

All I'm Asking

Annotated Playlist

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0VzoN57NOoumIJOKuVAFAm?si=04974334e8564729>

Best Friend - Jason Mraz

Naomi and Jessamine

(Naomi and Jackson)

Count On Me - Bruno Mars

Naomi and Jessamine

Naomi and Jackson

Sayeed and Tracy

The book club members

Connection - OneRepublic

This song is all about how we form connections with others in nontraditional ways and how the internet has both made interacting with others more challenging because it's easy to hide behind a screen, but to also strengthen and expand our connections with one another and the bigger world around us.

What About Us - Pink

One of the elementary schools I was working at during the time I was drafting this story would put on a musical recital for each grade level. They would each have a theme and they'd sing several songs with fun arrangements (that school has a great music teacher! Shout out to Scyler). I don't actually remember the theme of the fifth grade performance, but this was one of the songs and I can still picture the dance for the instrumental sections of this song. :) Anyway, it made me think of Naomi's students, Reese, and even Leyanna. I think it's common for society to look upon students in Alternative Learning Centers as "bad" kids - kicked out for behavior reasons or "juvenile delinquents" when for most of them it simply means the traditional setting didn't work for them. I did initial practicums in an ALC, later I taught one year in a self-contained classroom for a small group of students in an ALC-type environment, and then later still, had many students in my online teaching job who were learning through an ALC program. While Pink's song is about youth in general, it speaks to me especially for students who are easily forgotten.

The Outsiders - NEEDTOBREATHE

This song makes me think of every single character in this book, including the Polar Cafe baristas (Tracy and Sayeed) and all the book club members. Each of them has a foot on the

"outside". Also, my favorite line in the song is "Just because I'm wrong, it don't make you right." It's something I try to remember. Just because someone else is wrong, doesn't mean I'm right.

Sad Songs (Say So Much) - Elton John

I love Elton John and this song came on in some other Spotify playlist or maybe even Pandora and I thought, YES, THIS is a song Tracy would want to play to exemplify another failed potential relationship (or simply after a single bad date, haha). I find it highly singable and I'd be able to listen to it on repeat, tbh.

High and Low - Joshua Radin

*Naomi and Jessamine
(Naomi and Jackson)*

Never Gonna Let You Down - Colbie Caillat

Naomi and Jessamine

What Would I Do Without You - Drew Holcomb and the Neighbors

*Naomi and Jessamine
Naomi and Jackson*

I Go Through - O.A.R.

While I think this is eventually Naomi, I mostly have Jessamine in mind for this song. There's no going "around" things for her. She goes through.

Stand By You - Rachel Platten

Naomi and Jessamine, but also Jackson for Naomi

Safe Haven - The Alternate Routes

This one is all about Jackson for Naomi. "There's a brand new crib where our old desk used to be" definitely reflects the unexpected parenthood both he and Naomi faced, but honestly, this whole song speaks to me of Jackson and Naomi's relationship. I <3 Jackson. I had debated not having them ever come together as a couple again since I think it's a real and beautiful thing to see co-parenting, and I do love Lanh. But in the end, when I thought about Naomi and Jackson's origin story with Leyanna, well, I just needed them together. :)

In the Blood - John Mayer

This one's all Naomi. It's hard to have parents who are a mess (both apart and together) and don't really know what to do with a kid. Two lines that really make my heart go out to Naomi: "And what about this feeling that I'm never good enough?" and "Does a broken home become another broken family?"

Come Get It Bae- John Legend

Remember the scene where Jackson is talking to Naomi in the car while Leyanna is with her and then later he texts, but the car reads the text out loud? GET IT, GIRL. But also, Lanh is hot, so he deserves a song in this playlist.

Asking For a Friend - Devin Dawson

This one made me think of Jackson after Naomi finds out he is Chester. I imagine him contrite as he approaches Naomi for forgiveness.

Going With You - Joshua Radin

"Wherever you're going, I'm going too." This one's a little bit of everyone. It's a closing credits song. :)

Couldn't Ask for a Better Friend - Michael Hogan

Naomi and Jessamine

All I'm Asking - Band of Heathens

In truth, this was not originally on this playlist, but when All I'm Asking first released, I was doing some Amazon searches and this was always on the same search results page and now, even though it's not a perfect fit for the story, I can't not sing this song in my head when I talk about the book, lol. The refrain is kind of catchy!