says she read the play. She isn't sure, she asks him to read it. "Eh. Can't you just describe it to me?" He doesn't want to read an old play.

"He wrote in the margins next to one of Alma's speeches 'This line shows Alma is fully aware she's an oddball'. He thinks I'm an oddball? Or does he think that I think I'm an oddball, which could mean that I'm not really one, but I just think I am." Teddy patiently talks it out with her. She's torn between proudly flying her freak flag and thinking she should tone it down if she ever wants to win love. Did Roger think of the Alma story as a success story for oddballs? Or a cautionary tale for Jill? "So he thinks I'm a mentally ill misfit destined for a tragic ending of prostituting myself for the affections of men. Great. Nice. Taco Bell for lunch?" Teddy finally says "I don't think he put *quite* as much thought into this as you are."

Eventually Teddy gets irritated with her obsession over Roger and questions if it's healthy. "I'm just as obsessed with Depeche Mode but you don't seem to mind that," she says. "Well, yes," Teddy admits, "because in that case it works in my favor 'cause I want to see them in concert too." It's a conscious joke, they both laugh. By the end of their time together Teddy's done some really striking work. But he hides them in the back storage room. "Why do you hide your art?" she asks.

Episode Four - "It Doesn't Matter"

mid-March 1985

Jill shows Roger Teddy's paintings in the art room. They chat about school, art and life in general, alone in these close quarters of the storage room with Teddy's secret art. He continues giving her some "real life lessons" that she won't get from regular classes. While admiring the paintings she says she loves that even though Teddy is super talented he isn't arrogant about it in the least. She says she despises arrogant people. Roger says that arrogant people are usually hiding some insecurity. "The best way to put an arrogant person in their place is to find out their weak area and point it out to them. Preferably in an embarrassing way," he adds with a grin, "With witnesses!" She innocently says she doesn't understand why Teddy hides these paintings. When she's out of earshot Roger nods, "I bet I know why."

Roger invites Teddy to go a party and Teddy is leery, but agrees to go. Turns out there are other young gay men there flourishing in the arts, and Roger introduces Teddy to them. The host, Sancho, is in his early 30s, wears a bright vest and flashy scarf. Sancho is very kind and welcoming, openly gay and makes Teddy feel at home. Teddy gets to see what it's like to be openly gay and proudly show your artwork and creative skills. Roger never directly addresses the gay issues, he simply shows Teddy a new world he can be himself in. Teddy watches Roger interact with everyone, but Roger makes no overt signs of being gay himself.

Before drama class Roger has one of Jill's skits she wrote in hand and heads over to her. She has her nose buried in her psychology textbook. He sits next to her. She looks up, a confused look on her face from what she just read. "Alcohol is a depressant?" Roger confirms this, "Yeah." "Really?" "Yeah, why?" "I thought it'd be a stimulant. All these dorks at parties drink and they get so rambunctious and loud and wild. How can it be a depressant?" He explains that when you drink alcohol it seems to stimulate you but what's actually happening is that it depresses your inhibitors at first. She gets it. "Oh, so with those inhibitors now depressed you have nothing holding you back and you can act loud and crazy and stupid," she says. "Right. So in a way I think people's behavior when they drink shows their nature. Their filters are gone," he adds. She nods, "So after attending a few parties I can confirm that everyone I know is an obnoxious buffoon." He agrees, "Yeah, that sounds about right. People are awful." She laughs, "Another life lesson. 'People are awful.' Thanks!"

Roger then moves on to critiquing the skit she wrote. Once again he tells Jill that she has too many characters in her scenes and it waters down the storylines. She should limit her characters. "But I like all these other characters, I like exploring their stories." He counters, "Limiting it to only three or four characters forces the audience to focus on them and intensifies the drama. That is if you

put some drama into it! Don't feel bad, this is one of the most common flaws with new writers. So actually you're right on track!" he jokes.

Bully psychology teacher Mr. Deakins makes fun of Danielle for still not knowing the difference between there, their and they're. He further humiliates her by having an impromptu grammar lesson. He writes an example on the board "I wonder where they're going?" Jill stares at the board, her mind racing. **"That's not a question. It's a statement! Oh my god, this arrogant asshole made a mistake! I should say something. No, better not."** He drones on with his patronizing grammar lesson. **"This isn't even English class, why is he going on and on about this? Danielle is humiliated. And he's made a mistake with his own grammar! Oh my god, I wanna say something but my heart is racing! Say it, say it! That's not a question, that's not a question!"** Finally she interrupts him, meekly. "That's not a question." "I'm sorry?" Everyone turns to her. "You wrote 'I wonder where they're going?' as if it's a question, with a question mark. But that's not a question, it's a statement." They look back to the teacher. He looks at what he wrote. She continues, with more confidence. "'I wonder' is a statement, like 'I think' or 'I eat' or 'I sleep.' 'I wonder where they are going' is making a statement. But you put a question mark at the end." Mr. Deakins has no response. A stare. He turns, abruptly erases the top part of the question mark. Then with his chalk he very exaggeratedly redraws the period into a huge aggressive dot.

Roger posts the results of the Spoon River audition, who got which part. Pretty much everyone gets several small roles, and of course Jill is listed as the assistant director. As Jill and the others swarm around to read the cast list another teacher comments Roger on "enduring" watching high schoolers drama all day. Roger jokes that actually they tend to always do silly comedic skits. He's not really meaning to be disparaging, but it could be taken that way. He explains that it's expected that the skits are all comedic, that's what teens do. "They're allowed to be loud and bawdy, so they take that and run with it." Jill hears this, takes a mental note.

The unspoken competition for Roger's attention with Danielle and Jill continues. Danielle brags to some students that Roger had gone with her Taco Bell with her after school a few days ago. Jill is sure to mention that she was there too. And Jill ever-so-casually mentions that she was at Roger's house, just hanging out, reading the play. She downplays her confusion about how to interpret Roger's comments and comparisons to the Alma character in *Eccentricities of a Nightingale*, but plays up the fact that she has this special connection with him that they now share *Eccentricities*. It's meant as a brag, but Danielle's comment of "Wow, you get to do extra homework for no reason. How sexy and special," makes everyone laugh at the little Late Bloomer. The rivalry revs up.

At lunch Jill feels a bit queasy, and Danielle says she's willing to also skip class to drive her home. But after dropping Jill home Danielle doubles back and goes to drama class.

Roger tells the class that he needs a few "players" for his production of *Hamlet*. Small lineless roles, the performers in the acting troupe that visits Hamlet's castle. Danielle volunteers. "Make sure you tell Jill, she might want to join. I can always add another performer," Roger tells her. Danielle smiles and nods. "Of course." Teddy says he knows his parents won't let him participate.

After school Danielle brags to Jill that Danielle and a few others get to be in *Hamlet* and will be hanging around a real theater with real actors, and Roger of course. Jill is upset she missed the chance to be in it too and wonders if she can still be in it. Danielle makes it clear, "No, he said he only needed four students. No more." Dang, Jill missed her chance. Danielle heads back to school for rehearsal, leaving the still-sick Jill at home.

The next day Jill is still not feeling great, but Roger calls her at home and says he really hopes she comes to class, he's looking forward to seeing her so she can start her assistant director duties. She's thrilled by this, revives herself and heads to class. She feels very special when she quietly slips into the theater mid-class and catches Roger's eye as a few kids perform a skit onstage. He motions her over, and of course she scurries to him. He puts his hand to her forehead to test for a fever. Feeling none, he smiles and motions for her to sit next to him. She beams under his care.

To compensate for Danielle's coup of spending time alone with Roger at the 'real' theater in *Hamlet* Jill gathers up her courage and asks Roger to go see a movie with her. Just her, not Danielle, not Teddy. He says sure, sounds fun. When she mentions this to Teddy later he tries to discourage this. He says there is talk that it's weird and inappropriate for a teacher to hang out with students.

“Who is saying that?” But Teddy can give no specific names. Jill rationalizes. “He’s not really a teacher, he’s just substituting. They don’t know him, he’s cool. He just relates to us on our own level.” “Yeah, doesn’t that seem a little weird?” Jill makes the mistake of being a bit snarky saying “You’re just jealous because you don’t have a cool teacher taking you under his wing.”

Later in class Teddy sees Roger’s unattended briefcase on the desk. Teddy uses his Chapstick and writes “Jill loves you!” in huge letters on the briefcase. The matte waxy letters stand out on the polished finish; it’s readable. Jill is across the room and Teddy holds it up for her to see - - just as Roger enters and heads for the desk. Jill is mortified, leaps out of her seat and rushes to the desk, grabs the briefcase out of Teddy’s hand and uses her sleeve to frantically wipe off the message. “Teddy, you asshole!” But the waxy Chapstick just spreads around and makes the entire surface more shiny. **“Well, at least it’s not legible anymore. Maybe he won’t notice.”** She surreptitiously puts the suitcase on the desk as Roger sits down. He notices. Picks up the briefcase, confused. “Jill, did you...polish my briefcase?” She shrugs, shakes her head, “Uh, noooo.” **“Oh Teddy, you asshole. You will pay for this. I’m looking more like a cloying simpleton everyday.”** Roger lets the matter drop, but Jill is mortified.

“I could’ve said ‘No. Teddy wrote something on it in Chapstick and I just wiped it off for you.’ Should’ve left it to Roger to wonder what Teddy wrote. Roger would’ve assumed it was something derogatory about him and I merely wiped it off so Roger wouldn’t have to see it. He wouldn’t have assumed it was about me. Makes sense. I would’ve been the hero. But when you’re panicking about having your love expressed in Chapstick logical thinking doesn’t come. What you say instead is....uuuuhhhhh, noooo. Impressive, Woyzeck.”

The class draws numbers to make up improv skits in groups of four, three, two or solo. When Jill draws a “1” everyone moans - - the shyest girl who takes the smallest parts in skits now has to improvise a three minute solo skit. She looks at Roger like “Really? Me?” He tells her, “That’s real life, babe. Deal with it.” The topic is “not fitting in.” **“Are you kidding me? How will I narrow it down? Well, I already looked like a fool in front of him today. Why should things get better?”** The other kids do things like being a zombie who is a vegetarian, or a blind person at a movie. Funny, silly things.

It’s her turn, we’ve seen the other comedic ones. She’s nervous of course, the monologues are the most nerve-wracking assignments, especially for the shy ones. No other classmates to play off of. She gets up, but doesn’t get onstage yet. Fumbles to the stage steps. Hesitates. “Um. I really didn’t want to do a monologue. I kinda was hoping to convince you to switch me to a duo. Or Danielle’s group hasn’t gone yet...I was thinking I could just join her group.” She trudges up the steps as she pleads with the unseen Roger sitting and judging from the farthest seat in the darkest part of the audience. “You guys all know how I’m not as good as you with this stuff.” She’s onstage now, but heads back down the stairs. “No, no, no. I can’t. I don’t want to. I don’t wanna do this.” Teddy quietly says, “Ut oh.” He recognizes a meltdown in progress when he sees one. She breathes hard, gets panicky. “Roger, I can’t.” A nice girl, Tracy, hops up onstage and tries to console her, to lead her offstage. “It’s okay, you don’t have to,” Tracy says. “I only took this class to help me get over being so shy, Danielle convinced me. She didn’t want to take this class by herself, so she made me take it too. But I can’t do this!” Danielle looks guilty for a second; did she cause this meltdown? Jill’s meltdown continues for a moment or two. Roger stands up, slowly and calmly makes his way to the stage, fearful she needs an intervention. Finally, near tears Jill says “I can’t do a monologue, I’m not as confident and outgoing as you guys!” then BAM, she ends abruptly on that sentiment. Drops all the acting, stands up straight, says clearly and deadpan “And that’s the last time I felt like an outsider.” Smiles, bows, saunters down off the stage steps and plops down in her seat. “When Tracy came up onstage I really had to ad lib there, almost threw me off, but I think I recovered.” Roger is stunned, bursts out laughing at himself for falling for it and proud of her. Applauds. “Bravo, kiddo!” The others realize it was an act and applaud too. A few hoots and hollers. For the average outgoing kid it would have been a great performance, but for a shy wallflower it’s stellar!

Later Roger says, only halfway kidding, a compliment, “You might want to consider switching from writing to acting.” And she says, “Can’t I do both?” He says, “Touché. Indeed you can.” **“Much better this time, Woyzeck. Maybe you’re finally learning.”**

Episode Five - "Stories of Old"

(Bottle episode, Jill and Roger)

Late March 1985

Rehearsals for *Spoon River* are about to begin and Roger and Jill stay late in the theater late one night. He's starting to build the set and she has volunteered to help, no surprise. As he teaches her set-making skills they both open up and learn surprising things about each other. And because Danielle isn't there she has his undivided attention.

As he shows her how to use the heavy duty nail gun to keep the canvas taut on the big background flats Roger talks about dying to go to New York to prove himself in the "real" theater world and how he's basically got a job offer coming from Juilliard and good *Hamlet* reviews will clinch it.

She opens up about being a late bloomer, being a bit chunky and getting made fun of and picked on a bit. He tells her that *brains will always win out over bullies*. He says that even if bullies "get" her somehow, even just verbally, she shouldn't worry because she's much smarter than they are and she'll "get them" ten times over in the end. She's shocked that he's sort of encouraging her to get revenge. He indicates that this is high school and she's getting traditional knowledge about how to survive in the real world from her other teachers, but he will mentor her and help her survive in a more real way. Roger says "If you're dumb but nice I'll let you slide because you can't help it if you're dumb. But if you're dumb and mean then I'm gonna ride your ass about it. I fucking hate bullies."

While outside on a break and some fresh air Roger talks about other plays, including *Macbeth* and they chat about it. As they come back inside the theater he can tell she is still on this same topic and he stops her at the door, blocking her from entering. "You can't say that word once you come into the theater." "What word?" "That title of the play you were about to say. The Scottish Play." "What Scottish play? You mean *Macbeth*?" "Yes. Don't say that word once you cross this threshold." He's serious. He explains to her the oh-so-serious superstition of never saying *that name* in a theater, it brings about very bad luck. She thinks he's kidding, but soon realizes he's serious. "Refer to it as The Scottish Play." She is dumbfounded.

At one point she notices he is wearing boots. She sings "You've got your leather boots on." He doesn't get the reference and she explains that it's from a Depeche Mode song. "Ah yes, the band you're devoted to." She perks up, pleased that he's noticed something personal about her. "Yeah, how'd you know?" "You wear a different Depeche Mode shirt almost every day. Did you think I wouldn't notice that?" She blushes, happy at the thought that she's been noticed since day one. He asks her why she likes that band so much and she explains why. He's not being dismissive of her teenaged obsession, he actually wants to understand the appeal. And she explains why she likes their music so much.

Roger can tell she has a crush on him, and does anything he'll say. He very gently urges her to find her own feet, don't worry about what other people in positions of power say. "So your advice as a mentor is that I shouldn't listen to advice of mentors. Now I'm not sure what to do," she says. "Yeah, that's something you'll have to get used to too. People never know what to do, even adults."

Later on Jill suddenly has a thought. "So can you say *her* name?" "Who's name?" "The wife of...the guy in The Scottish Play." "Oh, Lady *Macbeth*, sure!" "Wait, that doesn't make sense. I can say Lady *Macbeth*, but I can't say Mac- -" He stops her from saying it, she stops in time. "You can say Lady *Macbeth* but you can't say his name?" "Right. You can call him The Scottish King. Very bad luck."

After a soul-searching and wonderfully bonding evening Jill is full of hope and looking forward to being his assistant for the duration of *Spoon River*. Official rehearsals begin tomorrow. They're going to make a wonderful team, and Roger agrees. Now that she has found his endearingly weird weak spot – superstition – she feels a bit more on a level playing field with him, able to tease him.

Before she leaves the theater that night she accidentally says *Macbeth*, but he doesn't hear it. She gasps and covers her mouth in horror. "Shit!" Then she comes to her senses. "Oh, who cares? How stupid."

Jill bounces into class the next morning full of pep, ready for her ongoing *Spoon River* adventure with Roger. But she gasps when she sees Mr. Markowitz back at his desk. "I'm back!" Roger will no

longer be there, Mr. Markowitz is back from his medical leave and he'll be taking over directing duties of Spoon River. The kids shout their welcome back wishes and hug him. All but Jill. Fake smile plastered on her face. Devastation. "Oh hey...he's back!" Then she whispers to an invisible force, "Damn it. Fuck you, Scottish King."

Episode Six - "Somebody"

mid-April

Spoon River rehearsals are in full force, but without Roger there Jill's assistant director position is a hollow victory. Teddy calls her on it "Oh, so now that Roger isn't here you don't care anymore?" Danielle rubs it in that she is in Roger's theater for *Hamlet* rehearsals with him almost every night now. "Ironic, huh? You got to be assistant director for *Spoon River*, then I'm the one who sees him every night."

Teddy is surprised to get a message from Roger and agrees to meet him after school at the theater where Roger is rehearsing *Hamlet*. Roger was talking to his sister about an internship at her local graphic arts business that does a lot of work with local galleries. It's not exactly art, but it's a start in the right direction. Roger told her about Teddy and she said she'd be happy to offer him a spot at her company as soon as he started college in the fall. Teddy is surprised, he hadn't really thought about college yet, but this sounds promising and he's truly grateful.

Teddy tells Jill his good news that Roger got a cool internship lined up for him. Her first comment is that both Danielle and Teddy have been allowed to the *Hamlet* rehearsals, but she hasn't. "But you're totally in charge of the Spoon River rehearsals, that's really something, right?" Her enthusiasm is lukewarm. "I guess." She's happy about Teddy's future internship, but more interested in the fact that Teddy saw Roger and her main question is "Did he ask about me or anything?" Teddy stares, then coldly says "At Tampico Graphics, thanks for asking." Teddy has to grudgingly admit that it turns out Roger is actually pretty cool and he can see why Jill likes him so much.

Teddy goes to the gallery showing of Sancho, the host of the party Roger once took him to. It's very enticing to Teddy to see these artists showing their work, several of them are obviously gay; it's reflected in their art in the same way that it is in Teddy's secret art. Teddy is once again welcomed into the group. Family members and lovers greet the artists and Teddy is taken in as a colleague and fellow artist. He could get used to this. It's all very encouraging.

The next day Teddy calls Roger and asks if he thinks it would be appropriate to ask Sancho to look at his work. Just for some advice and to see if he has any talent. Roger encourages this and even offers to help Marty transport some of the large canvases in his truck. Marty has, perhaps unconsciously, started to mimic Sancho's flashy style of dress, vests, scarves, bandanas.

Teddy and Roger take a few of Teddy's choice paintings to Sancho's studio. Sancho loves them. He absolutely loves them. He's amazed that Teddy can do such amazing art at such a young age. He says he's sure he can convince the gallery owner to include a few pieces in the show. Teddy is overwhelmed and Roger couldn't be happier for him.

That night when Teddy goes home he stops on the front porch before going inside. He takes off his scarf and red silky vest and shoves them deep in his backpack. Once inside he glances at the large crucifix that dominates the central wall of the living room. The décor is outdated and conservative. Nothing newer than 1969.

Teddy's room is not an accurate reflection of the Teddy we know. It's subdued, conservative, and every Catholic parent's dream. Teddy is living the home life of a stranger.

Episode Seven - "Master and Servant"

Jill has a fight with her parents over her increasing time spent with Roger. Dad especially doesn't want her to go see the premiere of *Hamlet* tonight. She thinks it's ridiculous to stop her from seeing it. "It's Shakespeare for god's sake!" They end up letting her go, but they aren't happy about it. Later Mom has to admit, "Well, I can't imagine a Shakespeare production will bring much trouble."

Jill attends *Hamlet*'s first showing and is so proud of Roger. It's a truly magnificent production. Danielle does her best with her tiny background role. After the show Teddy tells Roger that their now-

mutual artsy friends that Roger introduced Teddy to have finagled a great job for Teddy in New York after graduation! Teddy is over the moon and deliriously happy about moving to New York where he can finally be himself and jump into his artistic endeavors. But this New York job offer supersedes Roger's local internship offer. Roger understands, but his nose is clearly out of joint.

Danielle and Roger head for the Hamlet cast party at a fellow actor's house. Jill pushes her way into the *Hamlet* circle even though she isn't involved in it and she and Teddy crash the party. At this mostly-adults party Jill sees Roger letting loose. There's alcohol of course and Roger is a tad tipsy, but it was a very successful show so no one can begrudge him a few celebratory drinks.

With Roger focusing on his adult friends and Danielle off trying to impress the boys at the party Jill winds up sipping a Coke in the kitchen by herself, munching on a few chips. Roger trots in to get more ice. She perks up when he turns to address her. He dramatically says, "I don't want to start any blasphemous rumors, but I think that God's got a sick sense of humor. And when I die I expect to find him laughing." She gasps and laughs, overjoyed. "You listened to the album!" He grins. "Yeah, you talked so much about them I had a listen. Interesting stuff. Catchy beat." Can it be that she influenced him *that* much? "You went out and bought the album?" "Well no, my nephew had it, I just borrowed it." ***"Okay, well still. He still took time out of his day to stop and listen to an album just because he knew it meant a lot to me. That's special. Not only listened to it, but memorized their lyrics. You don't do that with just any student."***

Danielle is drinking too, she's more comfortable at the party since she already knows the other actors. In typical "look at me!" fashion Danielle overdoes the drinking and gets hammered. Teddy succinctly warns her, "Better be careful. You're going to get vomit all over your Aerosmith shirt."

Jill tells Roger that she's really upset because of the horrible fight she had with her parents. She needs soothing but Roger only says "Then maybe you shouldn't have come tonight. Maybe Teddy can drive you home." ***"Wow, thanks for caring! Oh wait, no, you're not caring, you just want to get rid of me."*** He merely tousles her hair, grabs another beer and rejoins the others.

Roger ends up passing by Teddy at the party and suggests he take Jill home. When someone asks if this is the same Teddy with the great paintings he's been hearing about Roger sarcastically says yes, this is the 17 year-old who thinks he's ready to tackle the New York art world! Teddy is embarrassed in front of the crowd.

Mom and Dad stay up waiting for Jill, who is late. They talk about the endless kitchen remodel. Mom fights with him about not having the kitchen done and biting off more than he can chew. "You starts things and never finish them!" He says she is exaggerating. She asks him, "Have you seen my car? My lovely only-four-year-old car? The clear coat on it is starting to peel. It looks horrible, it looks like it has a sunburn. And actually, it does. Know why it's peeling? Because for the past two years I have had to park it outside in the driveway instead of the garage." "I know." "Do you know why I can't park in the garage?" "Yes." "Why?" "The boat." "That's right. Your boat that you just had to make is still in the garage. The one you swore would be done in six months. A boat? For god's sake, we live in New Mexico, the driest area in the United States! Aside from your work there are no projects you've ever finished in your life!" He's struck quiet. Hard to deny that. But then quietly he adds, "I assembled intricate models when I was in high school. Cars, trucks. Boats. I finished those." She softens. "Okay, so there's *almost* no projects you've finished."

Teddy drops Jill home where Mom and Dad wait. She's only a bit late and the first thing Mom and Dad do is ascertain if she's been drinking. Much to their surprise she does seem upset, but not drunk. Doesn't smell of alcohol, not slurring, not drunk. Just upset. She goes straight to bed.

The newspapers are filled with great reviews for *Hamlet* over the next few days. A huge success. When Danielle drops out of Hamlet after opening night, Teddy and Jill are not surprised. "Couldn't handle being in the background," Jill notes.

Jill obsessively writes on her big play, the one she has been planning to give to Roger in hopes that he will choose it for his summer festival. This would be the ultimate approval from him. She goes to the library that night for hours to finish it in peace and quiet.

At Spoon River rehearsal the next day Teddy asks if she saw the special half hour special on Depeche Mode on MTV last night. "What?! When?!" She did not! Teddy doesn't understand what the big deal is, even if she didn't see it she surely caught it on her daily recording sessions. "Oh my

god. I worked on the play for Roger. I forgot to put a tape in.” Her preoccupation with Roger has overtaken everything else that is dear to her. Teddy sums it up, “You’re cheating on Depeche Mode with Roger.”

Roger doesn’t pick her play for the festival. “Not enough conflict and pain. You’ve got to mine your own life for pain and drama and put it into your art. Maybe you just haven’t lived enough yet.” It’s a rather dismissive answer, basically tells her to not expect to write anything good for many years.

Roger tells her sometimes ideas take years to germinate, she shouldn’t expect to write a masterpiece in one weekend. He keeps an odd notion dump. “A what?” “An odd notion dump. A file where I keep all sorts of random ideas and bits of interesting information I find here and there, newspaper articles, photos, anything that catches my interest. Any odd notion I have I dump it in there and later I may find a use for it. Great art takes time.”

Episode Eight - “If You Want”

mid-May

It’s the opening night for Spoon River. Jill is excited and nervous for the show. Danielle and Marty and the whole cast are ready and excited. Jill is fully expecting Roger to show up for her big night. Mom and Dad are in the audience, smiling and proud. But it’s Roger’s face in the crowd she’s hoping to see. She reassures Teddy and Danielle that he will show up, after all he had promised her he would. But he never shows up. The show goes very well, but Jill can’t hide her disappointment that Roger is a no-show.

Even after the Spoon River cast party at Mr. Markowitz’s house Jill is still upset, now angry, that Roger didn’t show up to the play after he had promised her he would. She calls him at home, but no answer. Later she talks Marty into taking her down to Roger’s house. They try to get Danielle to join, but she wants to stay at the party. “Life of the party,” Teddy says.

Sure enough, Roger is at home and eventually comes to the door to see Teddy and Jill. Jill tears into him immediately. “Oh, you’re sitting at home? Yeah, that seems way more important than keeping a promise to me.” Roger invites them in. She steps inside, but Teddy says he’ll wait for her in the car. Inside Jill continues her rant. “What, were you hung-over from another cast party? Or you just didn’t want to bother? Because it’s just some stupid little high school play and not your big *Hamlet* play?” Finally she realizes he’s being unusually quiet. “What? Oh my god, is there someone else here?” He chuckles, “No. I’m alone. Jill, the reason I didn’t come tonight is because I’m not allowed on school grounds anymore.” She furrows her brow. What the hell is he talking about? “Huh?” He sits her down. “Someone called APS [Albuquerque Public Schools] and complained about me.” Still not computing for Jill. He breaks it down for her that someone complained about him being around students since he wasn’t teaching there anymore. “My lawyer talked to them and it was agreed that I should not go on school grounds again unless I’m there in an official teaching capacity.” She’s dumbfounded. “Oh my god. My dad! It was my dad.” Roger says nothing, doesn’t act angry, just listens to her vent about how angry she is at her dad for this. He tells her not to worry about it, it’ll all be fine.

Outside Roger approaches Teddy in his car. Says Jill is using the bathroom, she’ll be right out, but she’s still upset and Teddy should take her home. Teddy agrees, yes, of course he will. Before Jill comes out Roger takes this opportunity to encourage Teddy to come out to his parents. He never directly addresses the gay issue so as to not embarrass Teddy, but he suggests that Teddy’s parents undoubtedly love him and would want to see him live up to his full potential and express his art and be himself. Roger’s convincing and heartfelt advice seems to convince Teddy and buoy his spirits. Jill comes out, hops in the car and just as they say goodbye and drive off Teddy notices that Roger is wearing a familiar-looking Aerosmith concert shirt.

Jill has a huge blowout with Dad, furious that he called APS to get Roger in trouble. He calmly denies making any call. Not believing him she screams and rants, then abruptly goes to her room. Mom’s frustrated, “I thought you said we were going to decide how to handle this *together*.”

That night Teddy shows his parents a newspaper ad for the gallery showing. He tries to make it sound like it’s no big deal, but says if they want to come see the show they have added a few of his paintings. Silence. Mrs. Garcia finally says, “Your paintings?” “Yes. Two of them.” “Like the ones

with the...the...the men and women in them?” She knows which ones. “Yes.” Mr. Garcia reads the ad and asks, “What kind of gallery is this?” “A regular art gallery. Downtown.” “But...what kind of art?” “No, Dad, it’s not still life fruit bowls and family portraits. It’s kind of edgy stuff.” “Edgy,” Dad repeats. A disapproving tone.

More rave reviews for *Hamlet*. A huge glowing write-up in the newspaper arts section about the play and Roger himself.

Jill’s bad mood over the APS thing permeates her entire school day. She aggressively corrects the bully teacher Mr. Deakins again after he is a bit too smug and embarrasses a slower student. He asks her what type of person does she think she is for constantly correcting him in front of everyone? She paraphrases Roger saying “If you were a nice teacher I’d let your mistakes slide, but you’re an asshole about it so yeah, I’m gonna try and take you down. Bullies suck!” Class is shocked. But they are clearly on her side. “I suspected that your fragile ego would cause you to retaliate and target me. Frankly, I’d expect that behavior from pot-smoking teen idiots, not a teacher!” Smash cut to her sitting in stark, silent detention. **“Worth it!”**

That evening Jill goes to the theater to see Roger before his show starts. He tells her he lost his Juilliard dream job because of what happened. “What?! How did they get involved?” “They were alerted to the APS thing by someone, lord knows who.” Jill feels just absolutely awful. Roger soothes her guilt, but only a bit. He is pretty devastated about losing his dream job. He’s almost not even excited about the performance tonight, as if there’s no point to it anymore.

Teddy roams around the lobby of the small gallery where two of his paintings have been added to the show. He’s wearing a slightly less flashy outfit; a teenaged attempt at dressing “nicely.” There’s a cocktail party going on, lots of people appreciating the art. The curator congratulates Teddy, asks why he isn’t inside. Teddy explains that he actually invited his parents to the show so he’s waiting for them.

Roger tells her that his lawyers have recommended that he leave town for the summer. He’s going to go to visit some relatives back in Chicago. Let things cool down. Roger is proud that she stood up to the bully teacher but “Can you graduate without passing that class?” She’s gob-smacked. It hadn’t occurred to her that an adult would unfairly fail her. “Well, if he’s the asshole you say he is, he might get revenge on you by failing you.” “What?! But he’s a teacher, can he just do that? I mean, I did all the assignments and passed all the tests so far.” “Yeah, I guess that’d be hard for him to explain. I’m sure you’ll be fine.” “Well no, now I’m worried!” “Being a banner carrier comes with risks as well as rewards.” “Now you tell me. Sometimes your mentoring sessions withhold crucial information.” “Make sure you ace the final exam next week.” He gives her a nice long hug goodbye.

Teddy’s slumped on a bench in the empty lobby of the gallery nursing a can of Pepsi. The murmur of a crowd comes from inside the gallery. He sips his Pepsi. Alone.

Episode Nine - “Blasphemous Rumours”

Late May

Jill finds out that Roger will no longer be allowed to do the summer festival because of the scandal. She calls him and apologizes again for her Dad. He says, “Don’t worry about it,” but not much else. He has no comforting words for her and quickly gets off the phone. Jill is still wracked with guilt for this.

Danielle drives her and Jill to Taco Bell, but before they go inside Danielle finally comes clean. She shamefully admits to Jill that on the night of the *Hamlet* cast party she stupidly drank too much and Roger took advantage of her. “Took advantage of you?” Jill tries to comprehend. Danielle spells it out; she doesn’t mean he kissed her or groped her. He waited until she was almost passed out and took her into a bedroom at the party and had sex with her as she faded in and out of consciousness. Jill sits and listens, too shocked to speak.

Danielle says he started early, tried to kiss her in the theater at school that one day Jill was out sick. That’s why Danielle asked him to call Jill at home to convince her come to class that one day. “I didn’t want to be alone with him. Some days he’d try and corner me backstage and try to kiss me.”

Jill realizes that it was Danielle’s mom that called APS about Roger. “If it was rape then why didn’t she call the police?” “Because I’m 18, it’s not statutory rape. I didn’t tell her I was passed out

drunk. She thinks I got drunk and asked for it, let it happen. Maybe I did.” Jill doesn’t contradict this. “If she didn’t know the details then how’d she know anything happened at all?” “I told her.” “Oh. Why?” “I was freaked out. I had to tell someone.” “Why didn’t you tell me?!” “Yeah, right! Like you would’ve been receptive to that. You’re in love with him, so I’m gonna tell you he raped me?” “I’m not in love with him!” “Oh please. Come on, Jill. I know you’re a late bloomer, but get real. On some level you’re in love with him. I didn’t even want to tell you about this really. But I thought I should.” “Your mom called Juilliard too? Why did you tell her about his Juilliard job?” “She didn’t know about that, I didn’t tell her.” “Well, you must’ve. She told them what he did and he lost his job.” “You’re not actually sorry for him, are you?” A long pause. “No. Of course not.” Jill lets it all sink in. “So that day I was out sick and he wanted me to come to school, he only did that because you asked him to.” “Yeah. Sorry. That’s all you’re upset about?” ***“Actually that’s not all I was upset about. I felt like a colossal idiot. I was so over the moon that Roger took the time to listen to ‘my’ album. I felt like I was getting such special attention from him on the same night that he was lusting so much after Danielle that he practically shooed me out the door so he could go into the back room and force himself on Danielle. It’s true. God does have a sick sense of humor.”***

Mom drives home to see her side of the garage is open - - and empty! Mom is pleased when Dad explains he gave the boat to a friend who says he’ll finish it. “I found a good home for her.” He admits he needs to not take on such big projects. Mom is pleased with this act of contrition, she smiles and tells him that she knows the kitchen will get finished. She has faith in him.

Teddy plops down next to his dad on the couch. “Where’s Mom?” Mr. Garcia shrugs, “Grocery store I guess.” Mr. Garcia flips through the channels, settles on one channel showing a sitcom. But when a stereotypically flashy gay character appears in the scene he quickly changes channels. Finds a more wholesome show. “You going to church tomorrow? Father Sanchez was asking about you last week.” “Oh yeah? What’d he say?” “Wanted to know if you’re going to church tomorrow.” Sigh.

“When I was talking to Teddy about the incident I said Roger took advantage of Danielle and he asked why I said ‘took advantage of’ instead of ‘raped’. I couldn’t even say it. I was trying to minimize it, rationalize it. Instead of going to Roger’s final show of Hamlet tonight I’m staying home to study for Mr. Deakin’s exam so he doesn’t find any excuse to fail me. Not that I’d go anyway.”

Jill helps Dad with some finishing touches in the kitchen. She doesn’t admit what happened to Danielle, but she tells her dad she’s not mad at him, she understands where he was coming from all this time. When he’s surprised she knows how to use the heavy duty nail gun she only says she learned it at school. He’s impressed. “You’re really getting a well-rounded education at that school.” “Life lessons,” she agrees.

While Teddy is home watching TV with his dad Teddy’s mom is at his gallery exhibit. Mrs. Garcia is here alone. She mills around. She compares his art to the other paintings. No more or less “obscene” or “gay” than the others, in fact they are pretty awesome. She’s impressed with his work, proud. Other people pass by. “My son did these,” she gushes.

Days later. The kitchen is finally done. It looks great. And for the first time in months they have a meal at the kitchen table. All is in place again, house-wise and family-wise. Mom gets Dad a present. He unwraps it to find a large, intricate model kit of an English castle. She explains, “Figured this hobby might take up less space, but you’d still be creating something.” He grins, loves it. “Deal.”

Jill sits watching MTV like a zombie. She jolts awake when the VJ announces they’ll be playing a Depeche Mode video in a few minutes. She shoves a blank tape in and presses record. A hollow victory...first there is a music news clip about the recent successful Depeche Mode concert tour. Snippets of fans gushing about how great the show was. ***“Should have been there. Probably could’ve talked our parents into letting us go. But I crapped out because I had to spend every minute I could with Roger. NOT worth it.”***

She gets her final exam back from Mr. Deakin’s; she passed with an A. She’s safe. Puts her test away. Pulls out a fresh notebook. Finds a thick permanent marker and writes “Odd Notion Dump” on the front cover.

Episode Ten - "Some Great Reward"

Three years later

Jill lives in Los Angeles and she's performing a one woman show with a few minor supporting characters that she wrote in a modest size theater with a robust audience. ***"For all he did or didn't do, Roger was right. I needed to put my real life pain and drama into my work and it did take me a few years to be able to do it. But I seriously doubt he realized I'd be writing about him."*** It turns out the voiceover we've been hearing all along is actually Jill performing her show.

After the show she changes into a Depeche Mode "Music for the Masses" concert shirt, June '88. The director of her show, Jaycee, a trim, bearded man in his early 40s reads another great review in a local paper. He looks not too unlike Roger and Jill clearly adores him. Jaycee reads the review aloud that echoes what Roger taught her, "The limited use of only three characters works well here and helps limit and magnify the dramatic dynamic between them and the intentional breaking of the fourth wall enhances the experience by letting the audience in on her funny, insightful and sometimes tragically naive thoughts going on as this cautionary tale about a vulnerable teen and a predatory charmer unfolds."

Teddy is roommates with Jill and he's got a great job at Universal Studios; he helps design and create huge matte paintings used as backdrops in movies. Their quirky and cozy apartment is crammed with movie posters, artwork and thrift store décor. They have two VCRs and dozens of homemade tapes.

They get the news that Mr. Markowitz has died, and they use his funeral as an excuse to visit Albuquerque for a few days.

Jill's relationship with her parents is good, more mature. But they tiptoe around the subject of Roger. Teddy no longer subdues his true personality when he's at home. Both his manner and wardrobe are openly gay now. His mom is fine with it, and his dad seems to have come around a bit more, though not entirely.

Inside the church before the funeral Jill looks around at the crowd. She notices Danielle isn't at the funeral. She tells Teddy, "I can't help but wonder if Roger will be here. He and Mr. Markowitz ended up working on a lot of local plays together." "Maybe he went to New York after all," Teddy surmises. "No. My mom said she saw he was still directing plays here. Roger never got to go to New York." "Had to stay a big fish in a little pond. Funny that you're the one that ended up moving to a big city." "Yeah! I guess that shows I have grown. I have grown and he hasn't, and that really shows that - - oh shit! He's here!" She hides behind another funeral-goer. She asks Teddy who that woman next to him is, the one with the kid. Teddy says she went to Del Este High School. "She didn't go to La Manzanita? Why does she look familiar then? Was she in our year?" "Yep. She was in the All-City production of *'Alonius'* with us." "Oh yeah." "She's carrying that kid like a sack of potatoes." Teddy and Jill watch Roger from the hidden safety of a large group of mourners.

Mr. Deakins mills around the funeral. He sees her, obviously still not pleased with her, he can only manage a curt nod. She looks at her program to avoid the awkward the moment. "Find any typos?" he asks. "Nope. No. It's all good." After he walks away she adds quietly. "Still a dick, I see."

After the funeral Teddy schmoozes with everyone to get the gossip and reports back to Jill. Roger has married the former Del Este High School student! Jill tries to cover her shock but isn't very successful. "How old is that kid?" Teddy asks. "About three I'd say." "Are you doing math in your head right now?" he asks. "Yep," she nods. Teddy shakes his head. "So he was chasing her at the same time we were all in high school. Teenagers are assholes. What kind of weird-ass man in his 30s seeks out a relationship with a teenager?" Jill laughs, but then really lets this question sink in.

Finally Jill confronts Roger. At first he's polite, gives her a hug. He says he's proud of her, he heard she is doing a play in Los Angeles and it's a hit. He says he hopes that in some small part he helped made her play possible. She says yes indeed. "Maybe I should come see it." "Eh...I don't think you'd like it."

After the small talk she blurts out the question that's been bugging her for so long. "Danielle was my best friend, how could you think that I wouldn't find out what you did? You knew that anything that happened to her she'd end up telling me. Didn't you even ca- - oh my god, I just answered my own question." His blank look tells her everything. "You just didn't care if I knew. I didn't even enter into

the equation.” He’s not embarrassed, nor shamed. “Well, me and Danielle’s relationship details were personal, they didn’t really involve you.” She can’t believe what she’s hearing. “Relationship?” “You and I had a great bond, but what I had with Danielle was different, and separate.” “What you had with Danielle was in your head! There was no relationship! You freaked her out! She was afraid to be alone with you after you raped her!” He’s dumbfounded. “Rape?! It wasn’t rape, you don’t know what you’re talking about. Danielle was...different than you. She was ready for that sort of thing before you. She matured young.” “That doesn’t mean she wanted to have sex with a man twice her age! Her teacher! She DIDN’T want to!” “You don’t understand.” Finally Jill gives up, realizing she’s talking to someone who is trapped living in his own reality. “Oh my god, you actually believe Danielle was in a relationship with you.” “You’re upset.” “You know what, Roger? I’m actually, for the first time, NOT upset. This has been enlightening. Until this very moment I had a hard time understanding everything, but now I get it. You are damaged.” With that she walks away.

After the funeral Teddy admits it was he who called Juilliard. Roger and Teddy’s mutual friends at the gallery warned Teddy of Roger’s disreputable past with high schools girls. Not only did Teddy think the future students of Juilliard should be spared this man, but Teddy was always worried about Jill. “Well as it turned out, ironically, there was no need to worry about me. Of course he chose Danielle.” “Chose? You make it sound like it was some great reward.” He asks if she’s pissed at him. “Heck no. You derailed his career, not mine. In fact, that was just the bit of drama my story needed! I should thank you. Roger was right. My stories always need more drama.”

Jill and Teddy visit Danielle at home with a baby and new husband. She’s got herself a seemingly perfect little life. House, husband, housewife duties. She seems so grown up with this boring man and dull home life. When Danielle asks if Roger was at the funeral Jill says no. Best not to go into it. Danielle briefly allows herself to remember the whole Roger Incident. “Did you know that after that night after he, you know, as he was getting dressed he put on my Aerosmith shirt? And he tossed me his t-shirt. I was still so drunk and confused I just put it on so he could drive me home. He thought we should wear each other’s shirts, like we were some teenaged couple! And the next day backstage at school I was standing there watching someone do their skit onstage and he came up next to me and ran his fingers down my arm and whispered, ‘I miss you,’ in my ear! Oh my god! I was so scared and creeped out. He was our *teacher*.”

Outside the house Teddy and Jill wonder if Danielle just grabbed the first man she could who would give her a stable life. They’re not sure if they’re jealous or if they dodged a bullet. She makes an admission to Teddy. “I know I should be disgusted with his behavior, but I’ll be honest. When I visualized him stroking her arm and saying he missed her the emotion that shot through me wasn’t disgust. It wasn’t rage or mortification or pity. It was jealousy. But at least this time I realize that that’s not the appropriate reaction. So maybe I’m starting to learn a little bit.” “Baby steps, L.B.” Teddy says.

Back to L.A., back to theater life. Jill performs her play and this time she adds a few lines stolen from Teddy after her Albuquerque visit. ***“What type of grown man seeks out a relationship with a teenager? I mean, teenagers are assholes! Who wants that?”*** Audience laughs.

Teddy notices the new lines, “You’re welcome and do I get a writing credit for that?” He broaches the subject of what she learned from her whole Roger ordeal. Jill insists to Teddy she’s over her issues with Roger, she has learned her lesson and is moving on. And it really does sound like that’s true. They confirm their plans to have a late dinner, and get ready to go. But then Jaycee invites Jill at the last minute to go off with him and his group of theater pals. She gushes and bends over backwards to make sure she can join them. Teddy tells her to go, lets her run off with her latest idol. She blows Teddy a kiss for understanding and scurries off with Jaycee. Teddy sighs, chuckles. Says to himself, “I smell a sequel!”