

## The Leader of the Class

Rachel, Davis and Angela, the woman who played Big Mama in the play, all stand off to the side clustered in a group. Rory is standing apart from them, downstage. She is wearing her letterman jacket and otherwise dressed as she normally is. She is looking forlorn and fingering a ring on a chain around her neck.

The group slowly approaches but stays off to the side. They are whispering amongst themselves. Davis asks the group, "Is she really going out with you know who?"

Angela prods Rachel, "There she is. You should ask her."

Rachel hangs back, reluctant, but after Davis and Angela push her in Rory's direction, she takes one step forward. "Hey Rory, is that Maggie's ring you're wearing?"

Rory doesn't turn around to face the group; instead, she keeps looking at the necklace and mutters, "Mmhmm."

"It must be awesome working with her, huh? Are you seeing her after school today?"

"Mmhmm."

The whole group speaks as one: "How'd you meet her again?"

Rory stops touching the chain around her neck and looks off into the distance. She starts to softly sing:

Rory: "I met her in class one day.  
She walked up and called me a smartass,  
you understand?"

Group: "She did this in class?"

Rory: "That's when I fell for, the leader of the class."

"The dean was always trying to shut us down.  
He said we were being an embarrassment all over town.  
They said it was wrong, but I knew our love was strong.  
That's why I fell for the leader of the class.

One day the dean said this won't do  
My Maggie had to tell me we were through  
I stood there and asked her why, I was trying not to cry  
She said, I'm sorry I hurt you. The leader of the class.

She sort of smiled but there was no kiss goodbye  
I tried not to let the tears show  
As she walked away on that afternoon  
I wanted to beg her to stay, but I never said it  
Now she'll never know. Wait! Wait! Wait!

(Rory is visibly upset)

I felt so lost, I didn't know what to do  
Remembering all that we had been through.  
In school they all point and stare,  
They call me names, but I don't care  
I will always love her, the leader of the class.

Rory withdraws back into looking sad again. The group whisper amongst themselves, then shove Rachel forward again. She tugs on Rory's sleeve.

"Hey, she's still alive, right?"

Rory nods. "Yeah."

"And she loves you, right?"

"Yeah."

"And you love her?" Rachel asks.

"Yeah."

"Then what's your problem?"

"She wants to leave." Rory says sadly.

"She wants to leave you?"

"No, just here."

"Aren't you going with her?"

"I want to."

"Then why don't ya?"

"She hasn't asked me yet." Rory continues to look down and away.

"Why not?"

"I think she doesn't think I want to go with her."

"Well you do, right?"

"Yeah."

"Then why don't you ask her?"

"You think I should?" Rory asks tentatively.

"What have you got to lose?"

"Everything."

"That's the spirit!" Rachel nudges Rory forward, towards where Maggie is sitting in the front row. "Go on."

Rory looks over her shoulder at Rachel, hesitant, but Rachel nods and Rory turns back around to face Maggie, crouches down, then leaps off the stage, which makes Maggie jump a little, then she chuckles to herself. Rory takes the necklace from around her neck, walks up to Maggie, bends down on one knee in front of Maggie's seat and hold the ring out to her.

"Maggie, my place is with you. No matter what. Nothing is as important to me as loving you. You are my heart and my soul and I would be lost without you. I did this stupid song just to tell you that. I love you so much. Will you marry me?" She presents the ring, chain and all, to Maggie.

Maggie is smiling but has tears running down her cheeks which she wipes away with the back of her hand, then she takes the ring from Rory. It's a thin gold band with a small diamond, nothing too ostentatious or fancy. Maggie thinks it's perfect. "It wasn't a stupid song."

"Oh no, it was."

Maggie laughs. "Okay, it was a stupid song. But I got it. I want you next to me as I take this next step."

"Maggie...?"

"Yes Rory, I will marry you." She puts her arms around Rory's neck and Rory pulls Maggie to her in a crushing hug and pulls her out of her seat, causing Maggie to lose her footing and fall into Rory, who topples over backwards with Maggie in her arms. They lay on the theatre floor, laughing together, while there are shocked gasps and laughter behind them. Maggie kisses Rory, then sits up.

"Like I was trying to say, we're in this together." Rory grins.

Maggie takes Rory's face in her hands and says, "Wherever you go, I go love, no matter what." Then she kisses Rory softly on the lips, then puts her arms around her and her head on Rory's shoulder.

Behind them on stage, the group breaks into a spirited rendition of "I Will Follow Him."

Rory starts shaking with laughter, as that had not been part of the plan. She hollers above the din, "Really? Really guys? As if it wasn't cheesy enough."

Maggie pulls Rory to her feet and once standing, puts her arms around Rory's waist, ignoring the singers. "I love you so much. Come on, let's go make out on my couch."

Rory's eyes light up. "Now that's the real reason I proposed." Maggie smiles, then puts the chain around her neck and her arm around Rory's waist.

Rory turns back to the stage. "Thanks guys!" The group stops singing and yell their congratulations and Rachel and Davis blow kisses.

Before they can get out the door, Rachel calls out, "Hey Rory?"

Rory turns and looks over her shoulder. "Yeah, Rach?"

"Way to go, douchebag."

"Did she just call you douchebag?" Maggie asks.

Rory looks down at Maggie, "It's okay," then she turns back to Rachel, "Thanks. I love you too." They share a smile, then Rory and Maggie leave the theatre.