

***What Did We Expect***

**An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

We are a judgmental society; there is no doubt about it. We judge people by their looks, by the way they act, by any flaw we can find. I want to change that, to make people aware of this problem. If we can look beyond a person's image to who they are inside, we could be a much better society. We can be good people. My script, titled *What Did We Expect*, explores a troubled girl as she learns to look beyond what is right in front of her. She is able to, through an out of body experience, understand the factors that cause people to act a certain way. She is able to look at her peers without a mask, and see who they really are.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## Process Analysis Statement

A thesis needs to be impactful; it needs to stand out. As a Telecommunications major and a screenwriting and creative writing double minor, I felt a script would be the best possible way to showcase all I have learned throughout my four years at Ball State. Writing is what I know best and is what I want to continue to explore for the rest of my life. There was no other possible way to do my thesis; creative writing had to be it.

Technology is society's major source of information; this is how we get our information, how we publish and show our knowledge of things happening in the world. So, a script was going to have to be my creative thesis. I felt the best way to use technology to my advantage would be to write a script that could later, if needed, be turned into a short film. But a script is just as impactful as the film itself because it can be read and interpreted in its own way. I want people to read my script and understand that we can be a better society. I came to college to learn how to change the world for the better. This is how I am going to do it.

Working on the script itself was difficult. It turned out that my first couple outlines sounded more like a PSA for bullying, but that is not what I wanted. It is so much more than that. I wanted people to look beyond the characters, to understand their actions and reactions to their surroundings. I found out, after a few outlines and drafts, that I need to put in a certain element that would shock the readers and make them pay attention. My main character has an out of body experience throughout most of the story, but it is not specified till the end. Having this experience allows her to see a part of a person beyond what anyone else can see. She sees their experience through *their* eyes. This is the point. We need to be able to look beyond a person and try and understand them. Sometimes this

just means communication, in other times it means being able to take a step back and look at your own actions. Are you doing and saying the right thing? I want people to realize that we have the potential to be good. We can do better than we are now. In a world plagued with hate, we should be able to do better; we should be there for each other in times of need. Look beyond yourself and be the better person.

What Did We Expect

written by

Morgan Fuller

FADE IN:

EXT. TOWN ROAD - NIGHT

Old motel signs flicker neon blue and pink, lighting up the thin-faced JULIE PETERS (16), dressed in a baggy grey sweatshirt and jeans. Her hood is pulled over her head, as she walks, head bent, down the cracked sidewalk of a small town road.

Next to the motels are old buildings with signs reading, "Travel Agency", "Lolly's Candy Store", and "Dollar General", but their lights are off, and the curtains closed. A few cars are parked along the street, but nobody is in sight except for Julie.

Julie kicks a stone into the street and watches it spin and then stop. Her hands are shoved into her sweatshirt. Her brown hair peeks out from beneath the hood. Her eyes are red. Her cheeks tear-stained. She SNIFFLES and wipes her nose on the sleeve of her sweatshirt.

From behind Julie the ROAR of an engine. After a few seconds the yellow hue of distance headlights appear. Julie keeps walking down the sidewalk with her eyes glued to the ground.

The headlights get brighter and brighter, illuminating the back of Julie as a big truck drives into view. Julie's front is cast in shadow, her face unreadable. A song is playing on the radio repeating the words, "If you ever leave me..." Without hesitation and without looking, Julie steps into the street and begins to cross. The headlights are upon her. The car horn HONKS.

INT. JULIE'S ROOM - MORNING

In bed, Julie jolts awake. Her eyes wide and wild. Her breath comes out in huge gasps. Sweat seeps through her over-sized t-shirt. Her hair is stuck in clumps to her damp forehead.

Rays of sunshine peek in through her blinds, casting light upon her discarded clothes and open textbooks which litter the floor.

MONTAGE:

-Julie frowns and shakes her head, angrily smoothing back her messy hair with trembling hands.

-She throws the covers forcefully off and begins stomping around the room, kicking dirty clothes out of the way.

-She opens a few drawers from her dresser, grabbing clothes from each one.

-At her vanity she snatches a hairbrush and then opens a drawer, rummaging around for make-up supplies.

-She suddenly shivers and looks up. For a split second she stares at herself in the mirror hanging above the vanity. She frowns and slams the make-up drawer shut.

END MONTAGE.

INT. JULIE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Julie sits at the kitchen table, head bent over a bowl of Cheerios, quietly shoving spoonfuls into her mouth.

MRS. PETERS (49), MR. PETERS (47), and Julie's little brother STEVEN PETERS (7), share the round wooden table with Julie. Mr. and Mrs. Peters whisper quietly to each other over their cereal bowls. One of Mrs. Peter's hands lightly covers her mouth, shaking gently, while the other hand is delicately resting on the table. Mr. Peter's hand rests lightly on her hand, softly rubbing his thumb back and forth on her skin.

Steven watches them warily, wringing his hands in front of his untouched bowl.

Julie soon realizes they are whispering about her, as she catches her name in a sentence.

JULIE

You do realize I am sitting right here, right?

Julie looks at her parents, milk dripping from her full mouth.

Her parents glance at her out of the corners of their eyes, but they continue to whisper.

Julie shoves back her chair, hard.

JULIE (CONT'D)

I'm not hungry anymore.

EXT. JULIE'S HOME - MORNING

The sun is behind clouds, giving the air a soft glow. Rows of identical houses line the streets of Julie's suburban neighborhood. Birds chirp as they hop from limb to limb in the small tree planted by a mailbox reading, "Peters Family".

The front door SLAMS, shatters the air, the birds frantically fly away.

Julie, dressed in tattered jeans and a sweater with a backpack slung over her shoulder, stomps down the front steps, Steven close at her heels. The screen door wobbles still from the slam. Mr. and Mrs. Peters stand behind the screen door, watching.

MRS. PETERS

Make it a good day!

Julie rolls her eyes and continues walking. Steven turns around and half-heartedly waves.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Blue lockers line a crowded hallway. Students push through the hall, loudly chattering away, oblivious to others. Lockers slam. The students feet pound loudly on the tile floor. Old and faded motivational posters hang above the lockers. It's chaos.

Julie walks straight down the middle of the hallway. Students walk around her, not paying any attention. Until, THREE GIRLS push their way past Julie causing her to stumble. She glares at them

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - SARAH'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

SARAH BINES (16) is at her locker. She is pulling books out of her bag and carefully placing them on the shelf in her locker, smiling. Sarah's teeth are crooked and badly in need of some braces.

The three girls walk closer to Sarah's locker and begin to lightly giggle. They nudge each other in the ribs and motion to their teeth. Sarah who has now become aware of the girls, slowly closes her mouth. Julie looks at Sarah and is immediately drawn into a vision.

INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - NIGHT [FIRST VISION]

The kitchen is small, the table in the center of the room is very close to the worn wooden cupboards. Mis-matched silverware lie drying on a faded dishcloth on the kitchen counter.

Sarah is sitting at the small kitchen table facing her PARENTS. SARAH'S MOM is carefully watching Sarah as SARAH'S DAD sits down at the table with a stack of bills.

## SARAH'S DAD

Sarah, I'm so sorry but it is just not in the budget to get you braces this year. I know it has been a hard, but we just can't swing it.

Sarah just nods her head. Tears well up in her eyes, her hand goes to her mouth.

END OF FIRST VISION.

## INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - SARAH'S LOCKER - MORNING

Sarah's hand covers her mouth, a tear runs down her cheek. She turns away from the girls, hiding her face in her locker. The girls snort and wander away.

Julie's eyes grow wide. She blinks frantically and wipes at her eyes trying to clear them. She looks around only to find she is in the hallway with students wandering around her and not at Sarah's house.

Julie gasps and rapidly begins to back up, stumbling into another locker.

## INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DARREN'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

Julie slams into the locker right next to DARREN HAYNES (17). Darren, short haired and skinny, has his head half in his locker. He is MUMBLING to himself.

## DARREN

You have to do better...never forgive...must get into a good school.

In Darren's hand is a crumpled piece of paper. Just visible at the top, scratched in red ink, is a "B".

The locker on the opposite side of Darren SLAMS, causing Darren to flinch. Julie looks at Darren's pain-stricken face.

## INT. DARREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT [SECOND VISION]

The room is dark except for a single lamp, which illuminates the bed and part of the floor. The part of the floor flooded in light is littered with open textbooks and notebooks.

Dylan is perched on his bed, legs crossed and head bent. His eyes rapidly scanning the pages of a thick textbook, while simultaneously scribbling notes on a notepad.

The door to the room bursts open. Light flooding in from the hallway causes Darren to shield his face with his arm.

DARREN'S FATHER and DARREN'S MOTHER stride into the room. Both wearing crisp black suits.

DARREN'S MOTHER  
How could you hide something like  
this from your Father and I?

Darren's Mother holds up a sheet of paper with a red "B" in the corner.

Darren's arm drops from his face as he squints at the paper.

DARREN  
Where did you find that?

DARREN'S FATHER  
Doesn't matter. All that matters is  
this grade could affect the  
colleges you are applying to.

Darren's Father shifts angrily from foot to foot. Darren's Mother continues to glare at Darren, her face red in the glow of the hallway lights.

DARREN'S FATHER (CONT'D)  
We've worked hard to give you a  
good life. Be the son that we  
deserve.

Darren stares open-mouthed as his mother throws the paper on the ground and turns around, grabbing Darren's Father. They SLAM the door shut.

END OF SECOND VISION.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DARREN'S LOCKER

Julie comes out of the vision, taking a big gulp of air. She leans over placing her hands on her knees. She starts to hyperventilate. Nobody around her is paying attention.

As Julie is trying to regain her composure, a group of loud, boisterous, FOOTBALL PLAYERS, dressed in their jerseys, come raging down the hallway. They are jumping onto each others backs, shoving, and punching as they do so.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CLAIRE'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

The football players come right towards Julie, who quickly shuffles to the other side of the hallway, almost bumping into CLAIRE BOYER (17). Claire's blonde hair is tied back into a bun. She is wearing a letterman jacket with the number 15 plastered on the sleeves.

She is nervously watching the football players, flinching as they continue to punch each other. JAKE JENKEL (17) with jersey 15, waves at her and winks, then slaps the player in front of him.

Claire gives him a tight smile and pulls down the sleeve of her jacket, but not before Julie gets a quick peek at a hand-sized bruise around Claire's wrist.

Julie looks up sharply at Claire.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT [THIRD VISION]

The stadium is emptying out. Only a few stragglers are left, laughing, trying to find their way to the exit.

The bleachers are littered with candy wrappers and empty coke bottles.

Claire is sitting on one of the bleachers wrapped in a number 15 jacket. Her head is angled towards the locker rooms, where a bunch of CHEERING and SCREAMING can be heard.

After a few seconds, football players begin to shuffle out of the locker room, Jake with them. He waves goodbye to his teammates and saunters over to Claire, his face drenched in sweat, his blonde hair plastered to his forehead.

Jake slings his arm, hard, around Claire's neck. She ducks away.

CLAIRE

Great game, Jake.

She stands up on her tiptoes and gives him a quick kiss on the cheek. Then she steps forward, walking towards the exit.

JAKE

Get back here and give me a proper kiss.

Claire shakes her head with small smile and continues walking away.

CLAIRE  
Let's get going. I have a ton of  
homework I need to get done.

Jake's face turns cold.

JAKE  
Is that how it's going to be now?

Claire turns back towards him and sighs.

CLAIRE  
Jake, I just have things I need to  
get done. I told you earlier.

JAKE  
Oh, so it's my fault you can't get  
your homework done? I'm sorry that  
being with my team is such a bad  
thing.

CLAIRE  
Look, Jake that's not what I'm  
saying. Just...just forget it.

Jake's face turns red and he brushes his hands through his  
hair, making it stick up.

JAKE  
You don't give a shit about  
football or about me playing in  
college. It's all about you isn't  
it?

Claire opens her mouth to retort and reaches out and touches  
his elbow gently, but Jake shoves her back. Claire stumbles  
and regains her balance. She glares at him and begins to walk  
away.

Jake reaches out and grasps her wrist, pulling her back  
towards him. He is gripping her wrist so hard she SQUEALS.

There are already a few bruises up Claire's arm. She starts  
to cry.

END OF THIRD VISION.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CLAIRE'S LOCKER

Julie comes back from the vision gasping, tears in the corner  
of her eyes. She slides halfway down the locker she is  
leaning against. She looks wildly around. Her eyes focus on a  
locker down the hallway. Nobody is by it.

Julie takes a deep breath and pushes herself away from the lockers. She wobbles down the hallway to the empty locker. Next to the empty locker is HEATHER BEACHUM (16), one of the three girls who had made fun of Sarah.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - HEATHER'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

Heather is pulling her textbooks out of her backpack and placing them neatly into her locker.

Her two friends are still with her and the three of them are chattering away. Heather turns to place one textbook in her locker and a note falls out. Heather quickly grabs it out of the air, and her face falls. She crumples the note up and throws it in her locker.

Julie looks from the crumpled up note to Heather's face.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - THE DAY BEFORE [FOURTH VISION]

The classroom is partially empty, only a few students have filed in. The room consists of six lab tables and a front podium. Microscopes and glass vials cover the lab tables.

Heather is sitting at one table, phone in hand. A CUTE BOY walks into the classroom and straight up to Heather. He pulls a folded note out of his jean pants pocket and hands it to her with a smile. Heather smiles back, a blush rising on her cheeks.

Cute Boy nods to the note and Heather unfolds it, a big smile plastered on her face. But when she opens up the folded note, her smile fades. It reads, "I'd need a microscope to see your chest."

END OF VISION FOUR.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - HEATHER'S LOCKER

Julie comes out of the vision with a look of pity upon her face. She reaches out towards Heather and blinks.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - SARAH'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

Julie stands by Sarah's locker, hand outstretched towards Sarah and not Heather. Julie's eyes go wide and her bottom lip starts to quiver. She looks around and runs a hand frantically through her hair. Julie is on the verge of bursting into tears when Heather and her two friends come sauntering around the corner.

The girls are walking in the same way and in the same direction as they were earlier. Julie looks back to Heather's locker all the way down the hallway but nobody is there. Julie looks back at where Heather is now and sees her point to Sarah, who is smiling and putting her books away.

A flash a realization flashes across Julie's face. She quickly looks to Sarah and then back at Heather, who is getting ready to laugh and point at her teeth, just like before.

Julie rushes up to Heather, blocking her view of Sarah.

JULIE

I really love this shirt on you,  
Heather.

Julie tugs at the edge of the shirt, giving Heather a huge and reassuring smile. Heather blinks and a smile forms at the corners of her mouth, but pushes past Julie without saying anything. Her two friends follow and they walk away.

Julie sighs with relief and rushes back up to the still smiling Sarah.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You know Sarah, I like your smile,  
you should use it more.

Sarah keeps her face turned towards her locker, but her smile grows bigger.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DARREN'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

Julie rushes over to Darren's locker. He is bent over mumbling about his paper. Same as before. Julie taps him on the shoulder.

JULIE

I wish I would have done that well  
on Mr. McGovern's test. You must be  
the smartest kid in our grade,  
Darren.

Darren doesn't acknowledge Julie, but he stops mumbling and smooths out the crumpled paper, placing it in his locker. Julie frowns at him and opens her mouth to speak again but the loud SHOUTS of the football players can be heard coming down the hall. Julie pats Darren in the back and rushes off.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CLAIRE'S LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

Julie sprints over to Claire's locker but then suddenly stops. She bites her lip and shuffles from foot to foot.

The football players get closer and closer and Julie looks back at them over her shoulder and then back at Claire who has noticed the guys coming down the hall.

JULIE

You know you deserve better than him. You are a smart girl and you shouldn't be afraid to be on your own.

Claire frowns but doesn't say anything.

Suddenly the intercom starts to crackle. Julie looks around, confused. "If you ever leave me..." drones out.

MONTAGE FLASHBACKS:

-Julie is at school with a sign reading "Prom?" A guy standing in front of her shakes his head no and he and his friends wander away, trying to hold in their laughter.

-Julie is sitting in the classroom. Her hands clasped on her desk. She is handed back a paper with a red "C" on the top. She crumples it in her hands.

-Julie outside a movie theater waiting for her friends. She keeps checking her phone and one by one people start to cancel.

-Julie is screaming at her mom. Both are red in the face, flinging their arms wildly about.

-Julie sitting by a lake in the evening, crying.

-Julie dressed in a sweatshirt with the hood pulled up, walks across the road. Headlights light her up. The words, "If you ever leave me" fill her ears.

END MONTAGE.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

A bright light flashes overhead. Music plays in the background. "If you ever leave me, I would be no more."

Julie, face bruised, arms and legs wrapped in bandages, lies in a hospital bed. The room is filled with flowers and balloons. But around her bed are her parents and little brother. Heather, Sarah, Claire, and Darren are among friends in the back. They give her little waves.

MRS. PETERS

Oh, Julie. We've been so worried.  
We are so glad you are okay.

Mrs. Peters leans over and kisses Julie on the head. Her eyes are red and her lips tremble.

JULIE

What happened? Why am I all wrapped up?

MR. PETERS

Oh, honey. You were hit by a truck yesterday. You must have not been paying attention and wandered out in front. You've been out of commission all day. They didn't think you were going to make it.

On the last word his voice falters and he has to clear his throat.

MRS. PETERS

We are so glad you are okay.

Julie gives her hand a squeeze. She then looks around her mother to the Heather, Claire, Darren, and Sarah.

Heather, noticing her looking at them, strides forward and up to the bed, standing right next to Mrs. Peters.

MR. PETERS

Come on dear, let's give Julie and her friends a bit of privacy.

Julie's parents get up and walk out of the room, grabbing Steven on their way out, who pats Julie's foot as he walks by.

Heather takes Mrs. Peter's seat.

HEATHER

I know we don't really know each other Julie, but I heard about your accident and needed to come see you. Funny thing, I felt that you were at school today.

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I could have sworn you told me you liked my shirt.

Heather laughs and shakes her head.

CLAIRE

Wait a second. I thought the same thing!

Claire pushes her way past Darren and Sarah to stand next to Heather.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

I thought you told me that I deserved better than my boyfriend, well ex-boyfriend as of today, but I thought I was just going crazy as soon as I heard you had been in the hospital all day.

Julie looks back at the other two and they are giving each other weird looks. They look at Julie and nod.

JULIE

That is a funny thing.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - ONE MONTH LATER

The hallway is filled with students laughing and talking. Julie walks down the center of the hall, backpack slung over her shoulder, a big smile on her face.

She walks past Heather and Sarah who are laughing at something on Heather's phone. Sarah's smile is big.

Darren is talking to a GROUP OF PEOPLE all crowded around his locker. They are discussing which movie they want to see this weekend.

Claire, sans letter jacket, is going over notes by her locker with another STUDENT. She smiles at Julie and waves.

Julie waves back and continues on to her locker. She opens it. Inside are a bunch of family and friend pictures. A picture of Julie and her visitors from the hospital are in the center, signed by each person. All faces are smiling.

FADE OUT.