

# ABE SIDES

ELLA

by

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INT/EXT. ZHANG RESIDENCE - FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Abe grabs a couple TOOTHPICKS from the pantry, puts one in his mouth, then ruffles his hair to make it STICK UP.

He cracks open the front door, revealing:

ELLA, 20, short skirt, long jacket, ripped stockings, streak of pink hair, thrifted messenger bag. Everything clashes.

ELLA

Hey you.

ABE

What do you want.

ELLA

Thought we could hang out again.

Beat. The slightest tilt of her head, and Abe crumbles.

ABE

My dad's stopping by later.

ELLA

So we'll be quick.

Ella turn-steps away. Abe slips on FLIP FLOPS and follows. The door closes behind him.

**START**

EXT. SUNSET CEMETERY - DAY

Afternoon sunlight shines through trees. Nearby, TEENAGERS LAUGH and CAR HORNS BEEP. Ella sits against a tree.

Abe's head lies on Ella's bare legs. He stares at her shoes, chewed-up and tattered.

Ella strokes Abe's hair -- like she would a PUPPY.

ELLA

How come I never see you with kids your own age?

ABE

I could ask you the same question.

ELLA

There's no one else like you.

(beat)

How's Big Brother? Seeing anybody?

ABE  
You'd have to ask him.

ELLA  
He stopped picking up my calls.

Abe shrugs.

Ella takes out a wrinkled PACK OF CIGARETTES.

ELLA (CONT'D)  
(lighting up)  
Last one.

She puffs. Offers it to Abe, who refuses. Ella pockets the empty carton.

ELLA (CONT'D)  
Sam's the one who got me hooked.

Abe sits up, sulking.

ABE  
It smells.

ELLA  
What about you? Got a girlfriend?

ABE  
Why do you care.

ELLA  
...you're boring today.

ABE  
I'm the same as always.

ELLA  
Thought you were different.

Ella gets up, dusts herself off, and walks towards the NOISE.

ABE  
What are you doing?

ELLA  
Something new.

Abe watches her go. Alone -- surrounded by the dead -- hearing more LAUGHTER ring out from the parking lot...

**STOP**

Abe gets up and FOLLOWS.

---

SASHA  
Oh.

A CAR SCREECHES IN THE DISTANCE. OTHER KIDS SCREAM.

SASHA (CONT'D)  
We should go.

She sneaks. Abe follows, tripping over himself.

**START**

EXT. SHOP QUIK - SUNSET

Abe and Sasha dash to the Shop Quik, touching the entrance.

SASHA  
Looks like we're first.

She jogs in place, cooling down. Abe doubles over, huffing.

Sasha looks around for the others. Abe, still gassed:

ABE  
You wanna go for a walk--

Sasha's PHONE BUZZES. She reads it.

SASHA  
Oh jeez. Family dinner.

ABE  
Cool. Cool cool.

SASHA  
What was your name?

ABE  
Abe.

SASHA  
Sasha.  
(beat)  
See you in class.

**STOP**

Sasha takes off jogging.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOP QUIK - MAGIC HOUR

Abe leans against the wall. He chews on a toothpick.

Shaking his head, the CASHIER goes to check on the bathroom.

Abe LEAPS OVER THE COUNTER, finds Ella's brand, GRABS A PACK OF CIGARETTES, and RUNS out of the store.

**START**

EXT. ELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ella brings a BOWL OF CAT FOOD into her backyard. She sets the bowl down and waits.

A MANGY STRAY CAT crawls out of the bushes, and eats from the bowl. Ella pets the cat.

ELLA

Look who came out.

REVEAL: Abe, out of breath from running.

ELLA (CONT'D)

(to Abe)

This is Catface. I give him food and he gives me love.

ABE

Hey Catface.

(to Ella)

I got you these.

Abe offers Ella the CIGARETTES.

ELLA

Is that asshole tax?

Abe nods. Ella takes the pack, and LIGHTS ONE.

ELLA (CONT'D)

I should quit.

Abe sits down and pets Catface. Having eaten his fill, the cat RUNS AWAY. Abe and Ella sit in silence.

ELLA (CONT'D)

Sam used to get embarrassed by me too. You're just like him. I guess you're just like everyone else.

Beat.

Ella puts out her cigarette and dusts herself off. She opens the door to her house and walks inside.

CREAKING as it moves -- THE DOOR HANGS OPEN.

Abe stares. Then--

INT. ELLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe closes the door, careful not to make a sound.

He walks through Ella's dark house. Organized, functional, and decorated with flourishes of Japanese art.

A dark bedroom door is PARTIALLY OPEN: we can hear an OLDER WOMAN COUGHING from inside. Abe jumps, then keeps walking.

At the end of the hallway, Ella's room casts a warm glow.

INT. ELLA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abe enters. SUDDENLY, Ella locks the door, and leans CLOSE.

ELLA

So now we're alone. What do you  
wanna do?

Abe gulps. Their faces inches away. After a moment--

ELLA (CONT'D)

Thought so.

Ella walks away and puts on a VINYL RECORD.

Abe's eyes travel all over the room, taking in every detail. Photos of old friends, books, records, Miles' SKATEBOARD.

ABE

(re: papers on her desk)  
You're transferring to  
Northwestern.

ELLA

Gotta leave someday.

Ella plops down on her bed and reads the album liner notes.

Abe gathers himself up.

He sits down next to Ella.

ABE

I'm sorry about before.

ELLA

Thanks. Dick.

ABE  
And Sam.

ELLA  
You're not Sam.

ABE  
If you ever want to call me, I'll  
pick up. Or whatever.

Beat.

ELLA  
Cool.

Ella lays her head on Abe's shoulder.

**STOP**

...and they watch the record spin.

CUT TO:

INT. ZHANG RESIDENCE - DAY

INSERT: A KNIFE CARVES into a scratched up WOOD DESK.

Abe finishes, and DROPS THE KNIFE on the table.

The house is still a mess. The computer is untouched.

Abe grabs some TOOTHPICKS. Ruffles his hair. He laces up a  
pair of shoes, unworn. His MOTHER enters, arms crossed.

MOTHER  
(Mandarin Chinese)  
Where are you going?

Abe opens the front door. It's bright outside.

ABE  
Out.

The door closes behind him.

INSERT ON DESK: it's covered in angst-ridden phrases and  
drawings. Amidst it all, there's a heart. Inside is "Ella".

**THE END.**