

LISTEN - CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Kevin – is a thirty-five year old idealist and rookie high school counselor just as lost as the youth he is trying to save. After receiving his teacher certification he went back to school to get his masters in counseling and educational leadership. With only one year of student teaching in a private school and no experience counseling he is book-smart but lacks true-life experience. An unspoiled only child with strong intentions but false confidence, **Kevin** cloaks his insecurity with facial hair and preppy clothes. He is a closet homosexual and product of a phony All-American family with little love and intolerance. Though he wears a smile and unwavering optimism, he yearns for a true connection with anything. An avid drinker, self-help reader and huge fan of Tony Robbins, he thinks the latest five steps to “change your life and the lives of others” is the effective answer to everything. He fears failure, his homophobic father’s death and never truly making a difference in the lives of youth.

Principal Anders – is a fifty-eight-year-old, divorcee and cynical black man, hardened by intolerance and the lack of support throughout his life. Once a brilliant teacher with a social consciousness, he became a principal seeking more control and higher salary. Unfortunately, budget cuts, district bureaucracy and state standards have forced him to focus on the bottom line and forget how to listen to the pains of youth. Now in his final admin year before retirement, he has become more focused on covering his ass than he is on making a difference. He loves fishing, listening to Louis Armstrong and watching baseball. He fears losing a student, having his second heart attack and never making it to retirement.

Josh Jensen – is an athletic seventeen-year-old high school Junior with a heavy heart and conflicted mind. He is a sandy blonde all-American adolescent powder keg, hardened by the death of his older brother, the absence of his mother and the ex-military, racist father who drove her away. He is unusually soft spoken and simple despite being an aggressive wrestler with scholarship potential. He is a deep thinker that struggles with academics, but never with what he knows to be right. He fears joining the military, living up to his father’s expectations and never finding peace.

Perry – is a fifty-nine-year-old clean-shaven but sun crusted, retired farmer and ex-army Corporal. Since his wife’s departure after their oldest son’s death forced him to sell most of the ranch, he spends his time pampering a classic car and molding his remaining son in all the wrong ways. He is a subtle racist, homophobe and a man of few words but many opinions. He enjoys being alone, right wing talk radio and trying to overcome his failures through his son’s high school triumphs. He fears damage to his car, the country going to hell and someone piercing discovering how broken he really is.

Caleb – is a seventeen-year-old African American with the frame of a bear, the mind of a twelve year old and a heart full of love. After a successful elementary and junior high career in Special Ed, he successfully transitioned into a mainstream high school where fitting in with a 70’s afro, Tourette’s and learning disabilities is harder than simple math. School is the highlight of his day because in his broken home he must care for a drunken mother who uses physical and verbal abuse as a form of stress release. He’s a wrestler with no fire and an aspiring rapper with a style all his own. And even though his

daunting frame and trademark bright colored sunglasses make him stick out, he fears not fitting in and growing up to be someone no one cares for.

Josanna or (Josa for short) (Caleb's Mom) – is a large, over-weight, thirty-five year old African American mother of Caleb. She suffers from depression and alcoholism that stems from her early pregnancy and husband's departure because of Caleb's intellectual disability. Once a strong teen with aspirations to be a nurse, Josa's life spiraled out of control as her son's needs increased. Now that her son is grown and able to care for himself she feels that her time has past and lets life pass her by while letting him care for her. She spends her days collecting welfare, smoking cigarettes and drinking malt liquor while watching flamboyant talk shows. Despite the huge strides her son is making, she fears never having a normal son and living the life she always wanted.

Summer – is a well-off seventeen-year-old, high school senior with striking natural beauty and a drive for perfection that was planted by the adults around her. Often a loner who connects more with boys, Summer avoids attention and drama at all costs. While she appears comfortable and confident outside, this seasoned cutter hides her true insecurity with hidden scars and perfect appearance. She loves swimming as a distraction and a release but hardly as a sport. She fears failing and falling a part inside and wants nothing more than to please others and be happy.

Janice (Summer's Mom) – is a thirty-nine-year-old ex-collegiate swimmer and former Miss Delaware runner. A recent divorcee, she spent ten years absorbing emotional abuse before her husband left her for a secretary ten years her junior. She is a product of a wealthy but broken family that uses pills, wine and shopping binges to keep her anxieties at bay. She spends most of her child support on personal trainers, anti-aging products, and her BMW and most of her time with others beside her daughter. She loves being the center of attention, not being 40 and molding a perfect daughter while she fears losing control and having another man can make her feel worthless again.

Nicki – is a middle-class, seventeen-year-old high school senior from a broken family. The eldest in a family of three girls with an absent father, she desires to be popular, promiscuous, and a bitch to those that in fringe on her boys and territory. A Latina-Caucasian mix with jet-black hair, Nicki has natural looks that are made slutty with excessive make-up and a curvaceous form. She loves gossiping, stirring the pot, experimenting with drugs and sex and bashing others. She fears not being relevant, being dumped, called poor or embarrassed in public.

Kareen – is a lower-class, seventeen-year-old pawn to Nicki from a divorced family with no siblings. A junior in high school, she is a scout and manipulator that is a master of finding dirt and using it to bring others down. She is white, with sandy locks that frame a sweet face that hides sinister intentions. She loves following Nicki, seeing others fail and getting wasted. She longs to be rich, desired and the center of attention but fears Nicki, not being relevant and seen as white trash.

Jun – is a brilliant and thoughtful, mildly autistic seventeen-year-old high school Junior. An only child, born from a strict Japanese family, he is obedient to his parents and invisible to most at school. While he doesn't say much he is thinking about everything but has a difficult time reading people's emotions and fitting in. An accomplished pianist, a straight-A student, Jun is far from popular; his only friend is a three-year-old dog "Sam" that he earned by getting straight A's all through junior high. An astute observer, he

loves talking to his dog, watching nature work and pet videos online. He wants a human friend more than anything and fears making his parents unhappy, being alone and losing Sam.

Benny (Benjamin) – is a sixteen-year-old, Hispanic high school junior that has been hardened by the trauma filled environment where he is raised. He is the eldest in a single parent family and holds his Mexican roots and his pride in the highest regard. Anyone that disrespects him or his family understands that his baby face conceals a dangerous pent up rage. He is both approachable and scary at the same time; like a Pitbull, you are not sure he wants to shake or fight. A sharp thinker but shortsighted, Benny is torn by the pull of protection and financial security promised by his cousin's street gang and his obedience to his mother's religious and moral code. To Benny, education cannot buy a better life but slinging drugs can. He loves his mother, brother and sister more than anything and will do whatever it takes to protect them from his abusive father. He only fears his father, his family being harmed and what he will do if he loses control.

Braulio – is Benny's young energetic, free spirited younger brother. At ten, he's already conflicted with staying true to his roots or rejecting his native language and everything that makes him Mexican. He has a baby face and shaved head that reflects the incredible admiration he has for his Benny but not the sharp dangerous side that eldest hides. Like most young boys, he loves video games, Mexican wrestling and trying to make his serious brother laugh. He fears losing his family and death.

Maria – is the one-year-old baby sister to Braulio and Benny. Born prematurely because of a punch from her abusive father, she is now healthy and now is curious, happy and eager for attention from anyone. Since her mother works several jobs, she is often left in the care of the extended family or friends. She longs for a connection from her tired mother and is beginning to get used to the companionship of (too often) inappropriate television.

Rosa – is the thirty-three-year-old Hispanic single mother of Braulio, Maria and Benny that only knows a handful of English words. A native of Mexicali, Mexico, she met her abusive husband at her cousin's wedding and was pregnant seventeen-year-old nine months later. A devoted Christian that wouldn't dream of divorce, she lived through sixteen years of hell until a blow forced the premature birth of Maria and her to leave her husband forever. Still legally married, she works six days a week as a motel cleaning woman to provide for her family and build a home she always wanted as a child. For Rosa, her love of God comes first, her kids are second and she is always last. She loves just being a mother and fears losing her children to the violence that surrounds her.

Marcos – is a twenty-seven-year-old Latino gang-banger. The second cousin of Benny by marriage, he is notorious hell raiser and black sheep of the family. He was expelled from HS at fifteen for breaking the jaw of a teacher attempting to restrain him during an altercation with a black student. The main recruiter and meth Lieutenant for an aggressive Mexican gang, he has a shaved head, narrow hawk eyes, a thin goatee, various clan tats and a menacing build. He is no stranger to prison and has no fear of the law. He loves getting high, sex and porn, making the gang stronger and making cash. He fears losing control over others and his rank in the gang.

Hector – is the thirty-eight-year-old, alcoholic and abusive father of Benny, Braulio and Maria. He is a high school drop out that makes his living by assisting a local mechanic/chop shop and completing small time "cash" jobs for shady characters. A product of an abusive household, Hector has been physically and emotionally abusive to his wife who he has been separated from for the past year. He loves getting his drink on, gambling away his paycheck and trying to force Rosa back to him. He fears dying alone.

Cal – is a white, eighteen-year-old, middle class bully. He has a chiseled physique and striking looks that mask a pent up rage spawned from years of physical and emotional abuse from his older brother Austin. He is an avid user of performance enhancement substances and weekend binge drinker. He loves alone with his brother after his parents were killed in a car accident. He grew up with Josh since they were 3 years old and were best friends until they started competing in sports. What was left of their relationship was dissolved when he slept with Josh's girlfriend, Nicki, after a night of drinking while Josh was visiting family. Cal loves lifting weights, shooting guns, partying and breaking in young girls. He fears his brother, being small and public embarrassment.

Curtis – is the thirty-five-year-old older brother to Cal. He is, tall, well built, and has a short fuse fueled by performance enhancement substances and his high stress job on the force. Once an All-Area Wrestling Star and Football star, he uses brute force to get what he wants. A proud racist with a drinking problem, he was engaged before his wife cheated left him for a teacher who he nearly beat to death. He loves hunting, four-wheeling and drinking with buddies. He fears his high school accomplishments will be forgotten, leaving his hometown and his brother's success overshadowing his legacy.

Coach Brad Tucker – is a white, forty-three-year-old PE teacher, JV Football coach and head wrestling coach. A previous 163 lb collegiate wrestling champion, he is in excellent shape and still possesses the winning mindset. Born from a closed-minded family, he has little love for the lower class and often coaches-up the athletically inclined and patronizes the weak and challenged. He is married to a submissive wife and has two younger boys that he is molding to be just like him. He loves his hair cut short, wearing visors, coaching, golfing and tending to his hobby cattle. He fears losing his league championship title, old age and not being a good father.

English Teacher - is a seasoned thirty-seven-year-old, Asian teacher. She has youthful look, thin frame, and strong moral code a devotion to the rules. A Princeton grad, she gave up law school to make a difference instead of a higher salary. She has been teaching for over ten years and despite the rigorous state standards she still manages to find creative ways to inspire her class. Her passion for teaching is still strong but her faith in the students is waning. She loves reading Aldos Huxley, JD Salinger, and inspiring youth to write. She fears death, failing and never getting married.

Nori Soto (Jun's Mother) – is Jun's quiet, forty-four-year-old mother. She is thin, naturally beautifully but often expressionless. Born and raised in Japan, she migrated to America when her husband was offered a job at a scientific research and development company sixty miles from her house. Although she loves the city, she agreed to live in the rural setting to make her nature-loving husband happy. While she is college educated, her husband would rather her see her care for their beautiful landscaping and spotless house. She loves playing the piano, attending the symphony in the city and having her husband home. She fears angering her husband, losing her only child and never moving back to Japan.

| **Shin Soto (Jun's Father)** – is Jun's forty-eight-year-old, stoic and mildly autistic father. He is tall, lanky and completely disconnected from his son. A workaholic with a brilliant mind for numbers, he migrated to the small town where they live to serve as an analyst for a scientific research and development company. He leaves the house at 5:30am and commutes to work one hour in each direction and is often not home for dinner or Saturdays. He sees his on Sunday's and when he arrives home often just before Jun retires for bed. He loves crunching numbers, logic puzzles and being close to nature. He fears flying, being too far from home and his son's poor performance in school.