



CRACKED, BUT NOT BROKEN, High School

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Character Breakdown:

Chelsea: Kind and smart, victim of Jess's manipulation

Andrea: Strong and supportive. Tries showing Chelsea why Jess is a problem

Jess: Manipulative and controlling. All about having power and control

Props Breakdown:

Chelsea:

- Phone
- Ring from Jess

Andrea:

- Phone

Jess:

- Phone

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK VB

CHELSEA

Hey – I’m Chelsea and this is my best friend Andrea and we’re juniors now, but it doesn’t seem like that long ago I was finishing up my Freshman year and couldn’t wait for summer to start. I had like a million plans for the summer – get my braces off, get a part time job at the coffee shop, my younger brothers and sisters were finally old enough not to need me around to keep track of them all summer. I just wanted some time for myself and maybe a chance to hang out with my best friend, Andrea.

ANDREA

(Teasing) Try to get to more parties, maybe meet some guys...

CHELSEA

That summer actually DID go pretty well. I felt WAY better without the braces. I could just feel like things were changing. Like things were going to be different and I was going to be able to have my own life for a change. And just when I was thinking that – I met Jess.

ANDREA

(They sit) **ARROW DOWN** I remember exactly when Chelsea and Jess met. We were hanging out after school and we decided to go to this park that was nearby. We were just sitting on this bench chatting when this guy I liked named Rob and the new guy-Jess-drove by. They saw us and stopped. Rob wanted me to come over to the car to listen to this new band he had found, and while Rob and I were doing that, Jess and Chelsea started talking.

(ANDREA exits, JESS enters and approaches CHELSEA. He sits next to her. CHELSEA knows who JESS is, but assumes he does not know her. CHELSEA pulls out her cell phone and begins playing Angry Birds.)

JESS

Whatcha doing?

CHELSEA

Uhhh, just playing some Angry Birds.

JESS

You still play that? That’s from like ten years ago.

CHELSEA

Yeah, I know...lame, right?

(CHELSEA laughs and makes eye contact. They smile at each other. CHELSEA quickly retreats back to Angry Birds. JESS laughs.)

JESS

No, I still play, too. What level are you on?

CHELSEA

Oh, it's this one. I can't get three stars on it no matter what. I think it's impossible. Aagghh!

JESS

Are the Angry Birds making you angry?

CHELSEA

Infuriated!

JESS

Let me see.

(CHELSEA hands her phone over to JESS.)

JESS

Oh right, this one took me forever too. See here's what you do, you can actually get all the ugly green pigs with one bird. Just have to launch him at the right plank and... Boom! Ugly pigs are dead.

CHELSEA

Oh! Wow, that was easy. I'm not very good at that game.

JESS

Oh no! It's a really hard level. Do you know how many times those pigs laughed at me before I completed it. Too many to count. Stupid pigs. (CHELSEA laughs) I'm Jess by the way.

CHELSEA

Uh, yeah, I know who you are. You're a senior, right? Just transferred here for baseball.

JESS

Yeah, your school has an awesome baseball program. Way more scouts come here than to my old school and I really want to get a baseball scholarship. And you are?

CHELSEA

Oh, right, um, I'm Chelsea Martens. Me and Andrea are friends.

JESS

Yeah, Rob has a huge crush on her. It's kinda sad really. When he saw her over here he said, "Hurry, think of an excuse so I can go talk to her." He doesn't really have a new band for her to listen to, he just wanted an excuse to see her.

CHELSEA

Yeah, I think the feelings are mutual. As soon as Andrea saw his car she started fixing her hair.

JESS

So they will probably be going out soon, huh?

CHELSEA

Yeah, maybe...

JESS

Hmmm... You dating anybody?

CHELSEA (Shyly)

Nope...

JESS

Oh...

CHELSEA

Yeah...

JESS

So...

CHELSEA

Yeah?

(A moment looking at each other. JESS bursts out laughing, stands up, and puts his hand out to her.)

JESS

Come on.

CHELSEA

What?

JESS

Come on. We have to go and tell Andrea and Rob.

CHELSEA

Tell Andrea and Rob?

JESS

Tell them that we win because we started dating before they did.

(Beat, they smile at each other)

That is unless you aren't interested.

CHELSEA

No! No... I think I'd be interested.

JESS

Well... great come on.

(CHELSEA slowly takes JESS's hand and they exit together, ANDREA enters.)

ARROW UP

ANDREA

So that's when they started seeing each other . . . a lot. Rob and I started seeing each other shortly after that too. I thought that since Rob and Jess were friends and Chelsea and I were friends we would be hanging out a lot. But we didn't. I actually hardly ever got to see her over the summer.

BLUE LOCKERS VB

CHELSEA

Summer flew by. Everything was so much more exciting once Jess was in my life. I hurried through everything just to be with him.

It was hard to balance everything. Homework, friends, babysitting my brothers and sisters. Sometimes I'd get in trouble because of a bad grade, or I'd make my mom mad. But, Jess wanted to be with me. It was flattering... And he was the first guy I'd ever dated so what did I know? I just tried to follow his lead.

I asked him a few times if he thought it would be fun to go on some double dates with Andrea and Rob, but he didn't seem too interested. I think he wanted me all to himself. Jess always made the plans and he always said he had something special up his sleeve for our dates, so I usually didn't even know what our plans were until he picked me up. It was pretty exciting, at first. But then things slowly began to... change.

(CHELSEA gets on her phone, JESS enters.)

JESS

Hey Chels.

CHELSEA

Hey babe! How are you?

(Puts her phone away)

JESS

Not bad, what are you doing?

CHELSEA

Nothing.

JESS

It looked like you were texting.

CHELSEA

Oh, yeah, I guess I was.

JESS

Who?

CHELSEA

Nick Petersen.

JESS

Chelsea...

CHELSEA

Jess?

JESS

Don't.

CHELSEA

He's my partner for the science project. I've known him since kindergarten. I have to talk to him.

JESS

I know you've been friends with Nick for years, but I think he likes you.

CHELSEA

What?

JESS

I've seen how he talks to you Chelsea, I think he's hitting on you. I don't think you should let him do that.

CHELSEA

You really think he likes me, like that? I've never gotten that idea from him. I always thought that we were just friends. Gross.

JESS

Trust me, I'm a guy and I know how these things work. He's trying to hook up with you.

CHELSEA

That would never happen.

JESS

Good. Then it's best that you don't talk to him.

CHELSEA

But we're partners on the science project.

JESS

Switch with somebody.

CHELSEA

Oh... um...okay.

JESS

Look, it's for his own good. You wouldn't want him to continually chase something he can't have, right?

CHELSEA

But I've known him for so long-it just seems really rude.

JESS

Hey, it's rude to lead him on, isn't it? Drop him!

(Beat, back to sweet and nice)

Okay? It'll be best for everybody involved. And besides, you don't need him anyway. You got me.

(Puts his arms around her)

CHELSEA

Jess, not in school, okay?

JESS

Oh, nobody's around, besides, I **want** everybody to see and know that you are all mine. What class you got next?

CHELSEA

English. You?

JESS

Study Hall. Hey, could I borrow your phone? I want to look at baseball stats for next week's game.

CHELSEA

Oh, sure! Just don't get caught with it.

JESS

No problem. I sit way in the back anyway. Thanks.

CHELSEA

Oh, wait, Jess, that's not where the baseball stats are, let me-

JESS

I know, I am going to go ahead and delete all your contact information in here about Nick, since that's what we decided. I'm also gonna see if there are any other guys in here that are bad news so I can make sure you're safe. Oh, and keep your schedule free tonight. I might be getting out of practice early and I don't want you to be out and about so I can catch up with you. Have fun in English!

(JESS exits SR)

HALLWAY VB

CHELSEA

The weird thing with Jess was that even though a lot of the things he said seemed to make sense I always ended up feeling like I was stupid, always getting it wrong or taking something the wrong way. Being too sensitive. But we did have a lot of fun. He helped me with a bunch of my classes because he'd already taken them. And he was really cute – everyone liked him. My brothers and sisters loved him and even my mom said she thought that I'd done pretty well picking out my first boyfriend.

I felt like I was the only one feeling weird about it until this time I talked with Andrea. Jess and I were just about to leave when she joined us...

(JESS enters)

JESS

Hey, you ready to go?

(ANDREA enters)

ANDREA

Hey guys, what's going on? A bunch of us are going to go to the new Chinese place before meeting at the game. You should come along.

JESS

We've already got plans. And I heard that new Chinese place sucks. That's what I heard anyway. Thanks, but no thanks.

ANDREA

Are you sure—

JESS

Yeah, we're sure.

ANDREA

Okay...

CHELSEA

Jess, come on, we could go, don't ya think? I haven't talked to Andrea in awhile.

JESS

Well, maybe not talked, but you have been texting. She sent you 18 text messages yesterday.

ANDREA

How did you know—

CHELSEA

How did you get to my phone? It's been in my purse.

JESS

When you went to the bathroom I had to use your phone. What's in your purse that I shouldn't see?

ANDREA

Chelsea's purse and her phone are her own business.

JESS

I didn't ask *you*. I think I need to go and talk to Rob about keeping his girlfriend on a tighter leash.

ANDREA

What?

JESS

A muzzle might be good too. Crap, I forgot my shoes! I'll be right back. I still need to talk to you... (Looks at ANDREA)...alone. (He leaves)

CHELSEA

Andrea – I'm sorry. I don't know why he acts like that. He's been under some stress with college and baseball stuff – he has so much to do. And then I pick on some little thing like him checking my phone when he's just trying to protect me.

ANDREA

First of all you don't owe me an apology, he does. That was rude. I was just trying to invite you guys to join us. I never see you anymore. You're always with him. I don't see how he's protecting you by cutting you off from your friends.

CHELSEA

He's not, he just wants me to be safe. And Jess says people who are dating always spend less time with their friends.

ANDREA

Rob and I don't see our friends any less.

CHELSEA

Jess says that's because you two aren't in love. Not like we are.

ANDREA

What?

CHELSEA

Andrea, I'm not trying to rub it in, but Jess and I have something really special. (*ANDREA turns away, offended*) I'm sorry Andrea, I'm not trying to be mean, I just know how lucky I am to have him. Here, look, I haven't shown anybody because I am a little embarrassed, but this is the ring Jess got me for being together for 3 months.

(CHELSEA pulls out a ring, ANDREA takes it from CHELSEA)

ANDREA

Whoa!

CHELSEA

Yeah... I know.

ANDREA

How much was it?

CHELSEA

Jess wouldn't tell me, but he did say I was worth every cent.

ANDREA

Wow.

CHELSEA

Yeah...

(CHELSEA takes it back from ANDREA)

ANDREA

Chelsea, just . . . be careful, okay?

CHELSEA

Andrea, we're fine, he's just moody today. I'm sorry he was rude. Every:thing's fine.

ANDREA

Fine.

CHELSEA

Okay. Well... I'm gonna go find him and make sure he's okay.

(CHELSEA exits)

ANDREA

Seeing that ring freaked me out. It looked really expensive, and it just made me nervous for Chelsea. Jess was doing all of these things that seemed so controlling and she was just...going along. It was like watching my best friend disappear before my eyes.

(BRICK) OUTSIDE SCHOOL VB

CHELSEA

When I talked to Andrea that day, I don't know who I was trying to convince that everything was going to be okay, her or me. I always made it seem like I was fine and that Jess and I were totally fine and happy because, well, I was embarrassed. Jess and I weren't having as much fun as we had in the beginning, and it seemed like there were more and more rules all the time about how things should be between people who loved

each other. But I thought things would get better. I thought if I learned and followed the rules, Jess and I would be happy again. I thought everything was going to be okay. But things didn't get better...

(Andrea enters)

CHELSEA

Hey Andrea, what's up? Make it quick, Jess is waiting for me out in his car.

ANDREA

Okay well... it's about Jess.

CHELSEA

What about him?

ANDREA

Rob told me he said some stuff about you to the guys in the locker room. And I thought you should know.

CHELSEA

Well, what. What did he say.

ANDREA

He talked about some personal things you guys did together. Really personal things. And I guess he was bragging about it.

CHELSEA

Jess wouldn't do that. He's not like that.

ANDREA

There's more... he also said you two would have sex soon. Over prom weekend. Is that what you want?

CHELSEA

(Blowing up) What do you want Andrea? Huh? Is this what you brought me here for? To bad- mouth my boyfriend in front of me?

ANDREA

I just thought you should know Chelsea, I don't think it's right.

CHELSEA

Well it's not true! None of it! People criticize Jess all the time because they don't understand him.

ANDREA

Oh, please!

CHELSEA

You're--you're just trying to break us up, aren't you?!

ANDREA

You know what, yeah, I am! He treats you like crap, I never see you anymore and you aren't the same person. You've changed Chelsea.

CHELSEA

Yeah, well so have you. You're just jealous, aren't you? Because Rob doesn't love you like Jess loves me.

ANDREA

Rob and I broke up! (Pause) Rob and I broke up, Chelsea. A month ago. We haven't been together for a while.

CHELSEA

I didn't know that.

ANDREA

Of course you didn't, I never see you anymore.

CHELSEA

Jess never told me.

ANDREA

Because he knew you would want to see me.

CHELSEA

I'm so sorry Andrea.

ANDREA

It was... really hard... especially without you there. But it's fine, Rob and I are fine, we're still friends. Kind of.

CHELSEA

And Rob told you this - about what Jess said?

ANDREA

Because he wanted you to know.

CHELSEA

Why?

ANDREA

Because we're both worried about you.

CHELSEA

Don't be. I can handle myself.

ANDREA

Chelsea-

CHELSEA

Jess and I are fine. We're happy together! I'm happy, I am the happiest I have ever been in my life so quit trying to ruin it! Okay?

ANDREA

Whatever...

(ANDREA exits)

OUTDOOR TRACK VB

CHELSEA

I did think I was happy. At least, I thought I could be happy again when everything with Jess calmed down. I felt really bad about Andrea but I just couldn't handle *another* problem. Not now. Not with everything else that I was going through. Later that same week Jess found me alone before baseball practice. He had borrowed my phone for study hall again. He came over to give it to me after school.

(JESS enters holding CHELSEA's phone)

JESS

What's this? This, a text from Nick Petersen sent at midnight on Saturday. "Tell your dad thanks again for giving me a ride home, I think we got an A on this for sure, good job."

CHELSEA

We worked on the project late that night, it was due Monday and we hadn't worked on it at all until then. It's worth 25% of my final grade. My dad drove him home after the project. It was nothing.

JESS

I told you to switch partners.

CHELSEA

Mr. Whitman wouldn't let me!

(She takes her phone back with her right hand, and he grabs her wrist with his left hand and won't let her go)

JESS

You expect me to believe that you two sat up until midnight just working on a science project. I'm not stupid! What's up?

CHELSEA

Jess, please let me go! You are the only guy I see.

(She uses her left hand to try to remove his hand from her wrist, and he grabs her left wrist, examining the ring she is wearing)

JESS

How about I take that ring back? I don't want somebody who I can't trust having something that important to me.

CHELSEA

Nothing happened! Nick and I are just lab partners –

(He pulls her to him, tightening his grip)

JESS

Well if you love me you'll stop worrying about school and focus on what's really important. I helped you with homework and now I need you to help me with baseball by being here with me.

CHELSEA

You are really hurting my arms, please.

JESS

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. I just get so jealous when I see you with other guys. Don't you know that by now? That's how people are when they are in love. Great, now you've made me late to practice. (Exits)

CHELSEA

Jess went back to practice. I hung out and waited for him. I messed around on my phone and posted a selfie I took of us on my Instagram, saying how much I cared about Jess, hoping it would improve his mood. But when I showed it to him after practice he told me that I had to delete all my social media accounts. He thought it would make it too easy for guys to find me and hit on me. He also said it wasn't safe. Lots of things seemed like they weren't safe for me anymore. He always said he was protecting me. And I thought he was. I felt tired all the time. I stopped eating much of anything, and I would get stomach aches when Jess came to pick me up. Sometimes I wanted to burst into tears, but I just didn't have the energy. I have never felt so... alone (she exits)

PINK WALL VB

ANDREA

After I had that last talk with Chelsea, I was angry. She never returned my calls or texts, she wasn't there for me when Rob and I broke up--she wasn't even the same person! I thought she was being so stupid and as much as I wanted to tell her that, I knew it wouldn't change anything. It would only make things worse. I mean, I barely got to talk with her now, if I attacked her, she would probably cut me out of her life altogether.

OUTDOOR COURTYARD VB

CHELSEA

And before I knew it...it was April. And time to get ready for prom. Jess was really excited about having gotten into this college he really wanted to go to. He got a full baseball scholarship. The spring baseball season was going really well for the team and it looked like we would be getting to the state tournament. I started to think that things were getting better now that Jess had less stress...but they didn't.

Arrow down

JESS

Hey, I picked out your flowers –(Puts his arm around her) I got this really nice orchid corsage – you can go check it out online before you go shopping. No one will have this corsage except us. I ordered it special. The most expensive one you can get.

I have the entire night planned out. I got my Dad's car, dinner for two at Carson's, and after the dance, (Places his hand on her leg) back to my house for the main event – my folks are gone for the weekend so we have my house completely to ourselves. You need to get together with Andrea so you can tell your mom you're staying with her – and we can have the entire weekend at my place. I can't wait, got to run.

CHELSEA

I was really stressed and feeling pressured. I went into the bathroom and threw up...

ARROW UP, TILED WALL VB

ANDREA

Hey I heard you in there, are you okay?

CHELSEA

I'm fine.

(Andrea starts to leave, Chelsea stops her)

So---what's up?

ANDREA

Nothing really, just getting ready for prom...

(A beat as Chelsea decides whether to tell Andrea what's going on)

CHELSEA

I better go...

ANDREA

Chelsea wait, look I need to talk to you, for real. I did something--Don't get mad, okay? It's just that I was worried about you.

CHELSEA

What did you do?

ANDREA

I talked to the school counselor about you and Jess and she wants you to stop by-

CHELSEA

Oh so what, now I need to see a counselor?!?

ANDREA

He treats you like crap ...

CHELSEA

He treats me fine!

ANDREA

He doesn't respect you, he always insulting you or telling you what to do...and, and I've seen the bruises on your arms.

CHELSEA

I'm fine!

ANDREA

Okay... then let me see your arms.

CHELSEA

What? Why?

ANDREA

Prove it-- let me see your arms.

CHELSEA

No!

(CHELSEA goes to exit)

ANDREA

Chelsea, wait!

(ANDREA follows CHELSEA and grabs her arm to get her to stay. CHELSEA is bruised where ANDREA grabs her. CHELSEA pulls away)

CHELSEA

OW! (Pause) He only did it once, okay... It was just a mistake. He was really sorry, he apologized for it and said it would never happen again... Okay?

ANDREA

Chelsea--

CHELSEA

My problems are my problems Andrea, and I don't need you interfering with my life by talking to a counselor about me. You're not helping me! I don't need help!

ANDREA

Right. Well, if you ever do, you know where to find me.

(ANDREA exits)

HALLWAY VB

CHELSEA

When I think about that now, I realize I didn't handle it that well. I mean, I know she was just trying to help, but I just felt so stupid for being in this relationship that I got defensive. And things with Jess were way more complicated for me than they may have seemed to her.

But what she said kind of made sense, so I decided it probably wasn't a good idea for me to go with Jess for the entire weekend. I knew Andrea wouldn't go along with the lie *and* I knew that my mom would be checking up on me all the time. And I just didn't want to be put in that situation anyway. I had to tell Jess, but I was scared about what he might do when I told him no.

JESS

Oh man, I am so excited for this weekend, it's going to be a blast.

CHELSEA

Yeah.

JESS

What's wrong? Aren't you excited to spend the whole weekend with me... alone?

CHELSEA

Yeah, but...

JESS

But what?

CHELSEA

I don't know. I just don't think my parents would buy me staying over at Andrea's this weekend and they always call and check up on me when I do stay overnight anywhere. I just don't want to get into trouble.

JESS

Oh, it'll be fine. I'll talk to Rob tomorrow and he can get the story straight with Andrea. No problem.

CHELSEA

Jess... no...

JESS

What?

CHELSEA

No. I'm not going to spend the weekend with you.

(He stares at her for a while. She stares back)

CHELSEA

I'm sorry.

(He abruptly gets up and begins to storm off)

JESS

Whatever.

CHELSEA

Jess-

JESS

Shut up! (exits)

BRICK VB

CHELSEA

I went outside and saw him standing by his car which was parked in the back corner of the parking lot. I wasn't sure that I really wanted to talk to him but I wanted to explain how I was feeling. Plus I hated that he was mad at me. So, I went over to him..

SCHOOL PARKING LOT VB

(CHELSEA exits and reenters. They sit in tense silence for awhile. JESS won't look at CHELSEA)

CHELSEA

Jess, I'm sorry, I just-

JESS

SORRY?!? You've planned this from the beginning, haven't you? You lead me on all year long and take all of the stuff I gave you and at the last minute you're not interested. Well, you know what? You can get the hell out of here because I'm not interested either. You're pathetic. No wonder everyone told me not to waste my time with you. I was just too nice a guy to listen. I really couldn't care less if I ever see you again.

CHELSEA

Look, Jess, please...can't we just talk about this...

JESS

No, get away from me...

CHELSEA

Jess, just listen-

JESS

No you listen, get out of here! (gets close to her)

CHELSEA

You don't understand-

JESS

I don't understand?!?

(The scene freezes as Jess reaches over to grab Chelsea by the neck. Chelsea exits the car. The action continues as she describes it)

CHELSEA

(Jess mimes the action while Chelsea narrates)

And he reached over and put his hands around my throat, and I thought he was trying to strangle me – he had his hands around my neck and was shaking me so hard. I thought he was never going to stop – Finally he shoved me, called me a nasty name, got in his car and sped off.. (JESS exits.)

I – I could hardly think – I felt like this was happening to someone else. Jess told me he loved me, and I believed him--I trusted him. How could I have been so stupid!? I don't remember much after that. I was so...confused.

Silence.

(Andrea enters, sees Chelsea and kneels down next to her. Chelsea does not respond.

Andrea holds her for a moment, then helps her sit down in the chair. She kneels and makes sure Chelsea is okay, then Andrea speaks to the audience)

ANDREA

Chelsea?

PINK WALL VB

Whenever I think of the way Chelsea looked that night it freaks me out. She had this dead expression on her face and I can't help but think of how much worse it could have been. It wasn't just luck that I showed up. I knew that Chelsea was in trouble. Rob had mentioned that Jess wanted me to lie for her so she could spend the weekend with him. I told her that I didn't think that was a good idea and she agreed. Then when I talked to Rob about everything today, I was worried for Chelsea. And it's a good thing that Jess didn't hurt her any worse than he did. Otherwise, being late could have meant really bad news. So, I called her mom to come and get us, and then Chelsea finally told her mom what had been going on. Her mom called the counselor at school the next day.

CHELSEA

It turned out okay. The next day the counselor asked me to meet with her at school. She said she had talked to Jess and that he said that we got in a fight and that he dumped me. I also heard from other students that he told everybody that I was cheating on him with Nick Petersen and that's why he dumped me. I wish I could tell you that hearing that surprised me, but it didn't.

Lots of people have helped me through this very confusing time. I realized that if you can't count on your boyfriend to be kind, that should be a red flag. An advocate helped me plan how to stay safely away from Jess and I'm seeing a counselor too. The counselor said that I should never see him again, even if he claims he has changed because it's not as simple as that. She also helped me see that none of this was my fault

and that I didn't deserve to be treated like this, no one does. I do still want the best for him, but I want the best for me, too. The bottom line is, I am really glad I am out of that relationship and have committed to never going back, which is why I'm telling you this story, because I don't want it to happen to you.

So that was my sophomore year. It was tough, but I learned a lot about myself and about the kind of relationship I deserve. I'm looking forward to another, different kind of school year. Thanks for listening. (*CHELSEA exits*)

END OF PLAY