

INT. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - DAY - FLASHBACK

TWO YEARS AGO...

SHALYNN RIVERS (16), an olive skin, slender girl stands at the front desk, in the baggy dirty grey sweatpants, she was brought in with 6 months ago.

The guard removes the handcuffs from her wrists and gives her forms to sign.

Shalynn shakes her wrists free and rubs the red marks the cuffs have made. She picks up her belongings.

Shalynn steps outside the center and looks up to the bright sky.

INT. CAR - DAY

Shalynn steps out of the car and places her feet on the concrete.

EXT. SHALYNN'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY

She looks at her three-story colonial brown childhood home.

Shalynn walks slow up the three brick steps to the garland laced door. There is a note on the bright red door.

SHALYNN'S MOM (V.O.)

Shalynn, I'm sorry I couldn't be there in person to pick you up, but you know I couldn't deal with everything you and Robert did in that liquor store or facing that juvenile center again. We've had that conversation more than once. I left the door unlocked, there is food in the fridge if you're hungry and your room is the way you left it.

INT. SHALYNN'S MOM'S HOUSE - DAY

Shalynn opens the door and gazes around the country home.

She places her garbage bag by the front door.

INT. SHALYNN'S ROOM - DAY - PRESENT DAY

The phone RINGS through the home. Shalynn picks up the phone that sits by her bed.

MR. THOMPSON

This is Mr. Thompson, your court-appointed attorney. I have news.

SHALYNN

Great! What is it?

MR. THOMPSON

I heard from the judge and they have agreed to seal your record.

Shalynn jumps off her white canopy bed with the biggest Kool-Aid smile.

SHALYNN

So I can accept the admission to Morgan State University no problem?

MR. THOMPSON

Yes. You can put that robbery and attempted murder behind you.

SHALYNN

He was doing nothing but bringing me down anyway. I went to a juvenile detention center for attempted murder while he walked away. I am trying to do better with my life anyway. This will be my chance to put all this behind me and move on.

MR. THOMPSON

Happy to hear it.

SHALYNN

Thank you so much again.

MR. THOMPSON

We'll be in touch.

EXT. MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY

Shalynn arrives on campus with five suitcases and two tote bags.

Shalynn drags her bags up the steps of the high-rise dormitory.

INT. ANDERSON HALL - PSYCHOLOGY CLASS - DAY

Shalynn walks in class and takes the last seat left in the back of the small lecture hall.

She sits by what she views as a hot chocolate man, BRANDON (18).

After the long lecture Shalynn shoves her notes in her oversize purse and lets out a long sigh.

BRANDON

Hey. Were you able to get all the notes?

SHALYNN

For the most part. Just trying to get adjusted to the class and college in general.

BRANDON

Well, if you want to see my notes or need some help, I'm willing.

SHALYNN

As nice as your offer is I will have to pass.

BRANDON

Hold on homie, I was just trying to be nice. I wasn't trying to get with you or anything like that, It just looked like you were struggling.

SHALYNN

My bad. I've just been through a lot and worked hard to get here and I don't want to waste it. But I would definitely appreciate your help with adjusting to this class and college.

BRANDON

No. You good. We can get together sometime to go over things if you want.

SHALYNN

That would be cool. Thanks so much.

They both take out their phones and exchange numbers and then head out of the lecture hall.

EXT. MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Brandon calls Shalynn.

BRANDON

Do you want to get together to study?

SHALYNN (V.O.)

Yeah. Our next exam is not for another month. I don't think we need to do that much studying.

BRANDON

I was just trying to ask you out then I guess, but I couldn't figure out how to ask you. I really like you, so maybe you want to go and hang out at The Grill on west campus?

SHALYNN (V.O.)

I went away to school to get away from everything. Every bad decision needs to be behind me. So, I don't have a great track record with guys so I will have to pass. Thanks.

BRANDON

I can understand that, but I want to be friends even if we don't get together. I think you're cool and would love to get to know you. Can we meet at The Grill. Nothing funny, just talking. We can meet during the day it doesn't have to be at night.

SHALYNN (V.O.)

I understand what you are saying but, I can't afford to go there with someone else. Me going out with you would be much more than just friends. I know that of myself. I don't mind talking to you on the phone, I just don't think I can see you outside of class.

BRANDON

Okay. I'm not going to push you. I just want to be there for you. But I'm cool with talking to you on the phone.

(MORE)

BRANDON (CONT'D)
I want to know about you and how
you got here. We can help each
other get through this class.

SHALYNN (V.O.)
I will talk to you soon.

BRANDON
Ok.

EXT. MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY - NIGHT

Shalynn and Brandon spend every night on the phone.

She skips class and forgets to do her assignments just to
talk to him.

EXT. SHALYNN'S DORM-DAY

ROBERT (18) her ex-boyfriend, sits with his long legs over
the steps outside her dorm.

ROBERT
Hey babe. Long time, no see. You
were trying to hide from me.

Shalynn freezes in her tracks and begins to shake at the
sound of the familiar voice. Slowly she turns around.

SHALYNN
Robert?
(She says slowly)

ROBERT
Yeah. Babe, why was you trying to
hide?

Robert grabs her hand and tries to pull her close.

SHALYNN
You know I had to let you go. It
was the condition of my release to
leave the state. Why are you here?

ROBERT
Juvie couldn't even keep us apart.
Who was the only person to come and
see you? Damn sure wasn't your
mama!

BEAT

(MORE)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I had to come and see about my girl. You didn't even call me when you got out. I had to hear about it on the streets. You wrong for that.

SHALYNN

My attorney told you I couldn't see you. So act like you didn't know anything. But right now, you got to go. I was told to call the police if you ever tried to contact me. I don't want to do that. How did you find me anyway?

Robert forcibly grabs Shalynn closer to him pulling open his coat exposing the gun that is resting on his left side.

ROBERT

You ain't about to call nobody! I have my ways of finding you. Just like I found out you was out on the streets, those same streets told me where you went. Trust and believe me, Shalynn. You will never escape me. You're mine, always will be. So go up to your room and start packing because you coming home. I'll be back later today to pick you up.

Shalynn releases his grip on her and backs up. She looks around to see if she can find someone to help.

SHALYNN

I'm not going anywhere with you. This is my new life. I escaped you and worked hard to put everything behind me. Please just go and leave me alone.

ROBERT

You know this isn't over. Believe!

Robert walks off. Shalynn's jaw drops. She fumbles in her purse for her phone.

INT. SHALYNN'S DORM ROOM-DAY

Shalynn slams the door and shakes. JASMINE (18) her roommate sits on the bed on the other side of the room.

JASMINE

Girl, what's wrong with you?

SHALYNN

Remember when I told you about Robert and everything that happened before I got to school?

JASMINE

Yeah. Why? What happened?

SHALYNN

Robert just showed up downstairs telling me that I have to come back home with him. I had to resist him, which was hard because he came carrying a gun.

JASMINE

What! When are the cops getting here? This is crazy.

SHALYNN

I don't know how he found me, he said from the streets but who knows. I called the cops right before I came up to our room. They said they will look for him. I was so scared when I heard his voice though.

JASMINE

I would've been scared too. They need to find him soon.

SHALYNN

I think when he shows back up I will tell him that I will go back with him and you call the cops.

JASMINE

How do you know he will come back, and you think it will work?

SHALYNN

He won't be able to resist me when I come downstairs with a bag.

JASMINE

We both need to stay safe, you said he had a gun. That is nothing to play with.

SHALYNN

Just be ready to call the cops. I'm going to get him this time.

(MORE)

SHALYNN (CONT'D)
He had me locked up and went free,
but not this time.

A Robert yells from the street.

ROBERT
Shalynn, you better get your butt
down here!

Shalynn looks out the window down at the street.

She watches as people stop and look at Robert yell.

JASMINE
Be careful, girl.

SHALYNN
I will. Thanks.

Shalynn grabs an empty bag from her closet and heads
downstairs to meet him.

EXT. SHALYNN'S DORM - DAY

The cops surround her dorm. They yell at Robert to drop his
weapon and get down on the ground.

Shalynn shakes as she dials Brandon.

INT. SHALYNN'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Brandon arrives and hugs Shalynn tight.

SHALYNN
Well, I am glad that he is finally
locked up after he fled the scene
at the liquor store during the
robbery. It was his idea and then
he ran and I was left holding a gun
to the cashier's head when the cops
arrived. Finally he is getting what
he deserves.

BRANDON
I'm so glad that you are safe. I
was so scared when you called me.
I'm proud of you for standing up
for yourself and fighting.

Brandon rubs her shoulders.

SHALYNN

Thanks! I've come a long way.