

HOMELESS HEART

SCREENPLAY BY
CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM STROUM

Copyright (c) 2013 This screenplay may not be used or reproduced
without the express written permission of the author

BLACK.

STEVE (O.S.)
I have a really good feeling about
this one, Trey.

FADE IN:

INT. MOVING CAR- EARLY AFTERNOON

We're in the backseat of a car, a pair of hands trace the leggings of a pair of jeans. A little nervous, but not entirely.

We pull out to reveal....

TREY BAYARD, 14, a tough exterior, but we can see a lot of pain in his eyes, he's seen a lot in his years of life, we can tell.

Beside him, on the seat, we see a couple of trash bags. They're only open a tiny bit, but we can see clothes, it's definitely his things.

He leans against the window of the car, his hand rested against his cheek.

In the front seat, a man turns his head...

This is his social worker STEVE LORD, 30s, handsome and kind, he's got a certain fatherly quality, easy to trust.

STEVE
I know you hated leaving Alberton
behind.

TREY
(Bitter)
I'm just glad to be out of the
shithole you put me in.

Steve's brow furrows, he frowns a bit, chews his lower lip slowly.

STEVE
I'll admit, it may not have been
the BEST home.

TREY
The guy beat me with a belt, Steve.
(Flatly)
(MORE)

TREY (CONT'D)

I'm not five anymore, no need to sugar coat it with little fairy tales of "there's a better home out there".

He shakes his head a bit, takes a deep, inward breath.

TREY (CONT'D)

I just want to get through the next four years as smoothly as possible.

STEVE

(Sarcastic)

That's the spirit!

TREY

Are we there yet?

Steve rolls his eyes, ignoring Trey now.

TREY (CONT'D)

How about now?

STEVE

(Blunt)

You're not making the car trip any more pleasant.

TREY

Not trying to.

Trey leans back, he puts a pair of headphones in his ears, drowns the world out. Steve sighs, he turns his head to the road.

EXT. PERISH COUNTY- CITY LIMITS

We now see a small car, "DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES" is on the side, in decal. It drives down a dirt road, and as it pulls forward, we turn to see a sign...

"WELCOME TO PERISH COUNTY, OKLAHOMA
POPULATION: 4, 200"

We pull forward just enough that we can see the town, it's small, but nice. It looks like a regular old small town, nothing special, just a tiny farming community.

EXT. BELL FARM

We come upon a farm slowly, moving as slowly towards it as possible. It's a simple establishing shot, a large farm, the farmhouse is all made up nice.

It's quiet for a moment, and then we see the car driving up, it's the same car we were just in with both Trey and Steve. It passes through a few areas, a large gated area, containing some horses.

Another side holds a cow pen. Some of them look up from grazing to follow the car with their eyes, curiosity almost.

We move towards the front porch where an old hound dog lays lazily, only lifting his head as the car comes closer and to a slow stop.

The front door swings open slowly, a man steps out, a smile on his face and a dipped cowboy hat on his head...

Enter FRANK BELL, 50s, Trey's latest Foster Father, a bit of a hard ass, but means well.

Steve steps out of the car slowly, moving around the back to open the door for Trey, who takes his time getting out with his trash bags.

Steve puts a hand on Trey's shoulder, Trey barely looks up at him quietly.

STEVE

Try and smile for once, will you?
You have a nice smile.

TREY

(Sotto)
Give me a reason to, and I will.

Frank steps down from the porch, keeping his smile on his face he takes Frank's hand in a firm handshake.

FRANK

Steve, always nice to see you.

STEVE

Likewise Frank, sorry for the short notice. Things at his last home got a bit...

BEAT.

Steve isn't sure how to word it, Trey stares at Steve slowly, then looks at Frank.

TREY
They beat me.

He shrugs, as if it's no big deal.

TREY (CONT'D)
So, should I... Y'know?

He points towards the door, Frank seems a little taken aback, but slowly nods his head.

FRANK
Sure... Uh...
(Dumbfounded)
Make yourself at home, I guess.

TREY
Thanks, hope you don't mind if I
raid the fridge.

He steps around Frank, and heads up the steps, pretty soon he's out of sight. Frank crosses his arms, turns to Steve slowly.

FRANK
What have you saddled me with this
time, Steve?

STEVE
I'm sorry, Frank. But you were the
only family willing to take him.

FRANK
With that lovely attitude?
(Sighs)
Can't imagine why.

STEVE
Trey has a hard time adjusting, but
he's a good kid. Give him a chance.

Frank thinks it over for a moment, slowly nods his head at Steve.

FRANK
I don't really have much of a
choice, do I?

STEVE
He's yours for the next six months,
then you can return him if you
want.

Steve hands Frank a clipboard, Frank takes it, slowly signs off a few things.

FRANK

Just don't be surprised. Most kids don't like the farm work.

STEVE

Trey will take any place that doesn't make him sleep in the basement.

Steve nods his head a little bit at Frank, smiles genuinely, taking a deep breath.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Good luck.

FRANK

I have a feeling I'm gonna need it.

Steve heads off towards the car, as Frank walks up the steps after Trey. The dog on the porch gets up, follows him inside as the door closes.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- KITCHEN

Trey, true to his word, has the fridge door open, but only a moment, he closes it as he pours himself a glass of orange juice.

Frank steps inside, removing his hat, and setting it on a counter, he stares over at Trey for a moment.

FRANK

Fresh squeezed, y'know.

TREY

I think the pitcher gave it away.

Trey turns to Frank, takes a sip of the orange juice, seems satisfied, sets the glass down.

TREY (CONT'D)

So, you gonna lay the rules down on me? Or do you want me to guess?

FRANK

Don't act like you know the first thing about-

TREY

Curfew of ten, no strangers over
without permission. I probably have
to help around the farm.

He then stares at Frank.

TREY (CONT'D)

Oh, and I looked up my school ahead
of time, starts at eight. So I take
it I need to be ready to go at
seven if I want a ride into town.

Frank stares at Trey, dumbfounded, the boy has clearly taken
the words right out of his mouth. Trey just smirks, takes a
sip of his orange juice.

TREY (CONT'D)

This isn't my first time up at bat,
y'know.

FRANK

Yeah, well, not mine either. So you
can drop the attitude if you don't
mind.

TREY

(Dryly)
What attitude?

Trey finishes off the glass, cleans it in the nearby sink, he
grabs his two trash bags and stares at Frank.

TREY (CONT'D)

So, where's my cell?

Frank frowns at that, unamused.

TREY (CONT'D)

(Sighs)
My room?

Frank nods in one direction, he starts to head off out of the
kitchen, Trey drags himself along after him, not entirely
enthused.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S ROOM- EVENING

Time has passed, a couple of hours, by the looks of it, Trey
is laying against a pillow, taking a deep breath and
relaxing.

The room is small, but not by any means tiny. A bed in the corner, which Trey is clearly laying against. He stares up at the ceiling quietly, a ceiling fan rotates slowly above him.

The door creaks open, FRANK pops his head in.

FRANK

Dinner's on the table if you're hungry.

TREY

What's on the table?

FRANK

(Playful)

Grule. Hurry up and I might just serve seconds.

Trey rolls his eyes, it's a poor attempt at a joke, a failed poor attempt. Frank frowns a bit, stares at Trey quietly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Come on Trey, you gotta eat somethin'.

TREY

(Avoiding Eye Contact)

Sure. Yeah. I'll be down in a few minutes.

Trey stares over at Frank, gives a half-smile, Frank nods his head a little bit, turns and exits the room. Trey returns to staring up at the ceiling fan silently.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- DINING ROOM

The family is gathered in the dining room. It's a large table, several seats at it. But only three people are actually seated there. Frank is one of them.

One of them is mostly quiet. This is his youngest son JASON BELL, 24, a lot like his Dad, hard worker, serious as a heart attack.

The other, digging into his plate like he's starving is his eldest son ADAM BELL, 28, army veteran, a sweetheart, kind, but a bit of a trouble maker.

JASON

I don't think he's coming down, Dad.

ADAM

Yeah, well, they're always scared the first night... Give him time.

JASON

You can bring the food up to him.

ADAM

(Annoyed)

I bet he can feel the love all the way up from his room.

Adam stands, he picks up a plate from the table, stares at Jason with a bit of a glare.

JASON

What's your problem?

ADAM

You.

Adam walks away from the table, Jason rolls his eyes quietly, turns his head towards Adam.

JASON

We need to do something about his attitude.

FRANK

His heart's in the right place, nothing wrong with that.

JASON

You told me the kid was a smart-ass.

Jason shakes his head.

JASON (CONT'D)

We should have just stopped fostering after Mom died, she'd-

FRANK

I think we can more than handle one kid. It's just for a few months anyway.

JASON

You always say that, remember the pyromaniac that stayed with us a year?

FRANK

Your Mom liked a challenge.

Jason shakes his head a bit, plays around with his food a bit.

JASON
Yeah, well I don't.

FRANK
This isn't your decision to make,
Jay. It's mine. And he's staying.

JASON
Yeah, yeah.

FRANK
Just try to play nice, Jason. The
kid's been through a lot...

JASON
I always play nice.

FRANK
Mmmm-hmmmm...

Frank picks up his plate and makes his way towards the sink,
Jason continues to pick at his food.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Don't forget to clean up.

JASON
Wouldn't dream of it.

Frank heads off towards the den, leaving Jason sitting at the
table, deep in thought.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S ROOM

Adam enters the room calmly, Trey is still in his same
position, he leans against the doorway, looking at him.

ADAM
Missed you at dinner.

TREY
You the farm hand?

ADAM
If only Dad was *that* rich.

Trey looks over at the man, who tries to keep a friendly
smile on his face.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'm Adam, Frank's son.

TREY
Trey.

ADAM
Yeah, I know, Dad filled us in.

He holds out the plate a moment, sets it on the end table.

ADAM (CONT'D)
We figured you'd get hungry,
eventually.

TREY
Sorry I didn't come down... Just...

ADAM
You guys never do on the first
night, maybe even a few nights
after that either...

TREY
I'm just not big on the whole
"family dinner" concept.

ADAM
Never knocked it 'til you tried it.

Trey shrugs his shoulders, only half-interested as he turns to Adam.

TREY
I'll think about showing tomorrow.

ADAM
(Sarcasm)
We'll anxiously await your
presence.

TREY
Was that sarcasm?

ADAM
Did it sound like sarcasm?

Trey smirks, so does Adam, who clearly know just how to keep up with Trey's sharp tongue.

TREY
You know you really should leave, I
have school in the morning.

ADAM
It's six-thirty.

TREY
(Flat)
I like to get to sleep early.

ADAM
Then you won't mind getting up early.

Trey raises an eyebrow.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I'm giving you a ride in the morning, and I want to be home early... Be ready by four, or you'll have to walk.

TREY
That's easy.

ADAM
Tough guy, huh?
(Smirks)
We'll see how long THAT lasts.

TREY
Forever.

ADAM
I give you three weeks.

Adam turns, heads out of the doorway, Trey watches him go.

ADAM (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Four tops!

Trey watches the doorway for a moment, he makes his way to the door, carefully closing it, locking it this time. He heads towards the end table, grabs the plate off, and walks off camera.

EXT. JAMES ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL- PARKING LOT- MORNING

EST. SHOT:

It's the exterior of a large high school, it's old, some paint is chipping, it's not the best or most welcoming sight, but there have been worse high school's in existence.

As we pull down, we see that action is already going on. Kids are getting high in the parking lot, or simply smoking. Tech nerds are showing off their latest gadgets.

The goths are lounging against the wall outside, the "emo" types are nearby. There doesn't seem to be much talking or socializing going on amongst them.

A truck pulls into the parking lot slowly, it doesn't bother getting a parking space, coming to a stop in the middle. The passengers side door props open and Trey gets out, grabs a ratty backpack, and closes the door again.

Adam slowly leans forward from the passengers seat.

ADAM

The main office is on your right once you get inside. And your counselor-

TREY

Will want to see me and touch base. Yeah, I know.

Trey pulls the backpack over his shoulder, one strapping it, he turns his head, forces a smile.

TREY (CONT'D)

You can go, y'know.

ADAM

I'm just making sure some punk doesn't decide to mess with the new kid.

Trey's face softens, he almost seems touched, this look on his face falters, the wall goes back up.

TREY

I can take care of myself, Adam. Thanks.

Trey quickly begins to make his way away from the truck, Adam follows him with his gaze for a moment, then drives off.

INT. JAMES ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL- HALLWAY

It's a sea of kids, for a small town, it seems to be a pretty big school, possibly filled with kids from neighboring, smaller towns.

Trey, a paper now gripped in his hand tries to maneuver it, scanning the lockers that line either wall.

He finally makes a stop a few feet down, setting his backpack on the ground slowly.

As he begins to punch in his combinations, the boy beside him stares over, curiosity in his eyes. This is KYLE TENNER, 14, an artistic and creative soul, but also an outcast, goofy and fun-loving.

KYLE

New here?

TREY

Yeah, just moved here yesterday.

KYLE

And your folks are already making you come to school?

(Sympathetic)

Bummer.

Trey shrugs his shoulders a bit, stuffs a few binders from his backpack into the locker.

TREY

I'm used to it by now, this is move number eleven.

KYLE

Military brat?

TREY

Foster kid.

Trey slams the locker door shut, heads off. Kyle frowns a bit, closes his too, jogs to catch up.

KYLE

That's rough.

(Curious)

Who did you move in with?

TREY

Why do you care?

KYLE

Trying to be nice.

TREY

The Bell's. They own the farm about thirty minutes from here.

Trey's eyes scan his paper, then the hallway, Kyle reaches over, takes the piece of paper from him.

KYLE
 Awesome, we have algebra together.
 I'll show you the way.

TREY
 (Surprised)
 Thanks...

Trey looks at Kyle, for a moment, he's a little shaky, uncertain, but he slowly reaches a hand out.

TREY (CONT'D)
 Trey.

KYLE
 Kyle.

The two shake hands, Trey actually gives a genuine smile for the first time since we've met him. Trey's eyes hit a girl as she passes...

For a few moments his gaze lingers on MINDY AARONS, 15, gorgeous, striking beauty, a good personality, she's the popular girl in high school, but too sweet to be a mean girl.

Mindy turns her head slowly, she gazes at Trey too, looks him up and down for a moment, then turns her head away. She disappears in the sea of kids, but Trey's gaze still lingers.

KYLE (CONT'D)
 Forget it.

BEAT.

Trey turns to Kyle.

KYLE (CONT'D)
 That's Mindy Aarons. And you have about as good a chance of getting a T-Bone steak in the cafeteria as getting with her.

TREY
 Why do you say that?

KYLE
 Sophomore, not to mention cheerleading captain, and in case you hadn't noticed.
 (Emphasis)
 INSANELY hot.

Kyle shakes his head a bit, puts a hand on Trey's shoulder.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Come on, Mr. Donovan's class is
right here.

Trey nods his head, Kyle opens a door beside him, and they
both make their way inside.

INT. JAMES ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL- CAFETERIA- AFTERNOON

Trey is moving away from a lunch line slowly, carrying a tray
of assorted and different foods. His eyes scan the lunchroom,
he's hardly looking where he's going as he nearly walks right
into Mindy.

TREY
Whoa, sorry.

MINDY
It's cool, you didn't spill
anything.

Trey starts to walk away, Mindy chews her lip.

MINDY (CONT'D)
You're the Bell's new foster son,
right? Jay?

Trey looks at her, cocks an eyebrow.

TREY
Trey, actually, how did you-?

MINDY
We're neighbors, my family owns a
farm like... Five minutes away.

TREY
Ah, guess we'll be seeing a lot of
each other then.
(Grinning)
Mindy, right?

MINDY
That would be me.

Their eyes connect, there's clearly a connection between
them, a tiny spark.

MINDY (CONT'D)
I'll see you around.

TREY
Ah, the rules of high school.
Popular girl can't be seen with the
new kid.

MINDY
(Offended)
Not like that at all.

Mindy turns to Trey, she smiles a little, flirtatiously.

MINDY (CONT'D)
I just have... Other commitments.

TREY
Then don't let me keep you.

MINDY
Wanna join?

She nods towards a table filled with people, Trey grimaces, he looks very uncertain.

TREY
I don't know...

MINDY
Come on, new guy, they're harmless.

TREY
I think the Hulk Hogan looking guy
could snap me like a twig.

Trey nods to a tall and buff jock type seated at the table for emphasis.

MINDY
Suit yourself.

Mindy heads off calmly, she looks over her shoulder with a playful wink at Trey. Trey seems to stand there for several moments, a hand goes on his shoulder, Kyle comes up behind him.

KYLE
How did you do that?

TREY
Do what?

KYLE
You do realize she has the hots for
you, right?

TREY

Funny...

(Mocking)

You told me I didn't stand a chance.

Trey heads off towards a table, Kyle rolls his eyes a bit and follows him slowly.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- FOYER- LATER

The door slowly creaks open as Trey comes in the front door, Adam is right behind him.

ADAM

So how much do you know about farm work?

TREY

Nothing.

ADAM

It's not that hard, but you're going to have to help out every day after school. In the morning on the weekends too.

Adam looks at Trey, trying to keep a smile on his face, Trey is silent.

ADAM (CONT'D)

How do you feel about horses?

Trey almost seems to perk up at that.

TREY

I love 'em. My Mom used to own a stable before... Well...

BEAT.

Trey goes silent, Adam catches onto this, puts a hand comfortingly on his shoulder.

ADAM

I know the feeling, kid.

Trey stares at Adam, gives another one of his half-smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

We got a pretty big stable, five horses. Think you can handle taking care of them as your first job?

TREY
I haven't really been around
horse's since I was two.

Adam shrugs his shoulders a bit.

ADAM
I can ask Dad if there is-?

TREY
No, I'd love to do it. I remember
how my Mom used to do it.

He takes a deep breath, shakes his head.

TREY (CONT'D)
Just can't promise I'll be any good
at it.

ADAM
That's alright, I'm not any good at
it and I've been riding since I was
ten.

He puts an arm around his shoulder, Trey wants to shrug him
off, but the stronger man doesn't allow him to.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Come on, I'll introduce ye.

TREY
Are you sure Frank will be okay
with that?

ADAM
I'm twenty-eight, not fourteen.

Trey rolls his eyes, but allows Adam to lead him away slowly.

EXT. BELL FARM- STABLES

There's a long line of stables, pressed up against what looks
almost like a barn. A couple of horses poke their heads out,
the first of which, a black one NAYS as Adam walks over.

ADAM
Hey girl, how are you this
afternoon?

Adam rubs her snout carefully, Trey stands near him, watching
Adam with the horse.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 This one's Blackjack, she's mine.
 The one next door is Midnight, he's
 Jason's...

He points to the next stall over.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 The third is Dad's, Firebreeze. Do
 NOT under any circumstances
 irritate him. He's a bit....

TREY
 Wild?

ADAM
 That's putting it lightly.

Trey stares at the fourth stall, makes his way over to it.

TREY
 Who's the fourth?

ADAM
 (Smirking)
 Apple.

Adam makes his way over, opens the stall calmly. Trey stares
 in to find a much younger, tan horse, APPLE, she's rideable,
 but still growing.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 Firebreeze and Blackjack's. She was
 born here, and we usually teach
 kids on this horse.

He nudges Trey gently, the boy turns his head to Adam.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 I'll even teach you, if you'd like.

TREY
 I can't pay for lessons.

ADAM
 You're kidding, right?

Adam shakes his head.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 We're not gonna make you pay, Trey.
 Dad taught Jay and I, I'll teach
 you.

TREY

Why?

ADAM

In case you've forgotten, Trey.
You're family, fostered or not.

Adam turns his head, as if keeping a lookout, he watches carefully, quietly.

ADAM (CONT'D)

In fact...

He grabs a saddle off the wall carefully, placing it on Apple's back and securing it.

TREY

I thought I'm supposed to be working?

ADAM

I won't tell if you don't.

TREY

(Cautious)

Are you always THIS friendly?

Adam stares at Trey, his brow furrows a bit.

ADAM

You don't sound as used to this as you should be.

TREY

I'm a foster kid, most people are in it for a quick paycheck.

(Honestly)

There's always a catch to this stuff.

ADAM

You're reading too much into it, kid. We...

He grabs Trey without warning, and hoists him onto Apple's back, Trey's stunned, but clearly, Adam is much taller and stronger.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Are not in it for the paycheck.

TREY

Are you sure this is such a good idea?

ADAM

Relax, Apple's used to new riders,
you just have to take it easy with
her.

Trey clearly looks a little nervous, he shifts on the saddle slightly, taking a deep breath.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Trey, I'm right here alright?

TREY

I'm just... I uh...

ADAM

I thought you grew up around
horses? When was the last time you
saw someone get hurt?

BEAT.

Trey shakes his head slowly.

TREY

Never. But then again I was two.

ADAM

Fine. Fine. I won't force you.

Trey sighs, climbs down from Apple as Adam carefully removes the saddle.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Any time you want though, you know
where to find me.

TREY

So what do I gotta do? Clean their
crap? Brush their manes?

ADAM

The whole nine yards, you'll find
the stuff in the corner of each
stall.

He smiles a bit.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Want me to stick around?

TREY

I can handle it. I learn fast.

ADAM
 Alright, I'll be with the chickens
 if you need me.

Trey watches Adam walk away slowly, for a moment his gaze lingers. He glances away, a smile slowly forming, a real one.

EXT. BELL FARM HOUSE- EVENING

Trey is coming out of the stables slowly, wiping beads of sweat off his face, clearly exhausted.

FRANK (O.S.)
 Well they didn't kill you, that's a
 good sign.

Trey turns his head as Frank is waiting for him on the front porch.

TREY
 What can I say? I love animals.

FRANK
 You just might have been placed in
 the right home after all then.

Trey shrugs his shoulders a little bit, he looks Frank up and down quietly.

TREY
 You know, you're behind schedule.

FRANK
 Huh?

TREY
 Most foster parents put up with me
 for a day and then I'm nothing more
 than a burden.

He shakes his head, and starts up the steps of the front porch.

TREY (CONT'D)
 You've almost gone forty-eight
 hours.

FRANK
 You're nothing compared to some of
 the faces that have come through
 here.

BEAT.

Frank smiles a bit.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We've had everything from an unwed teenage Mother to something out of "America's Most Wanted" pass through here.

TREY

Yeah, so...?

FRANK

I don't think you're half the hard-ass you're trying to make yourself out to be.

TREY

What makes you figure that?

FRANK

If you were you'd have been much more violent by now.

Trey smiles, just faintly, as if amused by Frank's observation, Frank crosses his arms.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Your social worker's right, y'know. You do have a good smile.

TREY

Don't get used to seeing it, old man.

Frank rolls his eyes a bit, Trey starts to head past him, he looks back at him.

FRANK

Trey.

Trey stops, turns back to him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about your Mom.

TREY

Adam tell you?

FRANK

He had good reason to. He saw it was a sore subject.

TREY
Then you should know better than to
bring her up.

FRANK
Trey-

TREY
It's okay, just...

He takes a deep breath, he doesn't finish his sentence, he just makes his way up the steps slowly. Leaving Frank standing there.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S BEDROOM- MORNING

Trey's asleep in bed, it's clearly a weekend as the sun has risen in the sky already. He seems to be sleeping soundly for a moment, but a hand rests on his back, shaking him.

JASON (O.S.)
Time to get up kid.

TREY
(Half-Muttering)
It's too early.

JASON (O.S.)
It's ten in the morning, and we
were being nice by letting you
sleep in.

Trey's eyes slowly open, he stares up at Jason, who looks down at him with an air of impatience.

TREY
Aw, fuck, the horses.

JASON
Yup, better get to work too,
they're getting antsy.

Trey slowly pulls himself out of bed, he stretches slightly, taking a deep breath.

TREY
Sorry, I'll get better at this.

JASON
Yeah, that's what they all say.

TREY
Yeah, but how many of them mean it?

Trey eyes Jason with a serious look in his eyes, Jason seems a bit confused.

TREY (CONT'D)

Are you gonna leave? Because if you're gonna watch me change that would be *really* creepy.

JASON

I don't get you, kid.

TREY

I get that a lot.

JASON

Just hurry up, okay? Because Dad wants to go out to dinner tonight, so he wants the work done early.

TREY

I can...

JASON

All of us, Trey. Face it, you need to get out of the house for more than just schooling.

Trey opens his mouth, he appears about ready to protest, Jason shakes his head.

JASON (CONT'D)

If you protest, we've gotten permission to hog tie you until we get there.

TREY

I'll call CPS on all three of you.

JASON

And go where?

Trey frowns at that, his hand balls up into a fist, Jason notices.

JASON (CONT'D)

Whoa, didn't mean it like that, slugger, calm down.

Trey meets Jason's eyes, watches him for a moment, then unballs his fist.

TREY

Can you go now?

Jason nods his head, backing off slowly, and leaving Trey in the bedroom. Trey seems to collect himself, growing calm again.

He slowly turns to the end table, takes a glance at a picture. It's of a young woman, early 20s, she looks a lot like Trey and she has a little boy held in her arms.

It's definitely TREY and his MOTHER.

He seems to stare at it for a long while, as if looking for advice. Then turns his head, pulling on a pair of jeans and heading out of the room.

INT. BIRCHWOOD DINER- EVENING

The family is gathered in a diner, Trey is seated next to Adam, he shifts with slight awkwardness, staring around the diner. The family is deep in conversation though we don't totally hear it.

Trey catches the eye of a waitress, who seems to be leering at him a bit. He doesn't know it but this is...

REGGIE AARONS, 23, Mindy's older sister, a bit of a judgemental girl, but still good-at-heart.

Reggie takes a few moments, then grabs her pad and pen off the counter she's leaning against, making her way over.

REGGIE

Well if it isn't the Bell's.

Jason stares at Reggie first, smiles a bit.

JASON

Reggie, always a pleasure.

REGGIE

Mmm...

(RE: Trey)

And you are?

TREY

I'm Trey... I'm Frank's...

FRANK

He's staying with us a little bit.

Reggie nods, her eyes scanning over Trey silently.

REGGIE
You're cuter than Mindy told me you
were.

TREY
How do you-?

REGGIE
She's my sister.

She looks at Trey with a serious look.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
And while I've got you here, I
might as well let you know up
front... If you mess with her
feelings, I'll tear you in two.

ADAM
Reggie, take it easy.

REGGIE
What? I've dated one of your foster
kids before, I've been there.

BEAT.

She stares at Trey, who is slowly getting more and more
uncomfortable looking.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I know how they *think*.

TREY
You don't know the first thing
about me.

REGGIE
I don't really care to know,
either. All I care is that you play
nice with my sister.

TREY
I've only met her once...

REGGIE
If you were a smart boy, you'd keep
it that way too...

Reggie suddenly goes from the third-degree to a perky smile.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
So, what can I get y'all today?

Trey's mouth is just sort of hanging there, a little stunned, Frank sees this.

FRANK

We'll need a minute.

Reggie nods and gives one last look at Trey before heading off.

TREY

Is she always that big a bitch?

JASON

Honestly, you have no idea. I dated her...

Trey stares at Jason quietly, something clicks.

TREY

She date's a lot of Bell family members, doesn't she?

ADAM

Oh yeah, she's a little bit of a slut... But you didn't hear that from me.

JASON

(Scoffs)

You're just jealous that YOU could never tap that, Adam.

BEAT.

Adam grabs his menu, that just made this really awkward and it's clear.

ADAM

We are not talking about this right now.

TREY

What, nothing to be ashamed of, she's hot.

(Sotto)

Fucking psycho.

(Blunt)

But hot.

Adam chuckles a little bit, nodding in agreement at Trey, who looks over his own menu. He peers up and notices...

MINDY

She steps into the diner from the door.

TREY (CONT'D)
She's here.

ADAM
Why don't you go talk to her?

TREY
Because getting castrated by her
older sister wasn't on my "to do"
list today.

Mindy catches sight of him, she smiles, waves in a rather
flirty way.

ADAM
Dude, go talk to her. I've got you
covered.

TREY
How the hell do you plan to "cover"
me?

ADAM
Just trust me on this one, I know
what I'm doing.

Trey eyes Adam for a moment, but gets up and heads towards
Mindy.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Hey, Reg!

Reggie makes her way over quickly.

REGGIE
You guys ready?

ADAM
No, not yet, I was just wondering
if you could tell me the specials.

REGGIE
We don't do specials, Adam.

ADAM
Can't you ask the chef or
something?

REGGIE
Adam, we don't-

ADAM
Just check with the damn chef, or
forget your tip.

Adam looks at her straight-faced, Reggie sighs, turns around,
rolling her eyes and heading to the back.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Works every time.

Adam leans back, pleased with himself. Trey glances over his
shoulder, and as he turns back finds Mindy in front of him.

MINDY
Looking for me?

TREY
My foster brother was egging me to
come talk to you. I just wanted him
off my back.

MINDY
Really?

TREY
Yeah.

MINDY
That's the excuse you're going
with? Points for originality.

Trey taps the counter beside him, he looks over at Adam, who
is making encouraging gestures.

TREY
Listen, to further get him off my
back... Do you... Maybe?

MINDY
Maybe, what?

TREY
Forget it, it's a stupid question.

MINDY
Alright then.

Mindy starts to head towards the back where Reggie went.

TREY
(Sighs)
Fuck it.
(Quickly)
Do you want to go out sometime?

Mindy turns to Trey, smirks a little bit, she walks up to him, grabs a marker out of her pocket, and a napkin from behind the counter, starts to write.

MINDY
You'd better call me.

TREY
Of course.

MINDY
Just don't just come over. My Dad's even worse than my sister when it comes to the boys I date.

She holds out the napkin, with her number written on it, Trey takes it slowly.

MINDY (CONT'D)
I'll meet you at your place instead.

TREY
Should I be scared of your Dad?

MINDY
No.

Mindy smiles at him with a wink, and shrugs.

MINDY (CONT'D)
You should be more scared of his twelve gage shotgun.

She disappears into the back, Trey gulps silently at that.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S ROOM- NIGHT

Trey sits himself down on his bed slowly, rubbing one of his eyes tiredly and yawning. Frank slowly stops in the doorway, Trey turns his head.

TREY
Hey.

FRANK
It was nice to see some personality in you for a change tonight.

Trey shrugs his shoulders a little, smiles.

TREY

What can I say, you guys are making it a little hard not to... Y'know.

FRANK

And you haven't even met the rest of the clan yet.

TREY

I've only been here two weeks, Frank. One step at a time.

Frank smiles a little bit, nodding his head.

FRANK

Of course.

(Smiling)

Still though, Thanksgiving is quite the scene.

TREY

How big is your family?

FRANK

Huge, actually. And that's not including some of the long-term foster kids who still come around.

Trey nods his head a little bit, he lays against the bed, pulling the covers over himself.

TREY

Yeah, well, it's... Not half bad here... I can see why they stayed.

FRANK

Not half-bad, eh?

TREY

Don't sound too surprised. I've lived in a home where I had to sleep on the basement floor because they didn't want me seen in their home.

Trey shakes his head.

FRANK

Yeah well, those people were assholes. We care about you here, Trey.

Trey stares at Frank, we see a look of thankfulness in his eyes for the first time. Trey smiles a bit.

TREY

Yeah... I think I'm starting to see that...

FRANK

Now, get some sleep. Those horses won't brush themselves in the morning.

Trey lays his head against the pillow, Frank nods, and smiles a bit.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Pleasant dreams, kid.

Frank flicks off the light switch, leaving the room, and Trey in darkness. Trey looks out the window quietly, then towards the cracked open door, there's a look of confusion on his features. As if he's trying to process what just happened.

INT. JAMES ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL- HALLWAY- MORNING

Trey and Kyle are calmly making their way down the hallway, Kyle looks completely stunned.

KYLE

So she just... Gave you her phone number?

TREY

Yeah, pretty much.

KYLE

Dude, seriously, you have to teach me your moves sometime.

Trey shrugs his shoulders a bit.

TREY

I'm not sure I'd call it moves so much as... Getting lucky.

KYLE

Yeah, yeah, yeah. All I know is I've been looking for a date for months and have had 0 luck so far.

TREY

Ever thought of changing your approach?

Kyle stares at Trey blankly as if he just grew a second head, Trey rolls his eyes a bit.

TREY (CONT'D)

What makes you chase after a girl,
Ky?

KYLE

How hot they are.

TREY

You see, there's your problem right
there. Hot doesn't always equal
personality, actually talk to the
girl before you ask them out...

Kyle blinks a bit.

KYLE

You only talked to Mindy once
before you asked her out.

TREY

True, but when we talked, there was
a connection. And that's the whole
point of relationships, connecting
with people.

KYLE

And you think that'll look for me?

TREY

One-hundred percent guaranteed,
man.

They stop at their lockers, begin getting and storing things,
Trey turns towards Kyle.

TREY (CONT'D)

So, where IS the best place to take
a girl on the town here, anyway?

KYLE

That's tough man, we're a pretty
small town, and excitement is
sorta...

TREY

Lacking?

KYLE

Exactly.

Kyle looks thoughtful for a moment, then turns his head
towards Trey.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Elrich Lake.

TREY
Huh?

KYLE
Yeah, believe it or not, we have
our own lake. It's not the biggest
thing in the world, but it's really
pretty.

He looks at Trey and grins.

KYLE (CONT'D)
Perfect place to romance her.

TREY
Yeah, but... I can't swim.

KYLE
So? Picnic on the shore. Just don't
go swimming man.

TREY
A picnic. I think I can do that.

Trey turns to Kyle slowly, chews his lip.

TREY (CONT'D)
By the way, this algebra test we're
having.

KYLE
Yeah?

TREY
You get this better with me. And I
was just kinda wondering... If
maybe we could study at your house?
Maybe you can help me out a little.

BEAT.

Kyle looks fearful at that comment.

KYLE
I'm happy to help man, but not at
my place. Can we do it at yours?

TREY
Are you sure about that? I mean, I
can ask Frank, but-

KYLE
We're just better off studying
there.

Trey looks Kyle in the eyes, some form of concern in his eyes, he frowns a bit.

TREY
Sure, but wh-?

KYLE
Sorry man, I gotta get to English,
catch you at lunch though, alright?

Kyle heads off in a hurry, closing his door as he goes, leaving a very suspicious looking Trey behind.

INT. BELL FARM- APPLE'S STALL- AFTERNOON

Trey is seated inside Apple's stable, brushing her slowly, he's quiet for a moment and then...

MINDY (O.S.)
So this is your job on the farm,
huh?

Trey turns his head to see Mindy outside the stall, smiling a bit.

TREY
Yep. Not the most glamorous job,
but I love it.

MINDY
Who wouldn't? They're beautiful
animals.

Trey smiles and nods his head slowly, then looks at Mindy.

TREY
My friend Kyle's coming over later
to study for an algebra test if you
want to join in.

MINDY
Who do you have?

TREY
Mr. Donovan, we have-

MINDY

A test on Friday? Yeah, so do I, so I don't think it would hurt to study up with you guys.

TREY

With me around, it might not help either. I've never been very good at math.

Trey shrugs his shoulders a bit.

MINDY

That sucks.

TREY

You're telling me. I still get straight-A's, but I work three times as hard to get them because of it.

MINDY

(Stunned)

You're a straight-A student?

TREY

Don't sound so surprised.

MINDY

You just kinda struck me as the rebellious "too cool to care" type.

TREY

I used to be, but I figured it's the only way I'm going to have any kind of future, so...

Mindy nods her head, understanding, she chews her lip a little bit, then stares at Trey.

MINDY

So you want to go to college?

TREY

Yeah, of course. Don't most kids?

MINDY

I think it really depends on the kid, but that's cool. Where were you thinking?

TREY
Anywhere that'll accept me,
honestly. I'm just gonna keep
applying until I get accepted.

He shrugs.

TREY (CONT'D)
That's the plan anyway.

MINDY
So, listen. About our date on
Saturday?

TREY
Got a better offer?

MINDY
No, no. Nothing like that. It's
just... I don't feel right about
just sneaking out.

BEAT.

Trey turns to Mindy in surprise.

TREY
Do I have to meet your Dad and his
twelve gage?

MINDY
No, no that's the best part. Dad is
going out of town on business this
weekend.

BEAT.

Trey looks confused.

MINDY (CONT'D)
I told him about it already, and he
said yes as long as you can pull
off the impossible.

TREY
Which would be?

MINDY
Getting my sister's approval.

Trey's face falls a bit at that, definitely not what he
wanted to hear.

TREY

Can't I just meet the twelve gage?

MINDY

Come on, Trey. It's just a quick ten minute thing. She'll probably let me go as an excuse to "get it out of my system".

Trey looks thoughtfully at Apple for a moment, the horse stares back at him. She nods her head, as if saying "do it". Trey smirks.

TREY

Yeah, I guess I could handle that.

MINDY

(RE: Apple)

She sure seems to think you can.

TREY

She apparently puts too much faith in me.

Trey chuckles a little bit at his own joke, he walks towards Mindy, who steps aside.

EXT. BELL FARM- STABLES

Trey closes the door slowly, locking it carefully before turning to Mindy.

TREY

Kyle should be here soon, so we should head up to the house now.

MINDY

You sure Frank won't mind?

TREY

(Joking)

You're not a stranger to them, are you?

Mindy chuckles, shakes her head, and they head off towards the home.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- DEN

The door casually opens in the distance, Frank, who looks to have just gotten off a hard day of working peers over his shoulder.

FRANK
That you, Trey?

TREY
Yeah, Frank. Hope you don't mind,
Mindy's going to study with Kyle
and I.

FRANK
Not at all, she's welcome here.
Just be sure to leave the door
open...

TREY
Frank, I'm not going to-

FRANK
Humor me.

Trey turns to Mindy, who looks like she's holding back a giggle. Trey shakes his head.

TREY
Yes sir.

FRANK
Don't sass me when you're on my
good side, son.

Trey smirks.

TREY
Sassing's what I do best.

FRANK
(Firm)
Grounding's what I do best.

Trey smirks a bit, turns to Mindy, who laughs a little, sighs a little.

TREY
I'll keep the door open.

FRANK
'Atta boy.

Trey rolls his eyes, leads Mindy away from the room rather quickly.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S ROOM- LATER

Trey, Mindy, and Kyle are all in the room, door of course, open. Kyle is sitting at Trey's desk, Mindy on the floor, and Trey on his bed. Clearly, they've finished studying.

KYLE

You know, Mindy, I envy you right about now.

MINDY

Why?

KYLE

Freshman year is the worst, seriously, our school should just be renamed "Dante's Inferno High School".

MINDY

Who?

KYLE

I take it you DIDN'T take mythology?

MINDY

Ehhhhh, it never really interested me at all.

Kyle chuckles a bit.

TREY

At least classes here are better than they were in Alberton. You want hell, THAT was hell.

KYLE

Can't be any worse than sitting through Mr. Greg's history class.

Both boys shudder as they think about it, Mindy rolls her eyes.

MINDY

Sophomore classes are worse guys, so I wouldn't even complain yet.

TREY

I don't even know that I'll be here in sophomore year, so...

KYLE

Most of their foster kids grow up here though. You might get lucky.

MINDY

Yeah, seriously, one of them LITERALLY grew up here. From age five to eighteen.

TREY

Yeah, well, I'm not exactly the model kid. Once they realize it it'll probably be off to wherever they ship me next.

Kyle frowns a bit, definitely not liking the the thought of that.

KYLE

Eh, don't give up hope so easily man, you never know when you've found the "one" right?

TREY

It's a foster family, not a wife, Kyle.

MINDY

Still, Frank seems to be warming up to you. And Adam seems to like you.

TREY

Yeah, I guess. But it never lasts, the longest I've stayed in a home is four years and that was because I was two when I got there.

Trey shakes his head a little, stares over at Kyle curiously.

TREY (CONT'D)

Speaking of families, what WAS with your freak-out at school yesterday?

BEAT.

Kyle grimaces slightly, spins around in the chair.

KYLE

My Dad's just a little strict. It's no biggie.

Trey gives a look of "not buying it", but sighs.

TREY

Yeah, okay.

KYLE

Besides, we're not even talking about my family's issues. We're talking about YOUR family's issues.

BEAT.

Trey frowns a bit, looks down.

TREY

They're not even my family, Kyle.

KYLE

Eh, foster family's count. Right Mindy?

MINDY

Yeah, I mean they pretty much treat you like family, don't they?

Trey nods his head a bit, stares at the two of them slowly.

TREY

Okay, so they're my "family", but I don't have issues with them.

MINDY

So you DO like them then?

TREY

Never implied I didn't. I'm just not sure if *they* like *me*. After all there is a difference between liking someone and just being nice to them.

Trey shakes his head a little bit, sitting up on his bed.

TREY (CONT'D)

Frankly, I think during the first week I probably pissed them all off twice.

KYLE

How do you figure?

TREY

Because I always do. It's just... The way I am.

Trey stands up slowly, turns to the others, and shakes his head.

TREY (CONT'D)

You guys gonna stick around a while, or do you need to get going?

MINDY

I could hang out if you want, what about you Kyle?

KYLE

As long as I'm back by ten, I'm good. Y'all wanna go down to the diner or something.

TREY

I don't think I want to be seen there with Mindy, not with psycho sister working there.

MINDY

Yeah, that has bad idea written all over it.

Kyle strokes his chin a bit, looks between the two of them, stands up himself.

KYLE

I know what we could do. Do they care if you miss dinner here?

TREY

Not if I warn them.

KYLE

Good, we're going through McD's and then we're going to "The Pit".

MINDY

Oh, great idea!

TREY

What's "The Pit"?

MINDY

The teen club in town, come on, it'll be fun.

Trey looks uncertain for a moment, but seems to think it over slowly, and nods.

TREY

Alright, just let me go tell Frank.

Trey heads out of the bedroom quickly, Mindy and Kyle right behind him.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- KITCHEN

Trey is making his way into the kitchen, he quickly pulls his jacket over his body quickly, Adam looks up from the table.

ADAM

Where are you off to?

TREY

Kyle and Mindy want to take me to "The Pit". Where's Frank? I need to ask him if I can go.

ADAM

He went into town, he won't be back for an hour or so.

TREY

Yeah, well, they want to go now, so can you cover for me? Just let him know I'm gonna miss dinner?

ADAM

It's a school night, Trey. I'm not sure Dad would be okay with you going out and partying.

TREY

I'm not gonna be gone *that* late.

Adam stands up, puts a hand on Trey's shoulder, Trey looks at Adam.

ADAM

Gonna have to put my foot down, or Jason'll kill me for saying "yes".

TREY

He's younger than you, man up, Adam. I swear I'll be back before ten.

ADAM

Trey... Are you really going to risk pissing Dad off just when things are getting good between all of us?

BEAT.

Trey stares at Adam, he frowns a bit, chews his lip silently, he turns towards Mindy and Kyle who are headed inside.

MINDY

Hey, you ready to go?

Trey stares at Adam, who doesn't seem to stand down on his firm look.

TREY

Sorry guys, Frank is in town. And well, Adam doesn't think he'd be cool with me going clubbing on a school night.

MINDY

Oh, that's cool. We can all go next weekend or something.

KYLE

Yeah, it's open weekends.

It's obvious both are disappointed, but they put on a smile for Trey's sake.

ADAM

You guys are welcome to stay for dinner, though.

MINDY

I should actually get home if we're not going out.

(RE: Kyle)

Do you need a ride home? I bet Reggie would be cool with it if I asked.

KYLE

Actually, yeah. I could, it's kinda a long walk back home, and yeah...

Kyle turns to Trey, giving a two finger salute with a smile.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Catch you later, dude.

He heads off, Mindy stares at Trey with a smile, kisses him on the cheek.

MINDY

It's only 'cause he cares, y'know.

Trey's silent as Mindy heads off, Trey groans quietly, turns to Adam.

TREY
My room really *is* starting to
become my cell.

ADAM
She's right. We care about your
well being and you missed half the
school year, so...

TREY
Yeah, I get it.

Trey sighs a bit, takes a deep breath, and leans against the
counter.

TREY (CONT'D)
But no amount of studying is going
to help me with Algebra. Seriously,
I think this is gonna end my
perfect record.

ADAM
That wouldn't be the end of the
world, would it?

TREY
It may ruin my chances at a
scholarship if I keep it up.

BEAT.

Adam stares at the frustration in Trey's eyes, he chews his
lip slightly.

ADAM
Well standing around here moping
won't save your grade either. Your
book still upstairs in your room?

TREY
Haven't put it away yet, so yeah.

ADAM
Go get it, I got straight-A's in
math as a kid, and I can most
definitely get you through ninth
grade algebra.

Trey blinks, surprised.

TREY
You want to actually help me?

ADAM

Not like I have anything better to do. And besides, brother's have to look after each other, right?

Trey stares at Adam as if this is the most foreign concept in the world to him.

TREY

(Shock)

Y-Yeah, I guess they do.

Adam nods then.

ADAM

Then go get it, bud.

Trey smiles, he starts to rush towards the doorway, he stops, turns to Adam a bit.

TREY

Hey, Adam?

BEAT.

Adam turns to look at Trey slowly, the boy chews his lip.

TREY (CONT'D)

Thanks.

ADAM

For what?

TREY

Being the first person in a long time who has actually given a damn.

Adam's brow furrows as Trey rushes out the doorway with that, his face seems to be a mixture of sympathy and a half-smile.

EXT. AARONS FARM HOUSE- EVENING

EST. SHOT:

A much bigger farm compared to where the Bell's live, it's definitely a newer farm, a little more modern. It's likely a few days later as it's earlier in the night than it was previously.

INT. AARONS FARM HOUSE- FOYER

Trey leans against the wall, staring at REGGIE, who seems to be scrutinizing him quite a bit.

TREY
So... How do I-?

REGGIE
Ah, ah, not a word, I talk, you listen. First of all, y'all can go on your date, if nothing else to get it out of her pretty little head that you're right for her.

Trey goes quiet, clearly noticing the fact that Reggie is not much of a listener.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
If she isn't home by nine, I might just come after you with Daddy's shotgun myself.

TREY
We might not even be out THAT-

REGGIE
Ah, not a word.

BEAT.

Trey tugs at his shirt collar, Reggie is clearly not helping his nerves.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Seriously, though. If you have any condoms in your pocket-

MINDY (O.S.)
REGGIE!

Reggie turns her head as Mindy makes her way down, dressed up nice for a date.

MINDY (CONT'D)
You already said we could go, could you not scare him off before we do?

TREY
You look beautiful.

Mindy blushes, pushes the hair from her face.

MINDY
You don't look so bad yourself.

TREY
Eh, hand-me-downs from Adam, but at least he was nice enough to lend me something nicer than my usual stuff. But if it's not-

MINDY
Trey...

BEAT.

Trey stares at her.

MINDY (CONT'D)
You really *do* look good.

REGGIE
Yeah, I'll give him that much.

TREY
Well, thanks.

He looks at Reggie.

TREY (CONT'D)
For the record though, I planned to have her home by eight.

REGGIE
Mmmhmmmm.

Mindy quickly drags Trey out the door as Reggie just glares daggers at him.

EXT. ELRICH LAKE- LAKESIDE- LATER

Trey and Mindy are seated on the shore of a beautiful, but small-ish lake. Trey takes a bite into a turkey sandwich slowly, Mindy turns to him.

MINDY
I'm sorry about my sister-

TREY
Don't sweat it. You're lucky she cares so much about you.

Mindy shakes her head slowly, rolls her eyes.

MINDY

A little TOO much sometimes if you ask me.

TREY

There's no such thing as someone caring *too* much.

(Beat)

Too *little* maybe, but not too much.

Trey shakes his head, leans against the tree he's in front of, and looks at Mindy.

TREY (CONT'D)

But I guess that's the thing about kids who have families.

MINDY

What do you mean?

TREY

You guys take how much they care for granted. No offense. But I'd kill to know that feeling.

MINDY

If you ask me, the Bell's seem to care about you an awful lot. Heck, Adam gave us a ride out here.

Trey shrugs his shoulders a bit.

TREY

Honestly, I just take it as them being nice. I stopped reading into these things when I turned seven.

MINDY

Why?

TREY

Because that's the age where you start to notice things...

MINDY

"Things"?

TREY

It's a little hard to explain.

Trey grabs a coke from the ground, Mindy smiles a little, leans back.

MINDY

I'm not going anywhere.

TREY

We've talked about me enough the last few weeks. What about you? What do you like?

MINDY

Honestly? This.

TREY

Ummm....

MINDY

The lake at night. My friends and I come down here all the time. Some sick parties have been thrown out here.

TREY

I can imagine.

Trey takes a sip of his coke, Mindy shakes her head.

MINDY

But it's also a good place to think. Especially when you go for a swim.

TREY

I wouldn't know much about that.

MINDY

Never taken any lessons?

TREY

Eh, when I was younger one set of foster parents took me. But when you're moving from home to home it can be hard to keep up with it.

Trey shrugs his shoulders, but Mindy smiles, stands up, and holds out her hand.

MINDY

Come on.

TREY

Come on, what?

MINDY

Want to go for a swim?

TREY
It's the middle of September.

MINDY
It's still 80 degrees out here.

TREY
I can't swim.

Mindy gives Trey a look, Trey looks down at her hand for a moment, he takes a deep breath, takes her hand and lets her lead him off.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELRICH LAKE

SPLASH!

Trey is struggling to stay afloat as they land in the water, he's freaking out a bit, taking deep, shallow breaths.

MINDY
Easy, I got you, I got you.

Mindy helps Trey stay afloat, he starts to relax, stares at her.

TREY
Well I guess this isn't so bad.

MINDY
Just hold onto me, I won't let you
drown.

Trey slowly moves his arms up, around her back, slowly, surely, takes a few deep breaths.

TREY
Like this?

MINDY
Perfect.

They float there, the glow of the moonlight illuminating them. Trey slowly moves a hand up, runs his hand along her cheek.

TREY
You're beautiful, you know that?

MINDY

That's the fourth time you've said
that tonight.

Mindy moves close to Trey's body, Trey smiles a bit.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Why not just get on with it?

Trey slowly moves forward as well, their lips meet, and they kiss. The kiss is deep, passionate, and utterly sweet. They break away, slowly stare at each other, smile, and kiss gently again.

FADE TO:

EXT. ELRICH LAKE- LAKESIDE- LATE EVENING

Trey and Mindy are now back on the shore, they're both dry by now, they stand there, staring at the lake.

TREY

You know, I could get used to this.

MINDY

To what?

TREY

Living here... Doing this.

Trey turns to Mindy, he smiles a bit at her, she smiles back. Trey takes a deep breath.

TREY (CONT'D)

I know it's never going to happen,
though.

MINDY

What makes you say that?

TREY

I'm only going to be here for six
months, I already told you that.

MINDY

How do you know?

Trey stares at her, he looks a little sad, his voice is quiet when he starts to talk.

TREY

I've lived in ten foster homes in twelve years, and four different cities...

BEAT.

Trey stares out onto the lake now, keeping a little quiet for several seconds.

TREY (CONT'D)

When you're three... Four... Five, even. You can keep the false hope up. That one of the lives you live will work out.

(Beat)

By the time you're fourteen, you start to get the hint. You're nothing more than just another lost cause in a system that is there to profit off of you.

He kicks a rock nearby to the side, as if that bothers him more than anything else.

TREY (CONT'D)

And then one day, all of us foster kids just have to wake up and realize that this is it. THIS is our existence. Someday you gotta stop thinking of that place people call "home".

Mindy appears to try to reach over, and make some sort of movement. She retracts her hand though, changes her mind.

TREY (CONT'D)

Some day you just *have* to give up hope because at the end of the day...

(Honest, Quieter)

Home just doesn't exist for us...

Mindy stares at Trey, she's frowning a bit, almost as if in understanding.

MINDY

Is that what you've done, Trey?
Just given up...

BEAT.

Trey looks uncertain.

MINDY (CONT'D)
 Because if you ask me, I don't
 think that they're going to give up
 on *you*.

TREY
 (Truthful)
 I guess I just don't know anymore.

Mindy slowly slips her hand toward him, grasping his hand.
 Trey turns, he smiles a bit.

MINDY
 Well whatever you decide... I hope
 you *do* find happiness one day,
 Trey.

TREY
 Yeah.

He stares out at the lake again.

TREY (CONT'D)
 (Sotto)
 Me too.

They continue to stare out at the lake.

EXT. BELL FARM- FOREST EDGE- MORNING

Jason SWINGS an axe down onto a log, splitting it in half, a
 moment passes, he wipes sweat from his face. As he goes down
 to grab another log--

TREY (O.S.)
 JASON!

Jason turns his head slowly as Trey comes jogging up. It
 looks like a little bit of time may have passed. Trey is
 wearing newer looking clothing, and his hair's a little
 longer.

JASON
 Yeah? What's up?

TREY
 Frank said now that I've been here
 two months I can start taking up
 another job.

JASON
 That's great, but why are you
 coming to me?

TREY

I want to learn this whole...

He points at the logs, unsure as to what to call it, obviously.

TREY (CONT'D)

Log splitting thing.

JASON

You mean firewood gathering? But we only do that during the winter.

Trey shrugs his shoulders.

TREY

Well it *is* winter, right?

JASON

Can I even trust you with an axe?

TREY

Come on, Jason. Give me a shot at least? I'm pretty strong, I think I can handle it.

Jason takes a deep breath, rips the axe out of the stump, turns to Trey and hands it over.

JASON

Alright, but you'd damn well better listen to me, or one of us is gonna lose a hand.

TREY

Right, figured as much.

Trey takes the axe slowly, Jason reaches down, grabs the log and sets it on the stump. Jason gets behind him, grabs his arms.

For a moment, Trey struggles, freaking out.

JASON

Trey. TREY! Easy.

TREY

Why are you grabbing me like that!

JASON

To guide your arms kid, will you relax? Deep breaths.

Trey relaxes after a moment, Jason stares at him in confusion.

JASON (CONT'D)
What did you think I was doing?

TREY
(Shaken)
Just forget it.

Jason's posture relaxes, and after a moment, he moves his hands.

JASON
Okay, just an easy swing, kid, let me guide you.
(Whisper)
And for the record, I wouldn't hurt you.

Trey's eyes soften, clearly taking that to heart. Jason smiles a little, clearly he caught on.

JASON (CONT'D)
Alright, ready?

Trey nods, Jason helps him to swing the axe, and cut the log in half with a loud *THWACK!*

TREY
(Excited)
WHOA!

JASON
Awesome, right?

TREY
More than awesome, epic. Mind if I try swinging on my own?

JASON
You sure that you can handle that?
Seriously first time I tried, I almost took my arm off.

Trey nods his head a little, Jason lets go of his arms. Trey takes a deep breath, he sets up a log. Trey takes a deep breath, *SWINGS* the axe!

It breaks the log in half!

Trey grins a little, turns to Jason, who gives a thumbs up.

JASON (CONT'D)
Not bad at all.

TREY
You wanna take a break or anything?
I think I can handle it.

Jason looks at Trey, and smiles a bit, shaking his head.

JASON
Nah, we'll split the work, you do
five, I'll do five. Think you can
handle that, kid?

TREY
Hand me a log.

Jason nods his head a bit, he puts another log up on the
stump, Trey swings the axe downward...

THWACK!

We see the log split in half just as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. BELL FARM HOUSE- FRONT YARD- NIGHT

The door slowly swings open, as it slowly closes, Trey slowly
exits the house. He looks around, nervously, as if he
shouldn't be out.

Trey looks out towards a few feet away, a car is waiting, he
rushes over. And in the back seat we spot Mindy, while in the
passengers seat is Kyle.

The window rolls down.

TREY
Are you sure this is a good idea?

KYLE
Come on, man. You've been putting
this off for a week. My cousin will
have you home before Frank even
knows you're gone.

TREY
I'm just starting to get on their
REALLY good side.

KYLE

And you'll stay on it, just come on
already, the sooner we're gone the
sooner we get back.

Trey chews his lower lip slightly, he turns towards the house
for a moment, walks around the other side, opens the door and
climbs inside.

The car pulls away slowly, driving down the dirt road away
from the farm house.

INT. THE PIT TEEN NIGHT CLUB- LATER

It's a huge teen night club, a giant dance floor in the
middle, two levels to it. Teens are dancing all around,
strobe lights going over them, the music is loud and catchy.

As we quickly realize that is the song playing. We move
through the crowd until we find....

TREY

He's coming from a "bar" with a couple of sodas in his hands,
Kyle beside him with his own.

TREY

Okay, I gotta hand it to you, this
place is AWESOME.

KYLE

I told you it was worth sneaking
out for!

Trey shakes his head, grinning from ear-to-ear.

TREY

Yeah, it really was.

KYLE

Best part? Even if he finds out
you're gone, he has no clue where
you are.

TREY

I doubt he'll even care. I mean,
honestly he has more important
things to worry about right now.

Trey shakes his head.

TREY (CONT'D)

It typically goes bio kids, work,
then foster kids when it comes to
foster homes.

KYLE

That's good. Because the last thing
I want is to get you in trouble
man.

Trey shrugs, he heads towards Mindy, puts an arm around her
shoulders.

TREY

Coca-Cola?

MINDY

Thanks.

Mindy takes it, leans over and gives Trey a kiss on the lips,
he kisses back, they break, and smile. They set their drinks
down on the table beside them. Mindy grabs hold of Trey's
hand.

MINDY (CONT'D)

Come on, Trey, let's dance.

TREY

I don't really-.

MINDY

Ah, ah. Nope, you are not going all
brooding on me tonight, Trey.
You're living a little tonight.

Trey sends Kyle a "help me" type of look before he's dragged
into the crowd by Mindy. Kyle chuckles, shaking his head, a
girl comes up beside him.

GIRL

Hey hot stuff, wanna dance?

KYLE

Me?

Trey turns his head to see Kyle and the girl, he gives him a
thumbs up of support. Kyle grins.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Sure.

The girl drags Kyle into the crowd as well, Trey smiles,
allows Mindy to grind up against him, definitely letting
loose.

The strobe lights are still going, they flash over the crowd, it's your typical dance club scene. The partying goes on, the whole group is clearly having fun.

MONTAGE:

- Trey break dances, showing off some of his moves to a couple of impressed party-goers.
- Kyle, thoroughly enjoying his night, makes out with the girl from before. She gives a "naughty" look, drags him into a doorway, they kiss some more.
- Trey and Mindy kiss elsewhere in the club, clearly, having a good time just enjoying each other's company.
- Finally, the trio is back together, they throw up their soda glasses, clang them together in a sort of toast, and a shout of excitement.

FADE TO:

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- FOYER- LATE NIGHT

It's clearly REALLY late at night, the lights are all out, and it's nearly pitch black outside. Trey makes his way inside, closing the door behind him. He flicks the light on to find...

FRANK

Sitting on the bottom step of the staircase. He stares at Trey with a look that's not hard to read: Disappointment. Trey's smile quickly falters.

FRANK

Where the HELL have you been?

TREY

Frank, I-.

FRANK

Do you have ANY idea how worried *sick* I've been? I go into your bedroom to check up on you and you're not there.

TREY

You check up on me at night?

Frank's glare shuts Trey up quickly, he knows better.

FRANK

Don't. I get it, there comes a time where every kid in your situation rebels.

TREY

Okay, so we're cool then?

FRANK

You're kidding, right?

(Blunt)

You're grounded for the next two weeks, if you thought your room was a cell before, you have no idea.

Trey's stunned by this, so much so his jaw drops.

TREY

What?

FRANK

(Angry)

It's MIDNIGHT, Trey.

(Firm)

I've been sitting here wondering whether or not to call the police. I thought you could have been snatched, or hurt...

ADAM (O.S.)

And I was five *seconds* away from dialing.

Trey turns to see Adam come from the other room, he looks equally frustrated with Trey. Trey stares at the ground.

TREY

I didn't think you'd even notice or... Care.

FRANK

(Calming Down)

I don't care WHAT you thought.

Trey backs up a bit as Frank gets up, seemingly aggressively, he backs up a bit. Frank reaches an arm up, and pulls Trey into a tight HUG.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm just glad you're *safe*.

Trey blinks, he's a bit stunned, actually, VERY stunned, and confused. Frank turns around after letting go, heading up the stairs, Trey turns to Adam.

TREY
What just happened?

ADAM
What did you think was gonna happen?

TREY
Usually it's just like... Y'know...
A lot of screaming, punching,
kicking...

Trey shakes his head.

TREY (CONT'D)
I really... I don't understand what happened.

Adam frowns a bit, stares in Trey's eyes, his facial features soften a bit.

ADAM
Trey, we would *never* hurt you.
That's not even an option.

Adam takes a step toward him a bit, puts an arms around him as well, Trey looks confused even more.

ADAM (CONT'D)
He cares, Jason cares, *I care*. And
no matter what you do that isn't
going to change.

TREY
... I... I don't even know what to say.

ADAM
You don't have to say anything
Trey, just never scare us like that
again, alright?

Trey nods his head a little bit, his eyes hitting the ground as Adam lets him go.

TREY
Yeah, I promise... And I'm sorry, I really am.

ADAM
It's okay, Trey...

TREY

So you guys aren't going to send me back now?

ADAM

Are you kidding me? I think we've all gotten used to you just a little too much to even think about going there.

Trey pauses a moment, steps forward, and hugs Adam. Adam seems stunned himself, he stands there for several seconds, but hugs back.

TREY

... I'd hug Frank, but he just left.

ADAM

Yeah, I get it.

We expect Trey to break off, but he lays his head against Adam's chest a moment. It's a really touching, heartfelt moment. Trey finally lets go, and steps back.

TREY

I should get to bed.

ADAM

Yeah, that's a very good idea. Because trust me, when you're grounded, he means it.

TREY

I know... And I'm glad.

Trey starts to head up the staircase, Adam looks a little confused now, but only watches Trey leave.

EXT. WOODED AREA- DAY

We're in a wooded area, a moment passes and ADAM comes out from the break. JASON is right behind him, they head into the clearing of the wooded area they're in. Trey comes up last, he stares around.

TREY

Where are we going?

JASON

If we told you, it wouldn't be much of a surprise, now would it?

TREY

Did you even hear how cliché you just sounded?

JASON

Come on, kid. It'll be fun.

TREY

You've been saying that the past six miles. How long until the "fun" begins, exactly?

RUSTLE. RUSTLE.

Looks like we were wrong, Kyle comes up in dead-last, he looks exhausted, takes a few deep breaths.

KYLE

Seriously man, my feet are KILLING me.

ADAM

Man up you two, we're almost there.

Kyle looks expectantly to Trey, who shrugs back as they continue to follow the two men.

KYLE

You said that Jason knows how to use an axe right?

TREY

(Chuckling)
Kyle, will you relax?

KYLE

I'm just saying, I've seen like EIGHT horror movies that started out like this.

He uncaps his water bottle, takes a drink, his sleeve falls back slightly to reveal...

A dark spot on his arm.

Trey sees it, we do too, and it almost looks like a BRUISE.

TREY

What's on your arm, Kyle?

Kyle looks at his arm, pulls his sleeve down carefully, shrugging his shoulders.

KYLE

I fell out of bed this morning,
probably left a bruise.

TREY

That looks a little older than this
morning, man.

Kyle shrugs his shoulder, he picks up the pace of his walking
a little bit.

KYLE

It's fine. Really. Doesn't even
hurt.

TREY

Dude, I'm really getting worried
about you.

Trey stops him slowly, looking Kyle dead on in the eyes.

TREY (CONT'D)

First that weird stuff about going
to your place a while back and now
the bruise. Dude is someone-?

KYLE

NO!

It's a quick answer, Trey backs off a bit, Kyle shakes his
head.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Just forget about it man, it's not
worth worrying about.

Kyle walks off with that, Trey frowns worry obvious in his
facial features. Trey jogs over to catch up, Adam waits,
motions him over.

ADAM

Come on, we're here.

TREY

Are you finally going to tell me
what "here" is?

ADAM

Come on, where's your sense of
adventure, Trey?

TREY

You really are just an overgrown
kid, you know that, Adam?

Adam rolls his eyes, Trey allows him to lead him through the underbrush and to...

EXT. OVERLOOK- TOP

An amazing and BEAUTIFUL sight. There are rocks all around, and they're high up enough that we can see a MASSIVE expanse of fielding, we see a few animals in the distance too. Trey's mouth gapes open.

TREY

Whoa.

ADAM

Satisfied?

Adam winks at Trey, then makes his way forward as Trey follows. Jason and Kyle are up ahead.

KYLE

Dude, I can almost see the next town from here.

TREY

Does anybody else know about this place...?

ADAM

That's the best part. We've never told anyone but the two of you. This was where we'd hang out when we were your age.

Trey grins a little bit, Adam seats himself on a rock.

JASON

Yeah, we used to play up here all the time. But y'know, we got older and...

ADAM

We don't have much use for it these days. But thought you two might like to know it's here.

KYLE

Dude, can you imagine the massive party we could throw out here?

BEAT.

Jason shakes his head.

JASON

Nope, no parties. Too much beer,
and you know where that's gonna end
up. The point is the natural beauty
of the place.

Kyle raises an eyebrow, he looks totally lost.

KYLE

Uh-huh. And that's good for?

ADAM

Hanging out, talking, whatever you
need it for, really.

KYLE

(Grinning)

I guess if I got my scetch pad up
here and my painting stuff it would
be awesome to paint a picture of
this view.

TREY

(In Awe)

It's amazing.

Trey takes a couple of steps forward, taking in the beauty
clearly, then turns to Kyle.

TREY (CONT'D)

They're right y'know. The best part
of it is the secret. No one that
pollutes or any of that crap knows
it's here.

BEAT.

TREY (CONT'D)

I'd love to take Mindy up here one
day when she's not out of town.

ADAM

Ohhh, romantic.

He nudges Trey a bit, playfully.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I like it, kiddo.

JASON

Just be careful around here, okay
guys? The drop is pretty steep.

TREY

Yeah, with my fear of heights I
don't think you have a problem with
me going near the edge.

Trey leans against the tree, Adam stares at Trey, nudges him again, and nods in a direction. Trey follows him slowly as he begins to walk.

They walk a few feet away, coming upon a tree.

ADAM

You want a way to really impress
her, you'll carve your names into
this tree.

Trey takes a few steps forward, he sees several names on the tree, all along the trunk.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's not just a secret kept by us.
It was our entire family, every
couple that made it is on here.

TREY

I saw your name, I thought you were
single...

BEAT.

Adam's silent, as if he doesn't want to talk about this, at all.

TREY (CONT'D)

(Reading)
Who's "Serenity"?

ADAM

My wife.

Trey stares at Adam, he's grown distant, clearly. Trey stares at him.

TREY

I don't-

ADAM

We were both in the army
together... She uh... Let's just
say...

He's silent a moment, stares out into the distance.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I lost more than just a few friends
during my time over in Iraq.

TREY

I'm so sorry Adam, I didn't know. I
thought you only lost your Mom...
No one mentioned a wife too.

ADAM

It's okay, you were just curious.
And that was a while back.

He runs his fingers along the name, he smiles, points to a
spot beside it.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Put your names next to ours... That
spot's open.

BEAT.

He smiles, and places a hand gently on Trey's shoulder.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Maybe you'll have better luck than
we did.

Trey smiles slowly as Adam turns around, clearly, a little
unsettled. As Adam walks off, Trey stares at the tree
again...

"ADAM+SERENITY 4 LIFE"

Trey runs his hand along the engraving, then turns, a
sympathetic look in his eyes as Adam heads back to where the
others are.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- ADAM'S BEDROOM- EVENING

Adam stands in his bedroom, looking down at a picture in his
hands. It's of him, and a VERY pretty woman. He has his arms
around her, he's kissing her on the cheek. She has dark hair
and bright blue eyes. This is SERENITY.

TREY (O.S.)

She was really beautiful.

Adam turns his head, seeing Trey by the doorway, Adam half-
smiles.

ADAM

You should have seen her in person,
kid. She was... She was even more
beautiful on the inside.

Adam turns around, he sighs quietly.

ADAM (CONT'D)

We had so many plans.

(Quietly)

One of them was to foster.

BEAT.

Trey nods his head a little with a smile.

TREY

You'd have made a great Dad to some
kid, Adam... Probably still would.

ADAM

Thanks, Trey. But I think that ship
sailed when she passed away.

TREY

Why? I mean come on Adam, you're
basically OOZING the Father role.
You're a lot like Frank actually in
that sense.

Adam shakes his head, he shrugs his shoulders, and sets the
picture down.

ADAM

You're fourteen, so of course you
wouldn't get it.

He makes his way forward, messes with Trey's hair.

ADAM (CONT'D)

But some day, you're going to
realize having a kid isn't easy.

TREY

I already know that.

(Sotto)

I've heard that excuse used enough,
at least.

ADAM

Hey.

He pushse Trey's head up as gently as he can, staring him in
the eyes.

ADAM (CONT'D)

If anyone shouldn't be giving up on anything, it's you and the whole "family" thing.

(Honest)

You're going to make someone the proud parents of an *amazing* kid someday.

TREY

It's already too late for me to do that.

ADAM

Why? Because some jerks said so?

Trey's silent at that.

ADAM (CONT'D)

The second you started putting your guard down... The second I saw the real Trey I couldn't understand *why* no one would take you.

He shakes his head a bit, nods for Trey to sit down in a nearby chair. Adam takes another chair sits in it.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Maybe if you started showing people more of that, you'd have that home, Trey.

BEAT.

Trey is silent, he stares at Adam, and smiles at him a little.

TREY

I'll tell you what... If you don't give up hope of being a Dad someday.

Another BEAT.

He seems to hesitate.

TREY (CONT'D)

I won't give up hope of finding a family.

Trey holds out his hand slowly, Adam stares at the hand, then back into Trey's eyes. He slowly reaches forward, and shakes his hand.

ADAM
You got a deal, little man.

Trey nods his head, standing.

TREY
I should get going, I have
homework... See you at dinner?

ADAM
See you at dinner.

Adam watches Trey leave this time, he looks very thoughtful for a moment, then turns to the picture again. He remains silently pondering, wordlessly staring into the camera.

EXT. JAMES ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL- FRONT AREA- AFTERNOON

Kyle is leaning against a wall, he's got a sketchpad and pencil in hand, seems to be deep into drawing something as Trey and Mindy make their way out the front door, he stares up.

KYLE
What took you guys so long?

TREY
Stuff.

KYLE
(Looks Between Them)
Make-out session.

TREY
... You're good.

KYLE
You always have the same look on
your face after you two make-out.
(Shrugs)
So, what's on the agenda this
weekend?

TREY
Movie night, you in?

KYLE
Most definitely. As long as it's
not horror, hate that shit.

Trey nods his head a little, about to speak when Mindy speaks up.

MINDY

Nopeeee, no horror at all. There's not even a horror movie out worth seeing.

TREY

I don't even like horror movies, life's depressing enough.

The three start down the sidewalk slowly, Trey looks between the two of them slowly. Trey's eyes notice something, they narrow, he pushes Kyle aside slowly.

KYLE

What the hell, man?

TREY

Who hit you?

KYLE

What are you talking about?

Trey grimaces, staring at something partially hidden by the collar of Kyle's shirt. It's a REALLY deep bruise, unlike the others this looks like it caused a *ton* of pain.

TREY

(Quiet)

Kyle, I know how to tell a "fell out of bed" bruise from THAT easily.

Mindy who is a few steps ahead of them comes to a stop, turns her head to them.

MINDY

Is everything okay!?

TREY

Go ahead, we'll catch up.

Mindy frowns a bit, but starts to head down the sidewalk, Kyle tries to avoid eye contact with Trey.

TREY (CONT'D)

Kyle, if you don't tell me the truth, I'm going to call the police.

KYLE

You can't do that, man.

TREY

Kyle, have you seen the bruise they left?

Kyle looks away a bit, Trey looks at him with a look of pure seriousness in his eyes.

KYLE

It's my Dad, okay? Sometimes, like last night, he gets drunk... And... I'm not the easiest kid to-.

TREY

Fuck this. You're coming home with Adam and I, we're calling the cops.

KYLE

Trey, no way. I'm all my Dad has.

TREY

So *what*? He's hurting you, Kyle. No one.

(Repeating; Firm)

NO ONE should have to go through that.

Kyle stares Trey in the eyes, he gulps slightly, but shakes his head a little bit. He tries to move past, but Trey shoves him against the wall.

KYLE

Trey. Easy.

TREY

You think I don't know you were about to run?

(Scoffs)

I'm a foster kid Kyle, and running is too predictable.

KYLE

Trey, I can't tell anyone about my Dad. It's not an option, not for me.

TREY

Why?

BEAT.

Kyle stares Trey in the eye slowly, he doesn't look totally certain.

KYLE
 Because if I did that, I don't have
 anywhere else to go.

Trey's eyes soften.

TREY
 Kyle, the system isn't so bad.

KYLE
 Not according to you, according to
 you it's HELL.
 (Beat)
 Trey, come on man. Just promise me
 you won't tell anyone.

TREY
 Kyle-

KYLE
PROMISE ME!

Trey stands there, he chews his lip a bit, his eyes are
 filled with guilt.

TREY
 (Defeated)
 Alright, I promise...

BEAT.

Trey and Kyle stare at each other for a long, hard moment, he
 lets Kyle go, and Kyle heads off ahead of him. Trey stands
 there for a long moment, watching him leave for a moment...

STEVE (O.S.)
 (Pre-Lap)
 So, what do you think of this place
 now?

EXT. BELL FARM- FRONT YARD- LATER

Trey is sitting on a stump quietly, Steve is standing in
 front of him, a soda in his hand, he stares over at Trey
 quietly.

TREY
 You've sent me to worse foster
 homes.

STEVE
 According to you at times, *much*
 worse.

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

(Curious)

According to that one guy, Adam, it seems to him you might be interested in staying through the summer, maybe later.

TREY

I don't know yet, honestly. The family is great, don't get me wrong...

BEAT.

Trey shifts a little bit.

TREY (CONT'D)

But they haven't exactly made any indications that they want me in the family.

STEVE

So, if you wanted them to they could foster you until you're eighteen. You won't be adopted, but-

TREY

Yeah, but... Lately I've been thinking that being adopted might not really be so bad.

BEAT.

Steve looks at Trey with a look of almost shock, he smiles a bit.

STEVE

You want Frank to adopt you?

TREY

Don't jump to conclusions, Steve.

Steve looks at Trey again, this time a bit deeper into his eyes.

STEVE

It's Adam, isn't it?

Trey doesn't say anything, but he does shift a bit at the mention of Adam's name.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Well I'm not going to lie, he seems like a great guy.

TREY

He's not interested in a kid with as much baggage as I have.

(Quiet)

I talked to him the other day, I tried to see... If maybe he was interested in kids.

STEVE

Didn't bite?

TREY

Not even a nibble.

Trey stands up a bit, he paces back and forth, looking uncertain of himself.

TREY (CONT'D)

I only have a few months left, and I *really* like how I feel around him.

STEVE

Maybe he doesn't catch onto subtltly?

TREY

No way am I gonna just flat out ask him, you're nuts. Last time I did that I was ten and my foster mom laughed in my face.

Steve frowns a bit, he sighs quietly, looks at the ground, then back at Trey.

STEVE

Do you want me to talk to him?

TREY

No, no. There's not really a reason to.

BEAT.

TREY (CONT'D)

I figure if he's interested, he'll tell me. And if not...

(Distant)

Try and try again, I guess.

STEVE

You never know, Trey. It wouldn't be the first time something like that happened.

Trey stares at Steve with an eyebrow cocked.

TREY

When was the last time a twenty-eight year old man woke up one day and said "I want to adopt a fourteen year old with baggage"?

Steve frowns a bit, sighs quietly.

STEVE

Plenty of times I'm sure, just not with my kids... But there's a first time for everything.

Trey remains silent at that.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Trey, I know you're scared of getting hurt again.

TREY

I just don't want to embarrass myself if Adam doesn't... Well...

His head lowers slowly.

STEVE

If he doesn't love you?

TREY

Who am I kidding? Who would, right?

STEVE

Hey, enough with the pity party, okay? That's not your style.

Trey shakes his head a little bit, chewing his lip silently, and looking at Steve.

TREY

Sorry, I *have* been a little down on myself lately.

STEVE

Well work on that. But I really need to get going, so stay good. And don't give up on him, kid.

Trey nods his head a little bit, he heads off towards the house, where we see that Frank is waiting.

ADAM (O.S.)

Trey!

Trey turns around slowly, Adam is making his way up, putting a hand on his shoulder.

ADAM (CONT'D)
So, how'd it go?

TREY
Eh, about as well as a meeting with a social worker can go. But he isn't making me leave, so that's a plus.

Adam nods his head a little then stares at Trey slowly, smiling a bit.

ADAM
You okay, kid? You've kinda been spacey all week.

TREY
To tell you the truth?
(Beat)
Not really.

Adam's face turns to an expression of concern.

ADAM
What's going on, Trey?

TREY
Nothing... I just need to go...
Talk to Mindy.

He looks at Adam, ducks under his arm.

TREY (CONT'D)
I'll be back in a bit, okay?

He heads off before Adam even has his mouth open fully to answer him.

EXT. AARONS FARM HOUSE- FRONT PORCH

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Trey is knocking loudly on the front door, he takes a step back, waits a couple of moments, he's about to knock again when...

REGGIE

Opens the door.

REGGIE
Mindy's not home.
(Confused)
Isn't she supposed to hang out with
you tonight anyway?

TREY
Yeah, she is. But I'm not here to
talk to her, I was actually looking
for you.

Reggie looks completely confused, she blinks a little bit,
shakes her head and crosses her arms.

REGGIE
What do you want, Trey?

TREY
I need advice. But I don't want it
from... Well... Someone in my
foster family.

BEAT.

Reggie looks ready to say something, but her mouth closes.
She notices the concern in Trey's eyes.

REGGIE
Are you in some sort of trouble,
Trey?

TREY
No, but someone I know might be.

Reggie stares at him, she steps aside slowly, concern on her
face.

REGGIE
Come on, I'll make us some coffee.

Trey enters the house slowly, Reggie closes the door slowly.

INT. AARONS FARM HOUSE- DEN

Trey and Reggie are sitting on couches on either side of a
table. Reggie is slightly sipping her coffee, a look of
concern even more present.

REGGIE
So this kid... You've seen a lot of
bruises on their body?

TREY

He has a new one every other day.
It's really starting to worry me...

REGGIE

But he won't go to the police?
That's crazy, why not?

TREY

He's afraid of going into the
system.

Reggie sets her cup down, leans back.

REGGIE

Why would you even come to me for
this?

TREY

Mindy has always said you were the
best person to get advice from.

REGGIE

Yeah, but I'm not like you, I
wasn't a foster kid, I don't know
what the system was like or-

TREY

This has nothing to do with that
fear. This has to do with the
fact... The fact that one of my
friends is being hurt...

BEAT.

Trey shakes his head a bit.

TREY (CONT'D)

I've been hurt before. I've known
other foster kids who were hurt
before. But I never... I never knew
anyone.

REGGIE

Outside the system?

Trey nods his head a little bit, Reggie chews her lip.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

This is a tough one, Trey. I mean
the right thing to do is tell
someone and get him out of there.

TREY

But if I do that he could end up hating me.

REGGIE

(Curious)

Who is it anyway?

Trey's silent, Reggie frowns a bit.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I get it, probably better I didn't know until you know what you're going to do.

TREY

So what would you do?

REGGIE

Depending on who it is?

BEAT.

She shakes her head.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Wait it out, and if it gets any worse, forget what he thinks is best. Call the cops. No one should go through this.

TREY

And if he hates me...?

Reggie stares at Trey, she sighs.

REGGIE

I think his safety is more important, kid.

Trey nods his head.

TREY

You're right, that WAS a stupid comment.

Trey chuckles at himself, he stares down, then up at Reggie.

TREY (CONT'D)

I'd really appreciate it though...
If for now we kept this between us.
Just in case, y'know?

REGGIE

Obviously, I figured as much. But you should get going if that's the case. Mindy will know something is up if she sees the two of us talking.

TREY

Right, I guess I'll see you later.

Trey gets up slowly, starts to head out of the room, Reggie looks thoughtful, then speaks up.

REGGIE

Don't think this all changes anything, though.

BEAT.

Trey turns his head with a cocked eyebrow.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I still have my eyes on you.

TREY

Figured as much.

Trey exits the room, leaving a VERY concerned-looking Reggie behind.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- DEN- EVENING

Trey and Mindy are on the couch, a movie is playing on the television. Mindy is sprawled out on the couch and laying her head on his lap, Trey sighs, looks at the empty chair beside them.

MINDY

Maybe he had homework?

TREY

Yeah, I guess he might have.

Mindy sits up slowly, puts her hand on his cheek, Trey stares into her eyes.

MINDY

You know, you're spending a lot of time worrying about Kyle. And not enough time worrying about... Other things.

Trey smiles a bit, he leans forward, they kiss gently on the lips.

TREY

I know, I just have a lot of my mind the last few days.

MINDY

I've noticed. But come on, shut your brain off for a few hours, we haven't had alone time in a while.

TREY

We aren't exactly alone, Adam and Jason are upstairs.

MINDY

Whatever. You get my point.

They continue to kiss, it's deep and passionate, the two of them seem to be falling more and more for each other each time we see them. Now is no different.

TREY

Something tells me I'm not going to find out if Tony and Maria have a happy ending tonight.

MINDY

Eh, it's a modern day Romeo and Juliet.

TREY

I never liked Shakespeare.

He turns her around, she's on her back on the couch, he leans down, kisses her deeply. She smiles between the kissing, he slowly begins to kiss her neck.

A throat CLEARS.

Trey and Mindy jump out of their skin as they turn to see FRANK, coming in, and taking off his coat.

FRANK

Keep it PG-13 you two.

TREY

Oh come on Frank, I wasn't-

FRANK

Trey...

BEAT.

Trey takes a deep breath, rolls his eyes and scoots back a little.

TREY

Yes Frank.

MINDY

We weren't going to do anything sir, honest.

FRANK

I trust you Mindy, but Trey-

Trey gives Frank a look.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Alright, I'm going. I want you out of here by ten though, Mindy.

Frank gives the "I'm watching YOU" sign in a teasing way, Trey rolls his eyes, but Mindy looks confused.

MINDY

What do you think he was gonna say, anyway?

TREY

It was nothing... Nothing at all.

Trey seems to be skidding over the subject, he sits up, grabs the controller.

TREY (CONT'D)

Well now that the mood has been thoroughly murdered, should we find a better movie than this?

MINDY

Now that Kyle's not here....

TREY

I hear there's a Friday the 13th marathon on...

Mindy stares at Trey, playful frowning.

MINDY

I thought real life was depressing enough?

TREY

I said that to make Kyle feel better. Bring on the carnage.

Mindy laughs, snuggling up closer to Trey slowly, as she isn't looking, he grabs his phone, checks his phone...

0 MISSED CALLS; 0 TEXTS

Trey seems to frown slowly, he sets it back down on the table beside him. As he leans his head against his palm we...

EXT. CAFE- OUTDOOR PATIO- MORNING

Trey is seated at a table outside a small cafe, he's holding a cup of coffee, Kyle sitting in front of him.

KYLE

Are you going to stare at me like this all day?

TREY

Have you told anyone other than me?

Kyle's brow furrows a bit, his head turns away from Trey.

KYLE

I really wish you would just drop this, I don't want to talk about it.

TREY

Keeping it bottled up isn't going to help, Kyle. It never does.

BEAT.

KYLE

How would you know? You never even talk about your last home.

Trey's silent, he rubs the back of his neck slowly.

TREY

That's complicated, Kyle. He wasn't my actual Dad. YOUR actual Dad however, is beating the shit out of you.

KYLE

So?

TREY

"So?", do you know how ridiculous you're sounding right now? Parents are NOT supposed to hit you.

(MORE)

TREY (CONT'D)
I grew up in the foster care system
and even I know that.

Kyle starts to stand up, grabbing his coffee, Trey stands up.

TREY (CONT'D)
Kyle, you need to listen to me.

KYLE
No, you need to mind your own
business.

TREY
(Getting Frustrated)
This IS my business!
(Blunt)
YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND, and I'm not
about to just stand here and let
him do this to you!

KYLE
(Sotto)
If you really are my best friend,
you'll just back off.

TREY
That's not what friends do.

Kyle starts to move, but Trey doesn't let him leave, he steps
in front of him quickly.

TREY (CONT'D)
Come on Ky, we'll go to the police
together. I'll be right there when
you write the statement and
everything.

Kyle crosses his arms, and stares at Trey, his eyes locking
with him.

KYLE
Fine, I'll do it. But you gotta
give me time.

TREY
To do what?

KYLE
Pack. I can't just leave all at
once, he'll figure out something is
up.
(Quiet)
And I'll need somewhere to crash-

TREY

I'm sure once we explain that Frank won't mind. How long are you going to need?

KYLE

A couple of days?

BEAT.

Trey looks nervous, he looks down at the ground, then back at Kyle, taking a deep breath.

TREY

Are you serious or trying to make me happy?

KYLE

I'm serious. I swear. Just... I need time.

Trey crosses his arms, he looks uncertain, seems to hesitate.

TREY

You have until Sunday. Then I'm telling Frank and we'll go over there and get you out ourselves.

KYLE

... Alright.

Kyle seems to tremble a little bit, Trey takes a step forward, puts his hands on Kyle's shoulders.

TREY

Hey...

Kyle stares at him.

TREY (CONT'D)

It's gonna be okay, you're doing the right thing.

KYLE

Think they'll let me stay in Parish County?

TREY

(Encouraging)

Might even let you stay with us.

Kyle nods his head a little bit, there's a HONK. He turns to see a truck pulling up.

KYLE
That's my Dad.

TREY
Don't do anything that'll tip him
off.

KYLE
I know.

Kyle takes a few steps forward, opening the door, and climbing in. Trey watches the truck drive off as his eyes fill with visible worry.

INT. BELL FARM- FRONT YARD- EVENING

Trey sits outside the farm, relaxing back on a log, he's completely silent, holding the picture of himself and his mother. A figure approaches him slowly, Trey stares up to see Frank.

FRANK
Don't you have homework?

TREY
I finished it a couple of hours
ago.

FRANK
(RE: Picture)
Is that your Mom?

Trey nods silently.

FRANK (CONT'D)
She was beautiful.

TREY
Yeah, she was...
(Beat)
I miss her...

FRANK
Never thought I'd hear you admit
something that personal.

TREY
Maybe I'm just tired of hiding
behind a mask all the time.

BEAT.

Trey starts to stand up, Frank however gently puts a hand on his shoulder, and gently pushes him into a seated position.

FRANK

Is everything okay?

TREY

I'm kinda asking myself the same question... Nothing's exactly what I expected... Nothing's going the way I thought it would.

FRANK

I don't understand.

TREY

I *like* it here. I'm starting to *care* about everyone I've gotten to know.

Trey looks up at Frank with a look of complete confusion.

TREY (CONT'D)

I'm not supposed to feel at home. I'm supposed to pass through, have a place to rest my head, and leave.

FRANK

Yeah, I know how that feels.

TREY

How could you?

FRANK

Because I grew up in foster care too.

Trey's head shoots up, his eyes wide with complete surprise.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Don't look so surprised. You're not the only one in the system y'know.

TREY

Are you... Serious?

FRANK

I've never been the type for jokes.
(Curious)
How else do you think I put up with your bullcrap, Trey?

TREY

I thought you were just a hard ass.

FRANK

I am. But on top of that, you remind me a lot of myself at your age.

Trey snorts, Frank raises an eyebrow.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You think I'm kidding? When I was fourteen I hot wired my foster dad's car and drove it into the pool.

TREY

I'm not that bad, Frank.

FRANK

Of course not, but you are a rebel.

TREY

I can't argue with you on that one.

Trey laughs a little, Frank does too. Frank sits himself down on the log too, puts a hand on his shoulder.

FRANK

You shouldn't beat yourself up about Adam if that's what this is about. He's a tough nut to crack.

TREY

Why do you think this is about Adam? It could be about anyone.

FRANK

You don't think I've noticed how you've been trying to get his attention lately? Even if I wasn't a foster kid I'd have to be blind.

TREY

Yeah, like I'd want that big lug as my Dad.

(Fake Chuckle)

You must be on something. I just... He's...

BEAT.

Trey looks down a bit, he doesn't seem to know what to say.

TREY (CONT'D)

Is it just that obvious?

FRANK

That's not such a bad thing, is it?
Maybe he'll notice too.

TREY

He's not supposed to, that's the
point. He's not supposed to be
responsible for me, and I'm not
going to make him be...

Trey stands to his feet, Frank stares up at him, Trey stares
back at him.

TREY (CONT'D)

You can't skip out on the job that
easy.

FRANK

I'm not saying I wanted to. What
I'm saying is that I think your
home is with someone else.

Trey looks thoughtfully at him for several moments, he takes
a deep breath.

TREY

I need to get ready... Y'know, I'm
spending the night at Kyle's house.

He pauses, then shakes his head.

TREY (CONT'D)

And just so you know, this has
NOTHING to do with Adam.

Trey starts to head towards the house slowly, Frank watches
him go, takes a deep breath, and looks away.

MINDY (O.S.)

It's beautiful.

EXT. OVERLOOK- TOP- NIGHT

We focus on the stars for a moment, and then move slowly
down, further and further until we can see TREY and MINDY.
They're walking along the overlook slowly, hand-in-hand.

TREY

Why do you think I brought you
here?

MINDY

I can't believe I've never seen
this place, my family comes hiking
here all the time.

TREY

You haven't even seen the best part
yet.

Mindy raises an eyebrow, he starts to head for the tree that
Adam took him to earlier.

MINDY

A tree?

TREY

This is what I brought you out here
to see.

MINDY

(Surprised)

A tree?

(Confused)

I lied to my parents AND Reggie,
about a tree?

Trey smirks, they come to a stop in front of it.

TREY

Old foster family secret number
two. The lover's tree.

Mindy scans the tree, her eyes widen, Trey's already taking a
rock.

MINDY

All of these names... Are their
family members?

TREY

Yep. And tonight, we're going onto
it.

MINDY

Trey, are you SURE that's okay? I
mean...

TREY

Adam told me to.

Trey begins to carve into the tree, right by the "ADAM +
SERENITY" carving.

MINDY

So is there a story behind this tree?

TREY

Supposedly if you do it, your relationship will last.

MINDY

Ah, it's one of THOSE kind of trees.

TREY

I know, it's cheesy.

Trey carves further into the tree, and slowly takes a step back...

"TREY + MINDY"

Is now carved right beside "ADAM + SERENITY". Mindy smiles a bit, looks at Trey.

MINDY

A little... But I like cheesy.

Trey stares at Mindy slowly, they stare at one another for a moment, he moves towards her, and they kiss. After a moment, it's not even a kiss, she leaps and wraps her legs around him.

Things become heated and passionate quickly, Trey is against the tree, he's kissing her neck. But before things get too steamy, Mindy breaks off.

TREY

What's wrong?

MINDY

I don't know... If I'm ready for this Trey.

Trey frowns, he looks extremely confused.

TREY

I thought that's why we came out here... Alone?

MINDY

Trey... I don't even... I'm not even sure I know how to... Y'know.

Trey nods his head a little bit, understandingly.

TREY
I get it, no sex. That's fine.

MINDY
How can you even be so relaxed
about it? It's your first time
too...

BEAT.

Trey's silent.

MINDY (CONT'D)
Isn't it?

TREY
(Quiet)
When you're in the system... You
grow up a little faster than most
kids.

He stares at her, stroking her cheek.

TREY (CONT'D)
Which is the same reason I won't do
anything if you're not ready.
You... Deserve that choice.
Everyone does.

Mindy stares at Trey, right in the eyes, she smiles, moves
in, kissing him deeply, starting to move her hand up his
shirt.

TREY (CONT'D)
You don't have to...

MINDY
I know, but that was so sweet. It
kinda...

She leans in slowly to his ear.

MINDY (CONT'D)
Turned me on.

They move into a seated position, Trey leans in, so does
Mindy, they quickly begin to kiss at an increasingly more
passionate rate.

MONTAGE:

- Trey slowly moves Mindy's jacket off of her shoulders,
she's moving her hand to his groin area.

- Trey is moving his own shirt off slowly, now shirtless he leans in, she takes her top off too, but we can't see much.

- From the back, and a small distance we see their naked bodies intertwining, no nudity shown, but we can see enough to get the point across.

END MONTAGE.

SLOW MOVE
UPWARD:

We move up along the grass slowly, and find Trey and Mindy again, they're covered by a blanket that one of them likely brought. Mindy's head is rested against Trey's bare chest.

TREY

You know, what I said really wasn't that sweet.

MINDY

(Quiet)

What did you mean anyway?

Trey stares down at Mindy slowly, he shakes his head, taking a deep breath.

TREY

I guess... Two years ago... My foster mom didn't exactly...

BEAT.

Trey's eyes trail off.

TREY (CONT'D)

Give me a choice. So I would never not give someone a choice either.

Trey is quiet after this, it's obvious what he means, even if he doesn't say anything more.

TREY (CONT'D)

Let's just say this was a lot more magical.

MINDY

Just magical...?

Trey is silent, he stares down at her, and kisses her on the head, leaning back. Mindy seems content enough. We pull up towards the sky again....

EXT. BELL FARM HOUSE- MORNING

We move down from the sky and towards a shot of the Bell Farm, it's quiet for now. We can see Trey as he makes his way, now fully clothed, towards the home, a duffle bag over his shoulder.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- FOYER

The door slowly opens, and Trey steps in slowly and quietly. He looks around, sets the duffle bag down.

TREY
Hey guys, I'm home!

BEAT.

A moment passes and there isn't a word spoken. Trey quietly makes his way towards the doorway to the kitchen.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- KITHCEN

Frank stares up towards the doorway, Jason and Adam are both seated at the table. There's a very somber look on all of their faces. Trey walks in.

TREY
Why the long faces?

FRANK
Where were you last night, Trey?

TREY
I told you, I spent the night at Kyle's house. We-

FRANK
You DIDN'T. Don't lie to me.

Trey backs up a bit, Frank sounds more upset than angry, Trey looks between them, focuses on Adam.

TREY
How...?

JASON
You're gonna want to sit down right now, Trey.

TREY
What's wrong with you guys?

ADAM
 (Quietly)
 Sit down, Trey.

TREY
 (Freaking Out, Upset)
 WILL SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT THE **FUCK**
 IS GOING ON!?

Adam and Frank look each other in the eye. Adam stands up, he walks over, sets his hands on Trey's shoulders.

ADAM
 (Carefully)
 They found Kyle's body in the
 Tenner's kitchen this morning,
 Trey...

BEAT.

Trey's face contorts in horror and complete and utter shock.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 His Dad beat him to death with a
 baseball bat.

TREY
 (Shrieking)
 YOU'RE LYING!
 (Upset)
 Quit lying to me!

Trey moves away from Adam's grip, tears welling up in his eyes, he stares between the sympathetic looks on each of their faces.

TREY (CONT'D)
 He's NOT dead!

ADAM
 TREY!

Trey rushes off, frantic, Adam tries to chase after him, Frank and Jason eye one another, their heads slowly hang.

MAN (O.S.)
 (Pre-Lap)
 And though I walk through the
 valley in the shadow of death...

EXT. GRAVEYARD- AFTERNOON

We can faintly hear the man's voice continue on with his speech...

The rain is coming down slowly onto the grass. We can see a procession of many people, all dressed in black, and gathered around a grave.

TIGHT ON:

TREY.

He stands there, his head hanging, in the middle of the rain, he doesn't even seem to care. He's a bit of a distance from the Bell's, away from MOST of the people actually.

He looks up slowly to see....

MINDY

She's with her parents, looks just as upset as he does. Reggie is with her, oddly enough she's just as sad as everyone else.

She looks up at him, she forces a smile, waves slightly. Trey averts his gaze downward slowly.

FADE TO:

The same sight a while later, Trey is standing in front of the grave. His eyes look completely dead, almost as if he's in some sort of trance.

Mindy approaches him slowly, puts a hand on his shoulder.

MINDY

You wanna walk home...? Maybe, talk about it?

TREY

(Quietly)

I can't see you anymore, Mindy.

BEAT.

Mindy stares at Trey, looks completely stunned.

MINDY

What?

TREY

I think it's in your best interest
to just... Stay away from me.

MINDY

(Heartbroken)

Why?

Trey pushes the tears that are filling his eyes slowly, he turns his head to her.

TREY

I wish I could tell you... But I
can't... I just can't...

Trey nudges her hand away, he starts to walk off, Mindy stares back at him, heartbroken may as well be tattooed on her forehead.

TREY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry...

He walks away from her, leaving a very confused and heartbroken Mindy alone.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- DINING ROOM- EVENING

Frank, Adam, and Jason are at the dining room table, they're eating dinner clearly. Adam stares at the seat that Trey's normally at, which is empty.

JASON

Adam, he'll come down when he's
ready to.

ADAM

It's been a month... He's barely
come out of his room.

Adam takes a deep breath, he stands to his feet slowly, Frank turns to Adam.

FRANK

He's not going to open the door.

ADAM

He wouldn't for you but maybe he
will for me.

Adam starts to head away from the table, Jason watches him go, then turns to Frank.

JASON
I can't believe I'm saying this.
But I'm worried about him too...

BEAT.

Jason frowns slightly.

JASON (CONT'D)
He was opening up so much I was
even starting to like him.

FRANK
Yeah, well, I think we all were.

Frank returns to his food, Jason doesn't touch his.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S ROOM

Trey is standing at his desk, a piece of paper on it, he's scribbling something down in a hurry. On his bed, we see the duffle bag, it's slightly open, with the picture of him and his Mother on top of several other items.

KNOCK. KNOCK.

Trey's head shoots up, he looks surprised.

ADAM (O.S.)
Trey, can I come in?

Trey chews his lip slightly, he stares towards the window beside him, which is open.

TREY
I'm busy.
(Thinking Quickly)
Doing my homework.

ADAM (O.S.)
You're missing dinner.

TREY
(Short)
I'm not hungry, okay?

BEAT.

There's complete silence on the other end, a quiet sigh, we hear Adam's footsteps as he slowly walks away from the door.

Trey finishes off what he's writing, then heads to the duffle bag, looking at the picture quietly.

TREY (CONT'D)

(Sotto)

I really wish this had worked out,
Mom.

He zips up the duffle bag up slowly, but surely, grabbing it off of the bed as it covers the screen.

EXT. HIGHWAY- NIGHT

It's late night now, a highway with only a handful of cars driving down it. As we pull to the side we see TREY, the duffle bag over his shoulder.

He throws up a hitchhiker's signal as a passing truck drives by, it passes him, Trey puts it down in frustration.

A second passes by.

Trey throws up the signal again, stops in his tracks. The truck slowly pulls to a stop beside him. A greasy older man leans forward, looking to be roughly in his 50s.

TRUCKER

Where you headed kid? Furthest I'm
going is Perish County.

Trey frowns a bit, just his luck.

TREY

Not headed that way.

Trey starts to continue down the road, the trucker honks to get his attention.

TRUCKER

I'll take you wherever you want if
you do something for me.

Trey turns his head, he sees the rather creepy grin on his face. He's quick to get out of there, moving as quickly as he can.

HONK. HONK.

Trey jumps out of his skin, he turns around and we see...

ADAM'S TRUCK

Is pushing forward down the highway, Trey's eyes widen, he keeps walking as quickly as he can.

The truck pulls to a stop, Adam climbs out, climbs down to the side. And slams the door shut.

ADAM

TREY!

Adam rushes forward, doesn't even give Trey a chance to get far before he has a HARD grip on his arm.

TREY

LET GO OF ME!

ADAM

I should tan your hide, you know that!? Do you know how long I've been driving since?

Trey tries to struggle away.

ADAM (CONT'D)

EIGHT O'CLOCK! Looking for your ass before Dad found you gone.

TREY

Let me go, Adam. I'm leaving, and you're not gonna stop me!

ADAM

Is that really how you're gonna find the answers to your problems Trey? By running EVERY time something happens?

TREY

It's none of your business Adam, this is my life, you're not my Father.

Trey yanks him off, Adam's arm swing and knocks Trey FLAT ON THE GROUND. Adam's eyes widen, he reaches down and...

Trey SCREAMS BLOODY MURDER!

Adam reels back, Trey crawls back slowly, Adam looks at him with a slowly softening face.

ADAM

Trey, I'm-

TREY

Don't TOUCH ME!

Trey's eyes are swelling up with tears, he's shaking visibly, we can tell he's terrified.

ADAM
Trey, you know I'd never-

TREY
You just knocked me down!

ADAM
It was an ACCIDENT.

Adam crouches down slowly, he cautiously reaches a hand out, his eyes hit something.

ADAM (CONT'D)
That...

He moves his hand back to reveal a faint WELT- or what used to be one- still is visible, it's old, probably by more than a decade.

ADAM (CONT'D)
How did you get that...?

Trey is silent.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Trey...

Trey stares up at Adam, his mouth doesn't move, nor does he.

TREY (O.S.)
I got it when I was two...

EXT. BELL FARM HOUSE- FRONT PORCH- LATER

Trey and Adam are on the front porch of the home, they're seated on a bench. Adam stares at Trey, who's face is focused on the floor.

TREY
Back then, I was still living with my parents. My Mom... She was the sweetest woman in the world.
(Beat)
My Dad was another story entirely.

Adam watches Trey, who looks to be holding back tears.

TREY (CONT'D)
He was a drug addict. I'm not sure to what or for how long, but he was *always* coming home angry. Mom was probably with him because she was scared.

BEAT.

Some tears start to betray him already.

TREY (CONT'D)

He would beat Mom in front of me,
viciously. And when he was done
with her... He'd beat me too.

(Quiet)

I was just a two year old kid, I
didn't know what I had done wrong,
I didn't know that I hadn't done
anything.

ADAM

Your Dad gave you that?

TREY

He gave me a lot of things.

Adam hesitates a moment, but slowly reaches an arm around
Trey, holding him close.

TREY (CONT'D)

One night, they were fighting, big
time. I don't remember about what.
But Mom was shouting about
"leaving" and about me... She had
her suitcase packed.

Trey starts to tremble, it's violent, Adam holds him closer,
Trey doesn't even fight it.

ADAM

(Quiet)

Trey, you don't-

TREY

He played for his company's
baseball team... So he had a metal
bat in the closet. And when Mom
went to come and get me...

The tears just POUR out of him now.

TREY (CONT'D)

He hit her over the head. And he
kept hitting her. Over and over,
and over. I remember screaming so
loud.

He looks at Adam.

TREY (CONT'D)

So loudly that the neighbors heard me. Because the next thing I remember was being taken away by an officer.

He's quiet.

TREY (CONT'D)

He'd beaten my Mom to death and left me without anyone in this world.

ADAM

So when Kyle...

TREY

(Breaking)

It was my fault. I knew his Dad was hitting him and the same thing happened to him because I was too scared to tell.

ADAM

Trey...

Trey completely breaks, the tears flow out as he SOBS. Adam is careful to move his arms around the child's body slowly.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It wasn't your fault, Trey. Either time.

TREY

(Muffled)

Yes it was, I could have saved them. I know I could've.

ADAM

You were only two. You were a baby.

TREY

That's no excuse for Kyle.

Adam rubs his back slowly, Trey buries his head into Adam's body.

ADAM

(Sotto)

It's okay Trey. It's gonna be okay.

Trey wraps his arms around Adam's neck, burying his head in his neck. Adam seems a little stunned. He stares at Trey, who just continues to sob.

TREY

Everyone I care about, or who cares about me dies.

ADAM

That's not true, I'm still here. Frank's still here, and Jason.

TREY

(Quiet)

I'm so sorry... I know I shouldn't have run... But I was so scared...

ADAM

You were upset, we've all been there. You know how often I wanted to run?

TREY

You don't understand.

ADAM

I do, I lost my Mom too. I had to watch her slowly die... I know what it's like.

Adam's silent for a moment.

ADAM (CONT'D)

My Dad was here for me. And I think it's time someone was there for you.

Trey says nothing about that, he only continues to sob into Adam's body.

We move up to the sky for a moment, night turns to morning, and we move back down to find...

Trey, sound asleep against Adam's chest, we can only guess he cried himself to sleep. The front door opens slowly as Frank turns his head towards them.

FRANK

You been out here all night?

ADAM

I was worried that if I moved I'd wake him up.

Frank nods his head a little bit, leans against the wall.

FRANK

I'm starting to think, that I'm not
the one who should be fostering
him.

Adam raises an eyebrow, but after a few moments his face
fills with realization.

ADAM

Dad, let's not do this here.

FRANK

Food for thought. Nothing more.

He turns around, opening the door again.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Wake him up, breakfast is on the
table in ten.

He enters the house. Adam stares down at Trey silently, soft
eyes filled with thought.

EXT. BELL FARM- STABLES- MORNING

Trey is heading down the row of stables slowly, he stops at
the first one. Blackjack sticks her head out and he smiles,
rubbing the snout.

TREY

Mornin' girl.

Trey moves to open the stable when...

ADAM (O.S.)

Hey Trey, you got a second?

Trey turns around slowly, he smiles and nods his head. Adam
has both arms behind his back.

TREY

Yeah, I got a minute.

ADAM

I just got off the phone with
Steve.

(Beat)

Bayard, was your Mother's name,
wasn't it?

Trey's face falls.

TREY

Yeah, why?

ADAM

Because I found this when I was
going through some old records...

Adam takes a couple of steps forward, hands him a paper, Trey
looks it over...

"CHANGE OF OWNERSHIP
NAME: BLACKJACK
FORMER OWNER: JENNIFER BAYARD
NEW OWNER: ADAM BELL"

Trey looks to be in disbelief, he stares up at Adam.

TREY

Blackjack... Belonged to my Mom?

ADAM

Ironic, right? I knew her owner had
died, the guy who sold her to us
said so... But I never would've
thought...

Trey stares over at Blackjack, who nays, and nods as if
confirming.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I figure it's why she warmed up to
you so quickly.

TREY

Horse's don't have that good a
memory.

ADAM

As far as WE know.

Trey shrugs, but nods his head slowly.

TREY

Hard to believe... Just I can't
believe it.

ADAM

Yeah, well. There's more.

BEAT.

He smiles a little.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I was talking to Dad... And...

He makes his way down to Apple's stable slowly, Trey follows.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Apple is her daughter, as you know.

TREY
(Knowingly)
Adam, I can't-

ADAM
We've decided to call SS tonight.
We're going to ask you to stay here
until you're eighteen.

Trey's eyes widen, but Adam smiles slowly, Trey looks a little stunned.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Which means you'll have plenty of
time to learn. And I think you two
rightfully belong together.

Trey chews his lip, and nods his head a little as Adam carefully opens the stable door.

TREY
She's really mine?

Adam smiles wider, nodding his head.

ADAM
Want to start learning now?

Trey starts to smile, slowly, but surely.

EXT. BELL FARM- CORRAL

Trey is riding on the back of Apple, he looks completely nervous. Adam is simply looking up, helping where he can. We see time pass....

Trey is almost thrown off once. He races around the track another minute, a natural, all things considered.

Before long, Adam is leaning against the fence. He stares and looks at Trey, there seems to be a bit of pride. From behind the fence, Jason walks up.

JASON

Can't believe you actually got him on her.

ADAM

If he's going to be a part of our family now, it's only right.

Jason nods his head a bit, he sits up on the gate, watching Trey.

JASON

I think it's pretty obvious riding's in his blood anyway.

(Beat)

You given any more thought to what Dad said?

ADAM

No. I don't think I'm going for it though. Trey's great and all, but...

JASON

You're still twenty-eight. I get it, don't need to explain it to me.

Adam nods his head a little, he stares over at Jason quietly.

ADAM

You think Dad'll end up adopting him?

JASON

Good question. I don't think he's ever liked a kid this much. Neither have you.

ADAM

Don't give me that, you care about him too.

Adam nudges Jason's leg gently, Jason rolls his eyes.

JASON

Yeah, well, that's up for debate.

VROOM! VROOM!

Adam and Jason turn their heads slowly to see...

STEVE'S CAR

Is coming up the way, Adam's face falls, Jason stares at Adam.

JASON (CONT'D)
I thought Dad wasn't calling him
until tonight?

ADAM
He wasn't.

They look at each other with a look of total concern.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- DEN

Angle on the doorway, we don't see anyone yet...

FRANK (O.S.)
Isn't there anything we can do?

STEVE (O.S.)
Not unless you or one of the boy's
is willing to adopt him.

We move in and finally see Frank and Steve standing in the den, Frank looks upset, very much so.

FRANK
We all love Trey, Steve. And I
think Adam's going to cave on
adopting him, but we need more
time.

BEAT.

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We were going to call tonight and
ask to get the rights to fostering
him until he's an adult-

STEVE
It's too late for that. It's BEEN
six months, they're expecting him
at the boys home in two weeks.

FRANK
You're telling me there's NOTHING I
can do to keep him here on the
farm?

Steve's guilty look says it all, Frank stares at the ground.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I know about his past now. That boy needs a loving family.

STEVE

Then adopt him yourself.

FRANK

I don't make enough money to keep all three of them supported for the rest of their lives. I'm already planning to-

STEVE

Then I'll break it to him, Frank. I get it, money's tight right now, he won't-

TREY (O.S.)

I won't what?

The two turn as Trey, Adam, and Jason enter the room slowly, Trey stares at Steve. Frank's head hangs a bit, he can't look at Trey.

TREY (CONT'D)

Frank, what's wrong?

STEVE

(Quiet)

We have your newest home set up, Trey.

Trey's eyes widen, he backs up.

TREY

What? But Adam said-

FRANK

They threw this on me before I could do anything, Trey. I'm sorry.

Adam looks dead to the world, in complete and utter shock. Jason steps up.

JASON

Trey, don't-

TREY

I knew this was bullshit. Too good to be true.

Trey looks Adam dead in the eye.

TREY (CONT'D)

You wanna know why I wanted to run?
Other than what happened to Kyle?

He gets aggressive now, like the old Trey used to be.

TREY (CONT'D)

This right here. This is why.

A moment passes --- Trey RUNS --- bolting up the staircase, we hear him running and running and then...

SLAM!

A door slams shut. Adam stands there, looking like he's just been punched in the gut.

EXT. BELL FARM HOUSE- DRIVEWAY - LATER

Trey is making his way down the driveway, his duffle bag and a trash bag over his shoulder. The Bell Family is standing off back.

Adam turns to Frank, who has his hand on his shoulder. Trey takes one last look back, silently frowning. He climbs into the back seat.

From the back window, we see his face press against it. He waves quietly, looking defeated as he's driven off from the sight.

INT. BOY'S HOME- HALLWAY- AFTERNOON

Trey is making his way down a hallway slowly, kids run past him at a rapid pace, nearly knocking him over, but Trey gets his balance. He comes across a room, stops, sees an empty room with one bed, and frowns.

EXT. BELL FARM- STABLES- NIGHT

Adam is moving down the row of stables slowly, locking them all. He comes to a stop in front of Apple's stable, frowning slightly, guilt seems to fill his eyes as he locks it up, and walks off.

INT. BOY'S HOME- TREY'S ROOM- NIGHT

Trey is laying on a rather dirty and dingy old bed, his eyes are staring up at the ceiling. He's silent as can be, he closes his eyes as a tear rolls down his cheek.

INT. BELL FARM HOUSE- TREY'S OLD ROOM

Adam is laying on Trey's old bed, staring up at the ceiling fan as it rotates slowly. It's almost exactly how Trey used to lay on it, he just watches it silently, his eyes looking dead.

INT. BOY'S HOME- KITCHEN- MORNING

Trey sits at a table with about fifteen other boys, they're all eating rather meager meals. Trey's barely touching his food, looking off thoughtfully to the side.

EXT. BELL FARM- CORRAL

Adam is leaning against the gate as he quietly watches Jason ride Midnight, his horse, around. He looks down at the ground, putting his hands in his pockets, and kicking some dirt.

INT. BOY'S HOME- LIVING ROOM- AFTERNOON

Trey sits in the living room of the Boy's Home, on TV, some show with horses plays, Trey's resting his hand against his cheek. Slowly, he gets up, turning back to stare at it one more time. And then walks off.

EXT. BELL FARM- CORRAL- AFTERNOON

A young boy, who we haven't seen before, is riding Apple. Adam leans against the gate, silently watching as from behind, Frank steps up beside him.

FRANK

It really is too bad.

Adam turns his head towards Frank slowly.

ADAM

What is?

FRANK

You told me Trey showed a lot of promise as a rider. It's too bad he never got to show it to me.

ADAM

Dad, I don't want to talk about this.

Adam starts to move away.

FRANK

About what? The fact that you've spent the last two weeks moping around like you just lost your best friend?

ADAM

What do you want me to say? I miss him.

FRANK

We both know there's more to it than that, Adam.

Adam stops in his tracks, he chews his lip, looking flustered.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You *loved* that boy. And don't even lie to me because I'm your Dad, I know you.

ADAM

What does it matter if I did?
(Turns Around)
Trey's gone. They took him to a boy's home up state.

FRANK

So that's it, huh? You're just gonna give up because they took him away.

Adam steps forward, he's getting frustrated.

ADAM

I'm not good for him, Dad. I'm only twenty-eight, I haven't got a wife. Serenity was the one who was good with kids. I'm...

BEAT.

Adam shakes his head a little.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Without Serenity, I'm not what he needs. You should understand that considering Mom-

Frank grabs hold of his collar, yanks him forward, surprising Adam.

FRANK

With Serenity gone, that boy may be exactly what you need!

(Blunt)

Because you and Jason are the only things keeping me going right now.

BEAT.

Frank stares at him dead in the eye, Adam's stunned.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You have *no* idea how much that boy wanted you to adopt him. He told me, he told Steve... He told everyone but you because he was *scared*.

ADAM

Me...?

(Quiet)

Why would he want me to adopt him?

FRANK

Love works in strange ways, Adam. Trust me, I know. Your grandparents found me in an even stranger way.

Adam stares down at the ground.

FRANK (CONT'D)

If you really love this boy. And I **know** you do...

Adam looks up at Frank, he looks guilty as can be.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You'll get your ass in parenting classes, you'll get yourself a nice little home, and you'll do what you *know* is the right thing.

He releases Adam, who backs up slightly, stunned. Frank now heads off from the corral, and towards the farm house. Jason steps up beside Adam.

ADAM

He's right...

JASON

Leave it to Dad to finally talk some sense into you.

ADAM

I wanted to adopt him, Jay. I really did, I still do. I'm just scared...

He stares over at Jason, who frowns at him a bit.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I don't even know the first thing about being a Dad.

JASON

And he doesn't know the first thing about being a son.

(Shrugs)

You'll learn together.

ADAM

So you think I should go for it? Get in parenting classes and y'know... Move out?

JASON

Get a house in town so you can still work here. Your life only has to change a little.

ADAM

I don't think having a kid is only going to change it a little.

Adam and Jason both chuckle quietly, Jason places a hand on his shoulder gently.

JASON

It's up to you, man. But if you ask me...

(Quietly)

You'd make a great Dad.

Jason leaves him alone at that, walking off. Adam stands beside the gate, looking off in the distance thoughtfully.

INT. BOY'S HOME- HALLWAY- MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: 6 MONTHS LATER

Trey steps out of the hallway from a room, he's quiet, kids of all ages run past him and he carefully avoids colliding with them. A young boy stops at the end of the hallway.

BOY

Hey Trey!

Trey looks up at him.

BOY (CONT'D)
Your social worker's here!

The boy rushes off, Trey sighs quietly.

TREY
(Sotto)
Great.

He heads off down the hallway slowly.

EXT. BOY'S HOME- FRONT YARD

Trey and Steve are in the front yard, walking along the grass, Trey stares over at him.

TREY
So, where's my next foster home?

STEVE
About that...

BEAT.

Trey stares at Steve, he frowns.

TREY
Don't tell me I'm staying here.
This place sucks, I'd rather go
back to the "belt man".

STEVE
No, no, nothing like that. You're
just... Not going to a foster home.

TREY
Another boy's home then?

Steve shakes his head, Trey looks confused, but a smile crosses Steve's face.

STEVE
You're being adopted, Trey.

Trey stares at Steve slowly, he bites his lip.

TREY
I don't want to be adopted.

STEVE

You sure about that? It's back in
Perish County, you'll get to see
your friends again.

TREY

(Scoffs)

I definitely don't want to go back
there.

(Quiet)

You should know by now that no one
there wants me around.

STEVE

I bet that isn't true.

Trey stops, Steve stops a few inches away, he turns to Trey
slowly.

TREY

Do I have to go?

STEVE

Your adoptive family is expecting
you in two weeks, Trey. You should
go upstairs and pack.

TREY

What if I don't like them?

(Beat)

Or they don't like me?

STEVE

I think you'll be pleasantly
surprised.

Steve starts to walk again, Trey looks uncertain, but slowly
follows after him.

INT. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES VEHICLE- MORNING

Trey doesn't even look up from the ground, he refuses to say
or do anything. He leans against the door as Steve looks back
at him.

STEVE

You know, this is your new family,
Trey. You might actually try to act
excited.

TREY

(Scoffs)

I give it two months before they decide that I'm not worth the trouble.

STEVE

What happened to you? I thought living with the Bells-

TREY

I left.

They slowly come to a stop, Trey glances up slowly, frowning. It's a small house, really quaint, definitely nothing to write home to Mother about.

TREY (CONT'D)

Last time I came to a house like this, I was told I was their new "slave" as soon as you left.

STEVE

Trey....

BEAT.

Trey glances over at him.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Come on, we need to go in. I'm sure everything is going to be fine.

Trey shakes his head, opens his own door, grabbing the trash bags roughly out of the back seat.

EXT. SMALL HOME- DRIVEWAY

Steve has gotten out as well, he lets Steve walk to the front door. Trey just stands there, examining the house with scrutiny. He scoffs, and turns around, grabbing the bags again.

TREY

(Sotto; Sarcasm)

Home sweet home.

MAN (O.S.)

I didn't think it was so bad when I bought it.

The voice is familiar, Trey recognizes it too as he slowly drops the bags again turning around to find...

ADAM

Coming up the driveway, Trey's expression is somewhere between shock and "what the hell?".

TREY

What are you doing here?

ADAM

Trey, before you get mad-

TREY

(Interrupting; Tearing Up)
You guys let them take me away, you just... You didn't even TRY to keep me after everything we went through.

(Angry)

You're just like EVERY other family so why shouldn't I get mad at YOU now?

Adam takes a few steps forward, they're cautious, he knows to approach this carefully.

ADAM

You think that was easy for me? Watching them take you away...

TREY

So what are you here for? To apologize.

ADAM

Trey, you know EXACTLY why I'm here.

TREY

Then remind me.

Adam smiles a little bit.

ADAM

Who do you think owns the house?

TREY

You live on the farm.

ADAM

Dad told me if I was going to adopt a kid of my own... I should have a home of my own too.

TREY

No... No... No... You can't just do this to me. You can't just give me everything I ever wanted. Then ditch me. Then expect me to come running back into your arms.

BEAT.

TREY (CONT'D)

Sorry, but I'm not interested. You were just another disappointment, another person to add to the list of people who have hurt me.

(Angry)

I'm tired of getting the rug ripped out from under me, I'm better off on my own.

ADAM

Trey... That's not it at all, I wanted to call you. I wanted to tell you I was fighting for custody.

TREY

Then why DIDN'T you!? Why did you make me stay in that fucking boys home!?

Adam's brows furrow, he looks guilty as can be, Trey is practically shaking.

ADAM

They wouldn't tell me where you were, for legal reasons. I swear though, Trey. All it took was two weeks to realize I couldn't-

Adam pauses, Trey looks away.

TREY

Couldn't WHAT?

ADAM

That I couldn't keep living without you in my life.

BEAT.

Trey stares at him slowly again, his eyes moving to meet Adam's.

ADAM (CONT'D)

All it took was two weeks for me to realize that *I* wanted to be the proud parent of an amazing kid like you.

(Bluntly)

Kid, you have no idea how much I love you. And how much seeing them drive you away was a knife to the heart.

Trey looks completely stunned, Adam's eyes are filled with sincerity, he clearly means every word.

TREY

You never even told me you loved me in the first place.

ADAM

Kid, put yourself in my shoes. I'm twenty-eight, I work for my Dad... I lived with him. I was scared because I've never felt that way.

BEAT.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Not for a kid anyway. And trust me a lot of great kids have passed through that farm.

TREY

And how do I know you'll go through with it. It's like you're saying, you're young... You have options in your life.

ADAM

Kid, I bought a house so that I could RAISE you.

He motions to the house, Trey stares at it silently, his eyes hitting the ground.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Trey, I know you've been hurt, more than any kid SHOULD be. But the difference between me and them? Is that I *want* you here. I didn't get you by chance.

Adam gets closer, he puts his hands on Trey's shoulders, looking at him slowly.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I chose you, Trey. And I thought...
Well, maybe somewhere along the
line, you chose me too.

Trey shrugs Adam off for a moment, he looks down at the ground.

TREY

You really mean that?

ADAM

Why would I even bother if I
didn't?

TREY

... And... I'd never have to leave?

ADAM

You'll probably want to for
college, but even then the door
will always be open.

TREY

You sure you really want me?

(Sniffle)

With all my issues? My
nightmares... My scars?

(Quiet)

I'm not perfect, you know.

ADAM

I didn't fall in love with a
"perfect" kid, Trey. I fell in love
with you.

Trey smiles slowly, it takes a moment to form, he traces the floor with his foot.

TREY

And I can, call you "Dad"...?

Adam smiles back at him, he nods his head a little bit, putting an arm around Trey, they both hug slowly.

ADAM

Call me whatever you want. Just...
Stay.

(Kindly)

Because I really do love you Trey.

Tears of joy roll down Trey's eyes slowly, nodding his head a little bit and burying his face into Adam's neck. Adam seems to be crying too, but he's trying to hide it.

TREY
(Choking Up)
I love you too Dad...
(Breaking)
I really do.

Adam just smiles, continues to hug him tightly, Trey takes in the embrace happily. As he finally releases him, he stares down at Trey slowly.

ADAM
Come on, let's get the rest of that stuff filled out with Steve. Then you can y'know... Get settled.

TREY
(Quiet)
Yeah, sounds good.

Adam leads Trey away slowly, and for the first time in a while, we see a smile wide and bright on Trey's face.

INT. ADAM'S HOME- TREY'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Trey climbs onto a bed, it's big and comfortable looking, there's a wide smile on his face that we haven't seen before. Adam knocks on the door frame slowly, Trey turns his head.

TREY
Come in.

Adam steps into the bedroom, we get a full view. It's small, but nice, definitely made up for someone like Trey.

ADAM
Dad wants us to come over for dinner tomorrow night. He and Jason miss you.

TREY
I miss them too.

Trey smiles.

TREY (CONT'D)
I keep half-expecting to wake up back at the boy's home, y'know.

ADAM
That isn't going to happen. It's only three months away, Trey.

He makes his way forward, pulling the covers over Trey slowly.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Then you can officially be Trey Bell.

TREY

It's gonna feel like an eternity.

ADAM

Yeah, I know what you mean.

(Smiles)

Still can't believe I'm gonna be a Dad.

TREY

You don't have to be, if you wanna change your mind-

Adam shakes his head, he kisses Trey's forehead gently, silencing him. He puts his hand against Trey's cheek, and looks him in the eye.

ADAM

I am *never* going to change my mind about how much I love you, kid.

TREY

Promise?

ADAM

With all my heart.

Trey smiles a bit, laying his head back against his pillow, he smiles up at Adam.

TREY

You know I heard about stuff like this. Gregory Kingsley, Alex Chivescu... All those guys that made it.

Adam smiles a bit.

TREY (CONT'D)

Just never thought I'd be one of them.

ADAM

Yeah, well. Maybe someday people will be talking about Trey Bell.

Trey nods his head a little bit, Adam moves to head for the door.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Sweet dreams, Trey. I love you.

TREY
I love you too Dad.

Adam smiles, slowly flicking the light switch off, he steps out, closing the door behind him. Trey glances over, smiles, snuggles deep into the bed, and falls asleep.

EXT. AARONS FARM HOUSE- AFTERNOON

Adam's truck makes its way to the front of the house, pulling to a stop. Trey steps out of the truck slowly, Adam does too. We can see MINDY on the porch.

TREY
I don't think I can do this, Dad.
She's never going to want to talk
to me again.

ADAM
You don't know that, Trey. And
you're never going to if you don't
man up and talk to her.

Trey stares over at Mindy slowly, she doesn't seem to have noticed them.

TREY
Alright, I'll do it. But if I get
castrated because of this, I'm
blaming you.

Trey starts to head up the path towards the home, Adam grins.

ADAM
(Sotto)
Reggie is gonna kill him.

EXT. AARONS FARM HOUSE- FRONT PORCH

Mindy stares over, now seeing Trey, she immediately turns to go inside.

TREY
Mindy, wait up!

MINDY

I have NOTHING to say to you, Trey Bayard.

TREY

Then don't say anything, just listen, hear me out.

MINDY

You take my virginity, dump me, disappear for MONTHS and expect me to hear you out.

(Scoffs)

Tell whatever you have to say to someone who cares.

Trey shakes his head as Mindy starts to open the door.

TREY

It was my Dad...

BEAT.

Mindy turns her head slowly.

TREY (CONT'D)

When Kyle was beaten to death. It reminded me of when my Father beat my Mom to death with a baseball bat.

She turns around fully now, her eyes softening.

TREY (CONT'D)

I shut down to everyone, not just you. I didn't know how to take it, I just...

(Beat)

And then they took me away to a boy's home and I couldn't explain myself.

MINDY

(Softly)

I understand, and I'm sorry you went through that... But how is that going to change anything?

TREY

Because I'm back now, and I'd really like to keep seeing you.

BEAT.

Mindy shakes her head.

MINDY

Give me one good reason I should
take you back.

(Flatly)

Just one.

Trey takes a few steps forward, stares Mindy straight in the eyes.

TREY

I only NEED one.

(Quietly)

I love you Mindy Aarons, ever since
I first laid eyes on you. And I
never stopped.

Trey takes either side of her cheeks, and brings her in for a kiss. It's deep, passionate.

Mindy leans into the kiss, kissing him back with just as much passion. Moments pass, they break for a moment.

MINDY

I love you too.

They lean in to kiss again as a throat CLEARS. They turn to see REGGIE is standing there, leaning against the door frame.

TREY

Is this the part where you castrate
me for what I did?

BEAT.

Reggie slowly smiles, shrugs her shoulders.

REGGIE

Just wanted to welcome you home.

Trey stares at her with surprise, Reggie moves towards Mindy, leans in.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You could have done worse.

Mindy chuckles, looking between the two of them, and smirking.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Now go on, kiss.

Reggie heads back inside.

REGGIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Before I change my mind!

Trey looks at Mindy, she smiles at him, he smiles at her.
 Their lips meet again for another, passionate kiss.

PULL OUT TO:

The setting sun...

Moments pass as we see from overhead the young couple
 kissing.

FADE TO BLACK.H

FADE IN:

EXT. GRAVEYARD- AFTERNOON

TIGHT ON:

A gravestone, we see who it's of:

"KYLE TENNER"

We pull out to reveal TREY and MINDY are by his grave, a
 couple of flowers and two drinks with them. Trey lays the
 flowers on the grave, fixes the tie on his shirt a bit.

TREY
 Sorry it took so long to visit
 Kyle, but I wanted to make sure it
 was for a special reason...

BEAT.

He smiles a bit.

TREY (CONT'D)
 Adam adopted me today, and well...
 It just didn't seem right to
 celebrate without you.

Trey opens the bottle of soda he has in his hand, so does
 Mindy.

TREY (CONT'D)
 You were right buddy, this was home
 for me, with the Bell's...

He turns to Mindy.

TREY (CONT'D)
With Mindy.

Trey looks at the headstone, he frowns a little.

TREY (CONT'D)
I know your story didn't exactly
have a happy ending. And a while
ago, I wasn't too sure mine would
either...

BEAT.

He smiles faintly now.

TREY (CONT'D)
But I'm gonna live a happy ending
for both of us. I promise.

He holds up the soda.

TREY (CONT'D)
So here's to you Kyle.
(Softly)
And here's to a happy ending.

Both Trey and Mindy drink the soda's calmly. As they both cap their bottles. Mindy stares over at Trey, who seems sad looking.

MINDY
Hey, you gonna be okay?

Trey stares at Mindy, he smiles at her.

TREY
Yeah.

Trey slowly turns around. Down the hill we can see...

ADAM, FRANK, JASON, and REGGIE

Are waiting for them. They all stare over, Adam locks eyes with Trey and waves him over.

TREY (CONT'D)
(Confident)
I'm gonna be just *fine*.

Mindy reaches over, taking Trey's hand slowly, Trey stares at her in the eyes, smiling. They make their way down the hill towards the others.

We start to slowly pull out over the scene...

Trey and Mindy break off after they reach the others, Adam pulls his arm around his new son's shoulders, kisses the top of his head.

As we watch the new family, and their friends slowly walk off from the scene, we move higher and higher into the clouds, towards the sky and then....

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END