“PARTNERS”

Written by

Jake Dreiling

PARTNERS

FADE IN:

1. INT. HALLWAY – DAY

A hallway in school. School has been out for about 15 minutes, and there are the usual odd students going to tutorials or just hanging out. The sun is backlighting the silhouette of Moon Tanner, 15, standing in the hallway, staring at a flyer on the wall. Moon is short for Moonglow. She is the opposite of shy. When she enters a room, she infectiously gets everyone’s attention.

We then see the poster from Moon’s POV. It’s a flyer for a LGBTQ meeting. Moon stares at the poster, wondering if she should attend. A close up of Moon, debating. Close up on the “Q” in the poster. “Questioning” is where Moon is right now.

She looks down the hallway. A group of girls are standing by a locker, one of which is Ashley Williams. Moon stares at the group, and then at Ashley, perhaps too long. She’s got something for Ashley, possibly a crush. She’s not sure.

From the stairwell, laughter & sounds are emanating. They are loud, obnoxious and male.

JACK

(from the stairwell)

She did not!

The stairwell door bursts open, and into the hallway walks Carter Ryan, 16, Jack Flynn, 16 and David Hackney, 15. Jack looks like the embodiment of everything cool. He really is that cool. All the girls want to date him. Carter wants to be him. Carter is always trying to be the womanizer. Doesn’t want his friends to know that is all a show. David thinks Carter is as cool as Jack and tries to be like Carter. He is definitely not cool.

CARTER

Dude, she absolutely did.

(puts up pinky)

She’s wrapped around. Tight.

DAVID

Yeah, she is! Tighter than a watch!

Carter looks at David for a second. Jack just smiles and pats David on the back. Moon overhears the last bit of this conversation. She turns towards the group.

CARTER

She wants the Carter.

JACK

You got yourself a good one there.

May want to hang onto her for a

while.

CARTER

I don’t know. Girl like that? I

didn’t even have to take her

somewhere nice.

Moon steps into the path of the guys. Gets in Carter’s face.

MOON

Carter, next time take your mom out

somewhere where they take your order

at the table.

Jack and David start laughing. Carter is not amused. Moon stands her ground.

CARTER

She’s busy cooking and cleaning,

doing my laundry. At home where

women should be.

Moon has had enough. She looks Carter up and down one more time, considers whether she should swing or move on. Enter Christine Meyers, Moon’s best friend. Confident. Likes boys a lot. She walks up to Moon, hoping to join the conversation. She has no idea what just happened.

CHRISTINE

Hey Moon!

She looks at Carter, a bit doe-eyed.

CHRISTINE (cont’d)

Hey, Carter.

Carter lets go of his stand-off with Moon, puts on the charm.

CARTER

What’s up Christine? You look good

today.

CHRISTINE

(trying to play it cool)

Thanks. I try.

JACK

Come on, Carter. We gotta head.

(with a smile)

Take it easy, Moon. See ya

Christine.

Carter, David, and Jack continue down the hall, with the occasional laugh or push that happens between high school boys.

CHRISTINE

(watching Carter go)

Wow. Carter Ryan actually

complimented me. Nice.

MOON

(incredulous)

What?

CHRISTINE

(defensive)

What?

Summer Sweeney, 15, walks up behind Christine. She is full of attitude, perpetually pissed at the world.

SUMMER

Please tell me that you guys were

cool.

MOON

I was fine. Carter’s the uncool one.

CHRISTINE

Jack is cool. Maybe he’s not as bad as you think.

MOON

He’s an asshat. Will always be an asshat. I don’t know why either of you’d want anything to do with him.

CHRISTINE

(to Moon)

That reminds me. I’m supposed to tell you what you missed in art class.

MOON

Something big?

CHRISTINE

Sort of. We have this partner thing to do.

MOON

Okay, so who’s my partner?

CUT TO:

1. INT. ART CLASS – DAY

Art Class. Clean up is going on at the moment, a few minutes before the bell. Moon is at Mr. Orion’s desk. Mr. Orion, 42, is chill, but follows the rules. He likes to keep his classroom “zero conflict.”

MOON

Carter?

Mr. Orion looks up from his laptop. He knows where this is going.

MOON (cont’d)

Is there any way I can switch

partners?

MR. ORION

Not at this point. Sorry.

The bell rings. Students start to file out.

MOON

We really don’t get along.

MR. ORION

You were absent. Give him a chance.

If it doesn’t work out, we’ll try to switch.

Mr. Orion grabs some materials and walks into the supply closet to put them away.

Moon starts to walk out. All of the other students have left, except for Ashley. She’s still packing up her things. Moon is a deer in headlights. Her usual personality is shut down in the face of her crush(?) She timidly walks up to Ashley.

MOON

Hey, Ashley?

Ashley turns around, brightens when she sees Moon.

ASHLEY

Moon! How’s it going?

MOON

(a blush)

Huh?… yeah. Good. Um, do you know what this project is? What we’re supposed to do?

ASHLEY

Yeah. So it’s a collaborative

painting. You and your partner each start with a sketch, something personal, and then find a way to merge the two images into one painting. Who’s your partner?

MOON

Carter.

ASHLEY

(shrugs)

Could be worse.

Mr. Orion walks out of the supply closet, about to exit. He gives Moon a “See? I’m not the only one.” look. Walks out into the hallway.

MOON

No offense. He’s a misogynist. Hates women.

ASHLEY

I don’t know him that well, so I can’t say. I hear him say stuff, but it’s probably just for show.

MOON

What do you mean you don’t know him? Aren’t you out with Jack and Bianca and all those people every weekend?

ASHLEY

I’ve been to a few parties, but not every weekend.

MOON

Sure. You’ve probably got a whole bunch of dates lined up.

Moon’s eyes widen. Was this too obvious? Ashley doesn’t seem to notice, but looks off.

ASHLEY

Actually, I haven’t been on a date in ages.

MOON

Seriously?

ASHLEY

No one ever asks me out.

MOON

Wow. I got that one completely wrong.

ASHLEY

(referring to Carter)

Well, there ya go.

(she turns to leave)

You should give Carter a chance. It’s kinda the whole point of the project. Setting aside misconceptions. Ya know?

(she leaves)

Moon contemplates this. As she thinks about it, Carter appears in the door. He stops, intimidated somewhat. Moon looks at him.

CARTER

Forgot my charger.

Moon doesn’t answer. After a moment, he walks over to the wall, pulls out his charger, and is about to leave.

MOON

Wait.

Carter stops. Is she going to lay into him again? Moon makes up her mind, walks toward Carter.

MOON

I…apologize for before.

Carter is a bit shocked. He nods.

CARTER

It’s cool.

MOON

I heard that we were… partners.

CARTER

I guess.

MOON

Listen. I don’t like you, and you sure don’t like me. But if you’re willing, I guess I can work with you on this.

CARTER

Cool. When do you want to get together?

MOON

How about we meet in here for lunch tomorrow?

Carter nods, exits.

3. EXT. COURTYARD – DAY

Christine, Summer and Moon are sitting on the steps of the courtyard in mid conversation.

CHRISTINE

So you made up with Carter.

MOON

I guess.

SUMMER

Good. Maybe now we’ll finally get to do something interesting this weekend.

CHRISTINE

Well, not this weekend.

MOON

Why not?

SUMMER

Oh, yeah. I forgot. Special weekend.

MOON

What’s so special about it?

CHRISTINE

Oh, come on Moon. What’s he got planned?

MOON

Carter? How would I know?

SUMMER

So it’s a surprise?

MOON

What are you talking about?

CHRISTINE

Your anniversary! With Carter. He hasn’t even hinted at anything? Moon?

But Moon is in shock. The world is spinning.

CUT TO:

1. INT. MOON’s BEDROOM – NIGHT

Moon wakes up, in a panic. Then lays back down, frustrated and exhausted.

5. EXT. BUS LANE – DAY

Once again Christine, Summer and Moon are in mid conversation. They are walking down the sidewalk.

SUMMER

Dammit, Moon, how are we supposed to become friends with the right people if you’re always screwing it up?

MOON

You mean Carter? Why would you want to be friends with him? He treats women like garbage!

SUMMER

Garbage, really?

CHRISTINE

I think he’s kinda cute.

MOON

Christine!

CHRISTINE

(defensive)

What?

SUMMER

Just don’t screw it up for us.

CHRISTINE

(to MOON)

Forget how he acts. You have to admit, he’s cute.

Moon hesitates. Summer and Christine see it as a possibility that their friend thinks he’s cute. Moon hesitates because she’s not sure in that area.

MOON

Gross.

6. EXT. UPPER COURTYARD – DAY (Cross cut with scene above.)

Jack and Carter are sitting on the rock wall, waiting for Jack’s girlfriend, Bianca.

JACK

So, now you’re partners with her?

CARTER

Yeah. Can you believe it?

JACK

At least she’ll keep you in line.

CARTER

Man, whatever. She doesn’t know what’s about to happen to her. Imma give her the full treatment.

JACK

Really? Seems like she was the one giving.

CARTER

She won’t be able to resist. If she’s lucky, she’ll be my Bianca.

JACK

Yeah, well, Bianca is great.

CARTER

Yo, dude, Bianca is one fiiiine –

JACK

Hey, Carter? Easy, dude.

CARTER

Sorry. Sorry.

Bianca Johnson, 17, walks out of the building. She is cool too, but is more passive-aggressive, a bit of a bully. She walks up to Jack and Carter.

BIANCA

What’s on your mind gentleman?

JACK

We’re talking about Carter’s new potential – Moon.

BIANCA

Carter. You can do so much better.

CARTER

I know. But I see her as a challenge.

BIANCA

She’s challenged all right.

JACK

Hey, go easy on Moon. She’s cool.

BIANCA

She is not cool, babe. We -

(gestures to everyone)

are cool. She’s too weird to hang

out with us.

CARTER

Just wait. You’ll see.

7. INT. ART ROOM – DAY

Lunch in the art room. Moon has a Tupperware full of a pasta dish, Carter has a slice of pizza. They are both looking over a bunch of sketches. Moon picks up a sketch near Carter.

MOON

See, I love this one. Put that with the other one -

Carter picks up one of Moon’s drawings.

CARTER

Yes! And then we can put yours on the other side, and we’re done.

They both exchange a look. This just might work…

MOON

I’ll put together a rough sketch during Lit, then we can start painting.

David opens the door. He peeks in, sees Carter.

DAVID

Car-ter! Wassup, bro? Whatcha doin’ in here?

Carter freezes. He tries to explain why he’s in the art room during lunch. He’s caught between Moon and David.

CARTER

Dave! Uh, well…

DAVID

Bro! Say no more! I’ll leave you alone with your special lady friend.

David gives Carter a wink and nod, and then laughs like a dirty old man. He starts to walk out. Moon looks at Carter for a second, then charges into the hallway after David.

8. INT. E100 HALL – DAY.

David, unsuspecting, is doing his best to strut away from the art room. Moon comes bursting out of the room, sees David, and charges after him.

MOON

Hey! Get back here, now!

David sees her coming, makes a half-hearted attempt to run, trips over himself. Moon looms over him.

MOON

You. Are. Wrong! Don’t come in there acting like I’m some slut! I will end you!

DAVID

Okay! Relax!

They continue, ad libbing. People are gathering around, taking out phones. Through the crowd, Summer cuts through. She grabs Moon, pulls her through the crowd, and into a vestibule.

SUMMER

Moon! What were you thinking!?

MOON

Get off me, Summer.

SUMMER

No. You’re going to ruin it for us.

Moon and Summer face off. Moon slowly pulls Summer’s hands off of her.

MOON

Then go find new friends.

Summer walks off, away from the art room. The crowd starts to disperse. Moon walks around the corner, and almost runs into Jack.

JACK

Hey Moon! You okay?

MOON

Yes. I’m fine.

JACK

Look. Don’t let Dave mess with your day. He can be an idiot. Right, Dave?

David walks up, sheepishly. He’s real sorry.

DAVID

Sorry Moon.

Moon starts to cool down. David leaves. Carter is leaning against the wall, looks up at Moon. Jack looks over his shoulder at what Moon is looking at.

JACK

See ya around.

Jack leaves. Carter comes over.

CARTER

Sorry about Dave. He can be an idiot.

MOON

So I’ve heard.

CARTER

I’ll be honest. I always thought you were kinda scary. I mean, you are pretty…

Moon gives him a look: “You better not start that again.”

CARTER (cont’d)

That’s not what I mean. You’re really good at this art thing. I’m not, but I never really put time into it. I’m actually glad we ended up partners.

MOON

Thanks, Carter. You’re okay, when you’re not with your friends. I like what we’ve created. This project.

Lunch bell rings.

CARTER

So, after school, we paint?

MOON

See ya then.

9. INT. THEATRE ATRIUM - DAY

A close up on a clock. Somewhere between 3:45-4:15. Several students walk out of the music hall into the courtyard.

10. INT. SCENE SHOP – DAY

Carter & Moon are in the scene shop, working on their painting. They seem to be in sync, in the zone. Neither are speaking to each other. They are both concentrating on the paint & the paper. From the hallway, Bianca enters.

BIANCA

So this is where you’ve been hiding.

Carter quickly looks up from the painting, then back to it.

CARTER

Hey Bianca.

BIANCA

(genuine)

So, how’s the project?

(she looks at the painting) Nice! Looks good.

MOON

Thanks. Once we started working on it, it just flowed.

Bianca is annoyed. She almost betrays herself, but keeps up appearances. Carter starts to look around the table, lifting papers.

CARTER

Where is that first sketch I showed you?

Moon looks around the table.

MOON

I don’t see it. Did we leave it in the art room?

CARTER

Yeah, I think so. I’ll be back in a sec.

Carter walks out of the Scene Shop. Moon continues to work, while Bianca checks to see if Carter left. Now sure that he is gone, Bianca moves behind Moon, almost in her bubble. Moon notices her but keeps working.

BIANCA

You’ve got a good eye for it.

MOON

Thanks. Carter’s helped a lot on making this thing realized.

BIANCA

Sure he has. But you’re obviously the talented one.

MOON

He’s helped me as much as I’ve helped him. As much as I hate to admit it, we work well together.

BIANCA

Yeah. I noticed.

Bianca moves to the other side of the table, facing Moon.

BIANCA (cont’d)

It’s not surprising, though.

MOON

Huh?

BIANCA

You and Carter. Working well together. It’s how it starts.

Moon finally looks up from the painting.

MOON

How what starts?

BIANCA

How Carter gets his girls.

MOON

(laughs)

No. That’s not what’s going on here.

BIANCA

Really.

MOON

It’s not. For once, Carter is not being that guy.

BIANCA

Wow. I thought you would be smarter than that. Carter’s just pretending to be nice.

MOON

Whatever. How do you know?

BIANCA

I’ve seen it. He’s actually pretty predictable. Lemme guess, he invited you to the party this weekend, didn’t he?

Moon thinks hard. Was there an invite? If there was, she didn’t remember one.

BIANCA

Not yet? Well, here’s a preview. He’ll invite you, you’ll end up going, he’ll bring some libations for you to enjoy. Once he’s got you good and sauced, he’ll invite you upstairs. And…

Bianca makes a scraping sound while pantomiming carving a notch in a bedpost.

BIANCA (cont’d)

Another one conquered.

MOON

Well, he hasn’t asked. So you’re wrong.

BIANCA

(feigned concern)

Maybe I am. I hope I’m wrong. I’ll leave you to it. Just be careful.

Bianca exits. As she leaves, we see Bianca smile, her back to Moon as she walks out of the Scene Shop. Carter walks in right past her, with the drawing.

CARTER

Found it. It’d fallen under the table.

Moon looks at Carter, tries to see if she can see the lie on his face. Carter goes back to work.

MOON

So, what’s your plans this weekend?

CARTER

Not much. Hanging out.

(he remembers)

There’s a party Saturday. Hey, you should come out.

Moon is hurt. She gives Carter one more chance.

MOON

No, that’s okay. I wouldn’t fit in with your crowd anyway.

CARTER

Forget that. We’ll go together. No one will say anything if you’re with me.

Moon has had it. She looks at Carter, picks up the drawing she made, the collaboration of their two ideas, the symbol of their partnership, and storms out of the scene shop.

CARTER

Hey, Moon!

But she is gone.

11. INT. MUSIC HALL/ATRIUM – DAY

She walks down the music hall, into the theater. She tries the door, the second, the third. All of them locked. She screams and pulls on the door handle violently. A second later, someone cautiously opens one of the doors.

12. INT. GALLERY – DAY

She pushes past the person, walks up the stairs to the landing above the gallery. She sits, trying not to cry. She looks at the drawing she made. All of the last couple of days have been a lie. She looks again, the sadness being replaced by anger. She rips the drawing in half, splitting her side roughly from his side.

13. INT. SCENE SHOP - DAY

Carter is at a table, trying to work. It’s obvious he’s not into it, his mind is elsewhere. Moon walks into the scene shop. She needs to get her stuff. She sees Carter, but decides that she can’t sit with him. Carter looks over at her, goes back to work. Carter looks up again. Moon is staring off into space, contemplating whether or not just to leave her stuff behind. Carter gets up, goes over to Moon.

CARTER

So, partner, are we –

Carter attempts to put his hands on Moon’s shoulders, she violently turns away.

MOON

Knock it off.

CARTER

Okay, okay. You don’t want the soothing hands of Carter, I get it. Who knows? You might just like it –

MOON

That’s it! Why can’t you figure this out? I’m not into you. No one is into you!

CARTER

Hold on –

MOON

No! You try to be this guy, this player, but you’re not. I’ve been around the real you. Where is he?

Carter just looks at her. She’s hit him hard with this. He doesn’t know how to respond.

MOON

I’m done. I don’t care what grade we get. I’m leaving.

CARTER

Wait. Just wait.

Moon stops. She isn’t ready to leave just yet.

CARTER

It’s just… look. You’re right. That’s not me. Not the real me. I’m not sure if I even know who the real me is anymore. It’s weird, but the only time I feel like I can be myself, is when I’m talking to you. Someone I never cared about before this stupid project. For some reason, you’re who I can talk to.

MOON

Please, stop.

CARTER

I mean it.

MOON

Whatever. I’m just another girl, another conquest.

CARTER

Truth be told, I haven’t even gone out with that many girls. Not near what I’m sure you’ve heard. That’s not me, Moon.

Moon looks at Carter. She sees that he is genuine. She sits back down in her seat near her drawing.

MOON

We’re all lost. You’re not the only one.

CARTER

Yeah, I know.

MOON

I don’t get it either. I hate you. I mean, really hate you with every fiber of my being. I hate the way you talk about girls, I hate what you stand for, what you represent. And yet, I feel like I can tell you things. Things I can’t tell anyone else…

Carter nods. He smiles. It’s genuine, inviting.

MOON

I think I have a thing for Ashley.

Carter has to think for a moment. Then it hits him that Ashley’s a girl. The old Carter comes out.

CARTER

Wow. That is awesome. I am in full support of anything involving two girls.

Moon gets up to leave again. She starts walking out.

MOON

I can’t…

Carter follows her out the door.

14. INT. MUSIC HALLWAY - DAY

CARTER

Moon, stop! I’m sorry.

MOON

No! You don’t get to be sorry! I tell you this thing, this very private thing -

CARTER

I’m –

MOON

And you go right back into being that other asshole! I need the other guy. The one I can talk to.

Moon turns to go. Carter stops her.

CARTER

Okay! Just don’t leave. I’m trying here.

Moon sees that truth coming out again. But she doesn’t budge.

MOON

It’s just… I can’t talk to anyone about it. None of my friends would understand. I just like being around her. I can’t describe it. It started with this tiny feeling, deep down. And ever since whenever I’m around her it grows, and at this point it’s just too big to keep in anymore.

CARTER

So, why keep it in?

MOON

Because I don’t know. I don’t know what this is. I don’t know why you and I are…

(she trails off)

This sucks.

Moon walks away again, back into the scene shop.

CARTER

Moon, wait.

15. INT. SCENE SHOP - DAY

Moon walks down the stairs. She walks towards the door to the theater hallway.

CARTER

Just stop! Please!

Moon stops. She doesn’t face him. He walks down the steps, into the scene shop. Looks at the painting. It gives him strength.

CARTER (cont’d)

I understand. It’s like with me. I can hear myself say things. Stupid things. But I don’t know how else to act around my friends. Jack seems to always have everything figured out. And Dave and I, we just always seem to be playing catch-up. I don’t wanna be that guy you think I am.

There is a pause. Moon walks over to the painting. She looks at it. Looks at CARTER.

MOON

I really like this piece.

Carter hands her a brush.

CARTER

Then let’s finish it.

Moon takes the brush from Carter, looks at it for a second. She smiles. They both get back to work.

16. EXT. COURTYARD – DAY

Lunch. Carter is sitting with Christine and Moon at one of the red round tables in the courtyard. Jack & Bianca walk up to the table.

BIANCA

What’s goin’ on, Carter?

CARTER

Hey guys.

JACK

Dude, you missed an epic party Saturday night!

BIANCA

Yeah. I guess you guys never made it out.

CHRISTINE

What party?

BIANCA

Ask Moon. She was invited.

(to Carter)

Must’ve found something better to do with your time.

CARTER

We weren’t together this weekend.

BIANCA

That’s cold, Moon.

Moon looks at Bianca intensely. Then starts to laugh.

MOON

You can relax Bianca. Carter and I didn’t hook up. We’re not dating. In fact, we’re still not really friends.

CARTER

True.

MOON  
But we do understand one another. Mostly. A couple of days ago I thought I knew Carter, who he was, what he was about. But I was wrong. And he was wrong about me. Mostly. I don’t know. Maybe one day we will be friends, but for now I’m fine with just being understood.

JACK

Very cool, Moon. Right on.

Bianca slaps her boyfriend playfully.

BIANCA

You’re supposed to take my side!

Bianca starts to walk away.

JACK

Hold up, what’s your side here?

Jack smiles, nods to the others, and walks after her. Moon watches him go. At another table, she spots Ashley. As she’s looking, another guy comes and sits down next to Ashley, and gives her a hug. She kisses him on the cheek.

Moon is crestfallen. It’s at this moment she realizes that at the least, she did have a crush on Ashley. Whether that makes her gay or not, she doesn’t care. It still stings.

Carter looks at Christine and nods toward Moon. Christine looks over to where Moon is looking. She gives her friend a reassuring look.

CHRISTINE

Hey, you okay?

Moon looks at Christine, somewhat panicked. Does she know? Christine looks at Moon, in full support. Moon is relieved, but still hurt about Ashley. Carter gets up.

CARTER

All right, I’m out. Take it easy, Moon.

Carter pats her on the back. As he starts to leave,

CARTER (cont’d)

(to Christine)

You comin’?

Christine tries to contain herself. She looks at Moon as if to say, “Are you okay with this?” Moon smiles.

MOON

Go on. I kinda need a moment anyway.

Christine gets up to leave. Moon is left alone at the table.

From the other direction, Jade Snyder, 16, enters. Jade stays away from the center of things at the school, but is always aware of what’s going on. She isn’t shy about who she is.

JADE

Anyone sittin’ here?

Moon looks at Jade.

MOON

No, feel free.

Moon is still looking in Ashley’s direction. Jade notices.

JADE

Boy trouble?

MOON

No. Not really.

JADE

Yeah. I’m not really into boys, either.

Moon looks at Jade. Did she just say what she thinks she said? Jade looks at her, smile-shrugs. Moon offers her hand.

MOON

I’m Moon.

JADE

Jade.

Jade shakes her hand. They both look at each other.

Moon smiles.

FADE OUT.

THE END