

JESSAMYN

Written by

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INT. SCHOOL COMPUTER LAB - DAY

FRED OVERMEIER, 50s, retired military haircut, sits looking at his desktop computer. Keyboards CLACK. Ambient NOISES of the occasional whisper or giggle.

Fred's SCREEN shows two rows of five squares, each mirrors the desktops of the students. He clicks on one, sees an essay assignment. Fred's eyes narrow. He expands another box.

In the document, a single line appears:

NO I DON'T MIND.

The line disappears.

YOU WANT TO, DON'T YOU? PRETTY GIRL LIKE YOU CAN GET ANYTHING SHE WANTS IN THIS WORLD.

Fred hits the SCREEN CAPTURE BUTTON in the upper right corner of the screen. The words disappear.

Fred looks over his monitor at JESSAMYN WEST, 14, white, typing away at her computer. She's somewhat plain, gaudied up with makeup and badly crimped hair, blonde with dark roots.

Fred looks back at the computer:

YEAH SURE BIG DEE

Fred hits the screen capture button.

WHAT TIME CAN YOU BE AT THE CORNER?

LATER:

The tech lab is empty except for Fred and PRINCIPAL EVELYN HART, 50s, African-American. She flips through the printout.

HART

Jessamyn's missed a lot of school lately. Looks like I'd better grab her before her date with Big Dee.

She picks up the phone on Fred's desk and hits three digits.

HART

Hello, Mr. Delario, is Jessamyn West in class right now? How long ago did she go to the bathroom? Twenty minutes? Be mindful of your students, Mr. Delario.

She hangs up.

HART

I don't have much time to catch her
at home before she's gone.

EXT/INT. WEST HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Hart knocks on the door of this squalid home. Female voices
SCREAM through the door, muffled.

The door opens. ALICE WEST, a sad-eyed, rundown woman in a
worn T-shirt, answers.

HART

Hello, Mrs. West.

JESSAMYN (O.S.)

Tired of listening to your crap!

ALICE

Principal Hart, I'm glad you're
here. She won't listen to me.

Hart surveys the dilapidated, messy home. Cigarette, filled
ashtrays. Boxes of empty beer cans stacked on the back porch.

INT. JESSAMYN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jessamyn stuffs clothes into a duffel bag. Hart enters.
Jessamyn sees her, freezes.

JESSAMYN

What are you doing here, Mrs. Hart?

HART

Hi Jessamyn. Got big plans?

JESSAMYN

No. Just gonna stay with a friend
for a bit. I'm sick of my mom.

HART

Jessamyn, is that friend Big Dee?

JESSAMYN

Uh, no, it's my cousin, she's gonna
let me stay with her.

HART

We have five minutes. I need to
show you something.

Hart pulls from her purse a copy of the papers Fred printed,
lays them on Jessamyn's bed.

HART

What do you know about this Big Dee? For real.

Jessamyn's eyes widen when she sees the screen captures.

JESSAMYN

His name is Denny. He loves me and I love him. We're fine. You don't need to worry about me.

HART

How old is Denny?
(waits)
Jessamyn, how old?

JESSAMYN

We're not gonna have sex, okay? He just cares about me. When I'm sixteen I'm gonna get 'mancipated.

HART

How long have you known Denny?

JESSAMYN

A month. Longest relationship I've ever had.

HART

It's a relationship?

Jessamyn pulls a necklace out from under her collar, shows the diamond on it. She snaps at Hart.

JESSAMYN

Yeah, see?!

ALICE (O.S.)

She's been acting so different lately-

JESSAMYN

Shut up, Mom, you don't know me!

Jessamyn grabs her duffel bag and stands in front of Hart.

JESSAMYN

You're in my way, Mrs. Hart. This isn't school. Move.

She pushes past Hart, but Alice grabs her duffel bag handle.

ALICE

You're right, this is my house-

Jessamyn falls over, hits the ground on her knee.

JESSAMYN
Ow, my knee!

Her bag spills open, reveals top of the line headphones, a Bluetooth speaker, a laptop, and a tablet.

ALICE
Where'd you get that stuff? Huh?

HART
Mrs. West, may I?

Alice backs off.

ALICE
Whatever.

Hart kneels, holds Jessamyn's hand.

HART
Here, stretch your leg out. Listen to me for a minute, please.

Jessamyn weeps quietly.

HART
Looks like Denny has been really nice to you, buying you things. Probably seems really fun, confident. A man, not a boy, right?

JESSAMYN
Yeah, I guess.

HART
Has he given you drugs?

JESSAMYN
No.

Hart reaches for the side pocket of the duffel bag. Jessamyn yanks it back.

HART
Jessamyn, Denny is grooming you.

JESSAMYN
Grooming me?

HART

Complimenting you, buying you things, trying to get you to leave your home...Jessamyn, this is happening to tens of thousands of unhappy, young girls like you. He makes you feel good about yourself, doesn't he?

Jessamyn stands up, shoves items back in her duffel bag. Hart stands up with her.

JESSAMYN

Better than you do.

Jessamyn busts past Hart.

HART

Jessamyn, I'm sorry. Let me do more. Don't be like Cassandra.

Jessamyn freezes.

JESSAMYN

Cassandra Sandy?

HART

When's the last time you saw her?

JESSAMYN

I don't know. Last year maybe. Why, what happened to her?

HART

Last spotted at a truck stop two hundred miles away. There are pictures of her on the internet. Bad sites, Jessamyn. Her mom said she'd been talking to a man named Dee. Please. You don't want to find out the hard way who Denny really is. Deep down, you already know.

JESSAMYN

He wouldn't do that stuff to me.

HART

Someday, someone's going to love you without trying to use you.

JESSAMYN

What do you care?

HART
Set down the bag, please.

Jessamyn sets the bag down.

HART
In a couple of years, I'm gonna watch you graduate. You're going to hug me and thank me. I'm going to cry extra tears of joy for you. But right now, we need to go somewhere, okay?

JESSAMYN
Where?

HART
To the police station. We have to make sure Denny doesn't try again with another girl when you cut ties with him. Because he will. Many girls, Jessamyn that you can help. Will you help me help them? You have that power right now.

HART
Take my hand, Jessamyn.

Jessamyn takes Hart's hand, then falls into Hart's embrace. Jessamyn sobs, lets her pain out.

HART
There there. We're going to take care of you, Jessamyn. It's going to be all right. Are you ready?

JESSAMYN
Yes.

Alice approaches, tears in her eyes.

ALICE
Sweet baby, I'm so proud of you.

Jessamyn pivots to her mom and sobs in her arms.

ALICE
Thank you, Mrs. Hart.

Principal Hart warmly nods.

HART
Oh, we're just getting started.