EXT. OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Hazel waits for her Mom’s car to appear.

Across the parking lot, she sees Isaac (off camera) going at it with a redhead, MONICA (17), sucking face like there’s no tomorrow against the door of her green Pontiac Firebird. Between kisses, we can hear them say “Always.”

And Hazel hears:

GUS
Literally.

Hazel turns to find the Beautiful Boy, Augustus, standing right next to her.

GUS (CONT’D)
I thought we were in a church basement but apparently we were literally in the heart of Jesus.

HAZEL
Someone should probably tell him, don’t you think? Jesus? Seems kinda dangerous keeping all these kids with cancer in your heart.

GUS
What’s your name?

HAZEL
Hazel.

GUS
No your full name...

HAZEL
(confused)
Hazel Grace Lancaster.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
What?

GUS
I didn’t say anything.

HAZEL
Why are you looking at me like that?

GUS
Because you’re beautiful.
GUS (CONT'D)
I enjoy looking at beautiful people
and I decided a while back not to
deny myself the simpler pleasures
of existence. Particularly given
that, as you so astutely pointed
out, we’re all gonna die pretty
soon.

HAZEL
(beat)
I’m not beaut --

A CUTE YOUNG GIRL walks past them.

YOUNG GIRL
Hey Gus.

GUS
Hey Alisa.

Hazel isn’t surprised that other girls know Gus. She turns
back towards Isaac and Monica (off camera) pawing at each
other. She once again hears “Always.”

HAZEL
Did they just say “always?” What’s
with the “always?”

GUS
“Always” is their thing. They’ll
“always” love each other and
whatnot. Must have texted “always”
to each other at least four million
times this year.

They continue to watch the show.

HAZEL
He’s gotta be hurting her boob.

GUS
Let’s watch a movie.

HAZEL
Oh. Um. Uh... (yes!) Sure. Yeah.
I’m... pretty free this week--

GUS
No I mean now.

HAZEL
What?
GUS
Hmm?

HAZEL
What do you mean “now?”

GUS
I’ve got a car.

He shrugs. Hazel has never seen someone so confident.

HAZEL
You could be an axe murderer.

GUS
There is that possibility. (beat) Come on Hazel Grace... take a risk.

As Hazel mulls this over, Gus reaches into his pocket and pulls out, of all things, a pack of cigarettes! Hazel is in disbelief. He flips the box open, puts a cigarette between his lips.

HAZEL
Oh my god. Oh. My. God. You’re kidding right? (off his look) You just ruined the whole thing!

GUS
Whole thing?

HAZEL
What, you think that’s cool? Oh you idiot! There’s always a hamartia, isn’t there? And yours is - even though you had FREAKING CANCER you give money to a corporation for the chance to acquire EVEN MORE CANCER!? Ugh. And you were doing so well.

As she rants, Gus continues to look at her with that smile on his face. Hazel does not find it so amusing.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Let me tell you... not being able to breathe? Sucks. Totally sucks.

GUS
Hamartia?
HAZEL
A fatal flaw.

GUS
They don’t hurt you unless you light them.

HAZEL
Sorry?

GUS
I’ve never lit one.

Hazel turns back to him.

GUS (CONT’D)
It’s a metaphor. See? You put the thing that kills you between your teeth. But you don’t give it the power to do the killing.

HAZEL
Metaphor.

Gus holds her gaze. Hazel’s mother calls. She answers her phone.

HAZEL (CONT’D)
Hey Mom-- No, I can’t tonight. I’ve made plans with Augustus Waters.