The Head and the Heart

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Synopsis: Mixing college life and romance for Cameron and her friends has never come easy. Together they must choose to live and love with their hearts or with their heads.

Setting: The time is the present in a college environment. The scenes occur in the living room of an off campus apartment with one on the street outside.

Characters:

Cameron: the main player in our play. A sophomore in college. Tomboy-ish.

Sarah: Cameron’s best friend. A Senior in college. Less of a Tomboy than Cam, but still not too girly.

Jessica: Cameron’s other friend. Also a sophomore. She is the definition of a girly girl.

Michael: a mutual acquaintance of all three. He is conventionally attractive, but a little quirky.

Party Guests: (optional) other college kids of varying personalities. Used only in the first scene to set the stage. (Possibly in the 3rd as people passing silently on the street.)
Scene 1

Your typical college apartment at around 11pm; dim lighting, crappy furniture, “interesting” décor (maybe something glow-in-the-dark or street signs). A modest party is happening; not too many people, but a good crowd for the space; classic party music from the 2000’s is playing. Alcohol is present, but no one is belligerently drunk. Michael and Sarah are seated on a couch; Michael on the left, Sarah on the right, both are holding cups. Cameron, sipping on her own cup, is across the room staring at them as Jessica approaches. Jessica notices Cameron has been staring at the couch where Michael and Sarah are seated.

Jessica: Whatchya looking at?
Cameron: (Snapping out of her stare) Huh? What?... Oh. Nothing.

Jessica has maneuvered herself behind Cameron, trying to imitate her line of sight

Jessica: Oooo… Who’s that with Sarah?
Cameron: I think his name is Mike or something? I don’t really-
Jessica: (cutting her off) O. M. G. You’re totally jealous!
Cameron: What? No I’m not. What are you talking about?
Jessica: Oh honey… You mean to tell me you aren’t dying to be on that couch over there?
Cameron: (Cameron would in fact love to be on that couch but tries to cover it up anyway) Well…
Jessica: (seeing right through it) Well what? With all the staring… and the eyes…? I saw the way you were looking at him. You totally like Michael.
Cameron: (calmly, yet matter-of-factly) No, I don’t. (Cameron is not lying. She takes a drink)
Jessica: Oh come on. (Cameron gives Jessica a death glare) Don’t overthink it, just go over there and talk to him…
Cameron: (cutting her off) Absolutely not.

Jessica: (continuing without interruption) Besides, you and Sarah have practically become best friends in the past year. I mean, you’re basically the same person, which would explain why you’re checking out the same guy… (Cameron fidgets) I’m sure if you talked to her, she’d let you have a shot at him. You know… girl code and whatnot.
Cameron: I have no interest in invoking the (using air quotes) “Girl Code.” Besides, Sarah and I would have more of a… a Bro Code anyway.
Jessica: Yeah… no… I see it. Definitely a bro code with you two.
Cameron: (trying to end the conversation as quickly as possible) Right. Well. Now that that’s settled… (she finishes her drink) Jessica, it’s been a lovely chat but I really must go. This is my party you so graciously complimented earlier and I should really get back to hosting it.

They part ways. Cameron goes to talk with other party guests. Jessica approaches the couch with a jaunt and joins the conversation, sitting between Michael and Sarah. The Party continues for a few moments before the lights and party babble fade out on the scene.
Scene 2

A few hours later, everyone is gone except for Cameron and Sarah who are cleaning up after the party. Cameron has a broom and Sarah is putting trash in a bag. They are both tipsy, but not too much that they can’t continue to clean as they talk-

Cameron: Drunk people sure do make a mess…

Sarah: Hey, don’t look at me. I only had… (pauses to count on fingers but can’t remember)

Cameron: uh huh! That’s what I thought. Whatever, I’m not one to talk. Besides, I know it wasn’t you who crushed these chips into 50 million pieces…

Sarah: (tisks) Yeah. ____ Oh my god, you know who else can be a mess? People at street fairs! Remember last year when we went to Salem at Halloween? They put out those wire things with trash bags, but people still believed the ground was a better place for throwing all their shit!

Cameron: That’s right! There were all those street vendors, too! Oh my God. The one where we bought that amazing funnel cake? And… and that one selling those little head-bands that make you look like you have horns? (using her fingers as horns, Cameron pokes Sarah)

Sarah: That was a great day.

Cameron: (reminiscing) Yeah, it was.

Sarah: That was the first day we really got a chance to hang out together.

Cameron: It was! (beat) Not gonna lie, I sorta made that happen. I purposely walked off with your group that day because I wanted to get to know you better…

Sarah: Oh. I know. I’m not oblivious. (With this Sarah has plopped herself on the right side of the couch)

Cameron: Was it that bad? (Cameron sits on the left side of the couch now)

Sarah: yeah. (both laugh)

Cameron: I’m really glad I did though…

Sarah: Me too. You’re kind of my best friend now, sooo...

Sarah playfully leans in to bump Cameron’s shoulder. Cameron, in turn, pokes her back to her side of the couch. Cameron takes a moment to collect herself from the gay panic of the brief moment of contact while Sarah continues:

Sarah: I remember we kept waiting around at all the shops for people to pay.

Cameron: Oh my god, yes! Like, everyone would decide to move on, but one person would be stuck in line waiting to pay and we’d be the only two to notice!

Sarah: Everyone would just ditch us and the poor third wheel who was paying and then we’d have to run to catch up!

Cameron: Ugh, yes! And then we got separated from the group after we went out on that pier to take all those super cliché photos with the lighthouse.

Sarah: They all ran off to the carnival!
Cameron: We started planning a trip to Six Flags to get our fix of thrills because we both hate the sketchy rides those street fairs cart around from town to town.

Sarah: You’re right! Man, we learned a lot about each other that day.

Cameron: You were telling me that the only reason you became an engineer was to design rollercoasters.

Sarah: *(tisks)* Right! So much for that…

Cameron: Remember, later at dinner, we discovered that we both have the same favorite drink!

Together: *(without missing a beat, with the same cadence, as if they have rehearsed this response for use at a moment’s notice)* An Arnold Palmer, heavy on the Lemonade, light on the tea! No ice please! *(both laugh)*

Sarah: I remember after dinner, on the way back to the car, I finally convinced you to buy that ring you’d been eyeing all day at that one vendor’s table!

Cameron: *(playing with the ring on her thumb for all to see)* I still wear it every day!

Sarah: I knew you would love it!

Cameron: *(retreating into herself a little, staring at the ring)* We really did get close that day…

*Cameron trails off. Sarah waits, wondering, for an awkward beat before Cameron continues:*

Cameron: *(standing to break the tension)* Hey, thanks for staying. You didn’t have to help me clean up. I was just gonna get it all in the morning.

Sarah: Oh, stop. We both know that wouldn’t have happened.

Cameron: Oh come on…

Sarah: *(standing)* Don’t “oh come on” me! I know you better than that. You wouldn’t have been able to sleep a wink until this place shined like Lannister gold. *(both laugh lightly)*

Cameron: While I appreciate the reference and the compliment to my apparently superhuman cleaning abilities, you gotta give me more credit than that! I would have stopped once the majority of the big stuff was picked up…

Sarah: Okay, fine… you would have stopped… eventually… *(poking one last joke at Cameron)* when you passed out from exhaustion!

With this final jab, Cameron lunges at Sarah with her broom. Sarah grabs a nearby empty bottle to defend herself. Both smile and laugh harder as they sword play with their respective ‘weapons’. Sarah, recognizing that her bottle is too short and she’s losing the battle, begins throwing cups and other party debris at Cameron. One cup isn’t empty and Sarah deliberately splashes Cameron in the face. After a few beats, they share one final burst of laughter. Drying her face, Cameron sinks into the couch on her side. Sarah returns to sit on her side while trying to help Cameron, but without a towel, she’s not doing much but swatting at her clothes. The close contact of Sarah’s hands on her shoulder and collarbone area almost sends Cameron into a tizzy. There is a pause as the two lock eyes for a moment. Cameron squirms away from Sarah’s touch, but does not say anything.

Sarah: *(slightly concerned)* What? What is it?
Cameron: Nothing. Sorry.

Sarah: That wasn’t nothing. I know you.

Cameron: Really. It’s fine, I don’t even know what just happened.

Sarah: Cameron. We may have only been best friends for the last 8 months, but I can tell when something’s bothering you. What is it?

Cameron: What? I… I… uh, no, I’m just, ahhh…

Sarah: Cam!

Cameron: (quickly) I’m not really sure I should tell you.

Sarah: Alright, well now I know there’s something you’re not telling me. Come on. You got all weird earlier too, with your ring and…

Not knowing any other way to shut her up, Cameron grabs Sarah’s face and kisses her. Sarah leans into the kiss and the two share in the embrace for a long, tender moment. Suddenly, Sarah breaks away and Cameron continues.

Cameron: I think I like you.

Sarah: wait, what!?! (instantly regretting pushing so hard) Like, Like like me?

Cameron: yeah…

Sarah: but. but like… (stands) what?!? (cautiously) Really?

Cameron: That day? On the pier at dusk…? In the shadow of that lighthouse, you stood behind me to take a photo, like that one with Jack and Rose from the Titanic? You stretched my arms out as if to touch the horizon… and when I felt your hands on my waist and your breath on my neck, I knew… I had fallen madly in love with you.

Sarah: (exasperated and bewildered) But why me?! I am just a drop in the ocean in this vast world--

Cameron: (standing to cut her off. Builds with emotion throughout) You are not a drop in the ocean! You are the whole ocean in a drop… Screw the other fish in the sea. You are the only one for me. And, I hate that that just rhymed and I sound ridiculous, ugh (composing herself for a beat) I love you. I love you and I’m no longer afraid to say it. People are always quoting that guy, or book, or… whatever! -saying you should tell those who you love that you love them, before you lose them. Well, I’ve been so afraid that if I told you, I would lose you. You are my best friend and granted, you’ve grown to be more than just my best friend in the past few weeks, but the thought of not being your friend, or worse, being ignored by you or fighting off awkwardness between us, just sounds awful… It would kill me if I lost you. (Cameron takes a beat to collect herself. The silence has now gone uncomfortably long) Please say something so I don’t feel like such an idiot… please?

Sarah: (After a beat) Well, shit.

Sarah paces for a moment while Cameron looks on, growing increasingly worried with each step.

Sarah: (After a deep breath) Cameron… you might want to sit down.
Cameron stands still for a second. Sarah motions to insist she sit on the couch. After a beat, Cameron hesitantly sits on the left side of the couch.

Sarah: So aah… god, where do I start? (breathes) Uhh… Okay. Wow. Okay, um… I would agree, we have grown to be a little more than just best friends over the past few weeks. Like, the other night at Elizabeth’s party..?

Cameron: (smiles and nods in recognition) We spent the whole night together making fun of everyone else’s drunken shenanigans.

Sarah: (cutting her off) And then you walked me home even though you live closer and I… (taking a single beat to prepare) I almost asked if you wanted to come up to my room with me. I don’t remember why or what I was feeling but I remember thinking about how confused I was, as to why it felt different that time, asking you to come up, like… we’re best friends. You’ve been to my place hundreds of times. You have a spare toothbrush there and half of our clothes are already in eachother’s closets for God’s sake. But, I just felt it in my gut, that something had… changed, I guess?

Cameron: (standing to approach her) Exactly! Like there’s just this--

Sarah: (cutting her off) Let me finish. (after a beat, Cameron sits back down and Sarah continues) I’ve been trying to figure out what I wanted before I did anything because I didn’t want to jump in and do anything I regretted or make you do anything you regretted. I don’t… (correcting herself) I just didn’t know. But now I… (she trails off, just staring at Cameron)

Sarah: but…

Cameron: (exasperated with motion) but?!? But, what?

Sarah: but… we can’t… we can’t do this. (Cameron’s stunned look is now definitely closer to terror. She is again frozen, speechless) I’ve never felt this before. I’ve never felt this way about a girl before either, but that’s not it. It’s not that I’m afarid to be gay or something. That’s fine, I just… I just think we’re at such different points in our lives right now. You’re a sophomore. I’m a senior. I’m about to go work full time in a different state. You’re still gonna come back here next fall. (paced now with diligence, acting now with her head and not her heart) I have this plan for how my life is going to go moving forward after college but I… I don’t know what the future holds for us and I don’t want us to be together for the few months we have left in the school year just to break up after I graduate. That’s just not fair to either of us. It’s not fair to me and it’s not fair to you. You deserve so much more than that. You deserve more than a relationship that we know won’t last.

Cameron: but… but… how do you know it won’t work.

Sarah: I don’t! That’s just it! I don’t know whats going to happen. But it’s just logical reasoning. It’s safe to assume we would only get to enjoy this, whatever this is, for 2 months? and that’s just… I don’t know.

Cameron: (with defeat rather than actual understanding) …no. I get it.
Sarah: You do?

Cameron: Yeah. I mean. You’re leaving. For good. You’re not gonna be in school anymore.

Sarah: (as if she’s still trying to convince herself) Right.

Cameron: I mean; we probably won’t even be on the same schedule any more. I’ll be up at 2am doing homework… you’ll be up at the crack of dawn for your job… so we won’t be able to call to talk or anything. It wouldn’t work.

Sarah: Exactly! I’m glad you understand where I’m coming from.

Cameron: Yeah, I understand. Totally get it.

Sarah: ok then. It’s settled. We’ll stay just friends.

Both stand across from each other for an awkwardly long pause, fidgeting within themselves. Obviously, neither one is happy about this decision.

Sarah: I should go. (cautiously) Friends can still hug each other goodbye, right?

Cameron: (with a terse smile) of course.

The two share a hug that is obviously more than a hug between two people who are just friends. As they pull away from each other, their faces are dangerously close. They pause, each gazing at the other’s lips but both too afraid to pursue what they really want in that moment.

Sarah: (cutting the tension with a knife) I should go… (she starts to go but stops without looking back) before either of us gets hurt.

Cameron stands motionless as she watches Sarah leave. She hears the door click shut and knows she is gone:

Cameron: Too late. (black out)

Scene 2.5

One second later, in a place that exists outside of time or space, Cameron stands, shrouded in light. She addresses the audience:

Cameron: Have you ever wanted, no. needed to cry, but no tears would come out? So you just… stand there. Staring. Feeling your heart break into a million shattered pieces?

After what feels like an eternity of sadness, Cameron leaves the stage. The empty stage is seen and then the lights fade out to black.
Scene 3

Moments after scene 2, outside, Michael is leaning on the building. He is Drunk in a way that makes him blunt, but in a way that he is wise, not rude. Sarah comes running out, not quite crying, but close. While looking back at where she came from, she bumps into Michael, knocking him over.

Sarah: (helping him up) Oh my God. I’m so sorry!

Michael: Easy there, tiger. You’ll pull my arm off.

Sarah: ugh, sorry. I can’t think right now.

Michael: Well that’s not helping anyone, now is it?

Sarah: Huh? … How drunk are you, dude?


Sarah: (cutting him off) yeah that’s great man. I don’t think I can stomach waiting for you to finish that right now.

Michael: There you are with the thinking again. You know, brains are weird. We think all day at work or class or whatever, wanting nothing more than to not have to do it anymore, but then we want nothing more than to be able to think at other times when our minds draw a blank. But then other times, we don’t even think with our heads. We use our guts. Like, we have a second brain just sitting there, lodged between the diaphragm and the heart or something that just turns on whenever it feels like. It’s like, we never get the brain powers we want when we want them. Or, one of the brains just turns on without us actually thinking at all. It just starts spouting knowledge without us asking for it and before we know it we’re saying stuff we haven’t even had time to think about. Oh man, there’s more layers to this thinking thing than I thought. Heh, Wooo.

Sarah, who has grown from impatiently listening to being thoroughly impressed with Michael’s wisdom, is speechless for a moment before catching herself.

Sarah: Uh…yeah. I’m not sure I follow…

Michael: mhmm… I guess… we either think with our hearts, or we think with our heads. And sometimes, we wish we’d thought with the other one instead. (beat) huh, I just made a rhyme! Go me. Self-five (he does a self-five)

Sarah is bewildered, but what he said has struck a chord in her. She inexplicably kisses Michael.

Michael: What were you thinking with there?

Sarah: What? Uh, Nothing!? I don’t what to think anymore!

Sarah Pulls Michael in to continue their kiss. Michael doesn’t protest and the two continue making out as the scene fades to black.
Scene 4

Two years later. Jessica and Cameron are sitting on the same couch; Cameron on the left, Jessica on the right. There is something (costumes or props) making it obvious that their graduation was that day.

Jessica: Can you believe we’re done with senior year already? God. Remember all the parties you hosted here?

Cameron: Yeah. We’ve had some pretty great celebrations over the years.

Jessica: I can’t believe we graduated today. It seems like just yesterday you were crushing on Michael!

(both laugh)

Cameron: Oh my god, yes; back when people still thought I was straight! (they share a laugh. After a beat) You know it was never him I was after, but man, what a time.

Jessica: (Jessica has been picking at something on the couch which causes her to jump into a realization) OHMYGODWAIT.

Cameron: (more startled than actually asking) WHAT!?

Jessica: That party, Sophomore year?

Cameron: Be more specific? We had so many, which one..??

Jessica: Oh my God, I was so oblivious!

Cameron: What Jess? Spit it out!

Jessica: (Standing, spiraling though her thoughts) How could I not see it? You were practically drooling over her, but I thought it was for him, and with all that staring? And I was so adamant about Michael, with all my questions and the constant nagging, and oh my god I’m such an idiot! OHMYGOD AND THE BRO CODE. (beat) Oh. My. God. I am so sorry!

Cameron: (beat) Yahgood!?! (Jessica nods as Cameron Stands) THAT was a journey. (beat) yeah… we ah… we actually kissed that one night.

Jessica: No. Way. You and Sarah?

Cameron: yup.

Jessica: (quickly) How was it? (recovering) Sorry, that’s a stupidly personal question. What happened? Did she like you back? Is she even gay? Uh, sorry. So not my business. I’m shutting up now. (sits)

Cameron: (stifling a laugh) yeah, no, well… yes? We… talked it out? She was a senior. I was a sophomore. She was leaving. I was staying. She was going out into the world to get a real job and I was stuck here for two more years, still trying to figure out what I wanted from life. It just didn’t make sense with the timing and everything…

Jessica: Oh honey, I’m so sorry…

Cameron: (Not hearing Jessica) Even if we had a falling out after that year, I still expected her to be here today, you know? Like, I had to fight to get here, to a place with my grades where I could graduate? And she knew that! And how much this meant to me? And even if we aren’t as close now as we were then, you’d think that her of all people would understand how much this day meant to me. And how much I
wanted her here to see it? *(building with emotion)* And you know what the worst part is? That day? When we kissed? She said those three words, you know? Those three words that I’ve never even heard anyone else say to me; that I’ve never even had the **chance** for anyone else to say to me. And you know what, I don’t even think I **want** anyone else to. Just her. *(beat of realization, turning away from Jessica to hide her face)* I can’t believe I just said that.

*Both sit in the moment, internally reconciling what was just revealed.*

**Jessica:** *(after a long pause, Jessica stands and approaches Cameron from behind. Tenderly:)* You still love her, don’t you?

*Cameron stands still, staring ahead for a few moments before turning for her and Jessica to share a knowing look. Cameron shakes her head “yes” as she begins to cry. They embrace, Cameron’s cries muffled in Jessica’s shoulder as the stage fades to black.*

**CURTAIN**