

Step Nine

By

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FADE IN:

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

A WEATHERED HAND crushes a small pile of white powder with a credit card against the surface of a wooden table.

It chops up the powder and splits it into four equal lines.

The hand pulls out of view, returns with a rolled up ten pound note, taps it twice and places it beside the lines.

MORRIS (O.S.)  
How does this make you feel?

JOSH (O.S.)  
Brings back memories, I guess.

MORRIS (O.S.)  
What sort of memories?

JOSH (O.S.)  
I don't know.

MORRIS (O.S.)  
You don't know?

JOSH, mid twenties, clean-cut, could be handsome with a bit of effort, sits at a window table, a tall milk-shake in hand.

JOSH  
It was a long time ago.

MORRIS, late fifties, physically frail but stern-faced, sits opposite with the credit card, ten pound note and four lines in front of him, along with two empty sachets of sugar.

MORRIS  
Eight months is not a long time,  
Josh.

It's late. A WAITRESS wipes down tables. Josh and Morris are the only things stopping the open sign from being flipped.

Josh stares at the lines of sugar.

MORRIS  
Do they make you uncomfortable?

JOSH  
Not really, no. Just seems like an  
odd thing for you to do.

MORRIS  
You've been telling me for weeks  
that you're better.

JOSH

I am.

MORRIS

Then what are we doing here?

Josh locks eyes with Morris briefly and turns his attention to the milk-shake.

MORRIS

What is it you want from our time together?

Josh shrugs and takes a sip. He glances up to see Morris's fixed gaze which demands an answer.

He puts his drink down.

JOSH

It's just nice to have someone to talk to.

MORRIS

Talking only gets you so far. It's up to you to take action. Are you happy at this point of your life?

JOSH

I'm still breathing. I can't really complain.

MORRIS

Breathing and living are two completely different things. How old did you say you were? Late twenties?

JOSH

Twenty six next month.

Morris smiles, shakes his head.

MORRIS

Twenty six.

JOSH

Let me guess. You're gonna give me the speech about what you'd give to be that age again. About how I've got my whole life ahead of me.

MORRIS

Do you know what I was doing on my twenty sixth birthday?

Josh shrugs.

MORRIS

Go on. Have a guess.

JOSH

Drunk?

MORRIS

I was lying in a one bedroom flat that hadn't seen daylight in weeks with a needle hanging out of my arm. And do you know how I know that?

Josh sits up, clearly taken aback by the response.

JOSH

How?

MORRIS

Because I did that every day for fifteen years. Fifteen years of my life. So no, I wouldn't give a fucking thing to go back.

JOSH

I'm sorry.

MORRIS

What for? It was me who fucked my life up, not you. The difference is, it was way too late for me to make amends by the time I got help. Mum and dad were gone, most of the friends I grew up with had moved away, the ones that hadn't didn't even recognise me. And the worst thing about it, do you know what I kept thinking? If I dropped dead now, it would make more people happy than it would sad. And I needed to change that.

Morris picks up a napkin and cleans the sugar from the table. He slips the credit card and note into his wallet and stands.

MORRIS

It's your life, Josh. You can either spend it regretting the bad choices you've made, or make some better ones.

Morris turns and heads for the exit, leaving Josh to sit alone in deep thought.

EXT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Josh steps outside and pulls a half empty packet of cigarettes from his pocket.

He puts one to his lips, closes the packet and hovers it above a bin. After a moments hesitation he slips the packet back into his pocket.

He pulls out a box of matches and takes a few steps down the road. He strikes a match and attempts to light up, but a faint breeze in the air has other ideas.

He stops in a doorway, pulls another match from the box but is distracted by the sound of a strained voice approaching.

Josh takes a step back and watches as a middle aged HOMELESS MAN stumbles past, trying his hardest to remember the words to an Irish folk song in between swigs of strong lager.

Josh waits until he's alone and strikes the match.

EXT. QUIET HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Josh strolls past a row of closed shops. He smokes the rest of his cigarette and throws the butt on the floor.

He tries to keep his eyes to himself but can't help glancing over the road at a HAPPY YOUNG COUPLE pushing a pram. He watches them pass and smiles, but it soon fades.

He crosses the road and passes a Newsagents. Two KIDS, barley pubescent, sit outside on BMX's.

One of them, CODY, goofy in the cutest way imaginable, notices Josh. He catches up and slowly pedals his bike along side him.

CODY  
Alright, Josh?

JOSH  
Cody. Your mum know you're out this late?

CODY  
Yeah. Well, she's at work. You're not gonna tell her are you?

JOSH  
Might do.

CODY  
Ahhh, please don't.

JOSH  
I'm only joking. What d'you want?

CODY

Some beers.

JOSH

Are you winding me up?

CODY

We only want a four pack. Can you go in and get 'em for us?

JOSH

I was quite happy playing the Playstation at your age. What d'you want beers for?

CODY

I haven't got a Playstation.

Josh laughs.

CODY

Please. I'll give you a quid for doing it.

JOSH

No chance. Now go on, before I call the police.

Cody turns and worriedly rides back up the road to his friend. Josh smiles.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Josh walks along a row of paint-peeled terraced houses.

He stops outside one of the healthier looking properties, searches his pockets, pulls out a set of keys and heads up a small set of steps towards the front door.

EXT. SHARED HOUSE - NIGHT

Before he can unlock it, the door swings open to reveal NATHAN, late twenties, pale and skinny. He's certainly no model but has a surprising amount of confidence about him.

NATHAN

Hello, mate.

JOSH

Nathan. You alright?

NATHAN

I was til I found out I had to work tonight.

JOSH  
At this time?

NATHAN  
Yeah. Boss is being a right pain in the ass lately. I think he might have found out that I've been nailing his daughter.

Josh chuckles.

NATHAN  
Oh, what you doing Friday night?

JOSH  
Dunno.

NATHAN  
It's my birthday. Me and a few mates are heading into town. You should come along.

Nathan brushes past Josh.

NATHAN  
We'll be heading out about eightish but I s'pect we'll have a few tins here first.

JOSH  
I'll see what I'm doing.

NATHAN  
Cool. I better get going anyway, I'm already late.

JOSH  
Alright mate, have fun.

Nathan jogs down the road. Josh enters the house and shuts the door behind him.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh lies on his bed. The room is small but tidy, more like a spare room than a bedroom. No TV, stereo or posters on the walls, just a single bed, a set of drawers and a wardrobe.

He stares at the ceiling and taps his hands against his chest like a bongo drum. He leans forward like he's about to get up but stops. He taps his hands on his thighs.

He stops, swings his legs around, rubs his hands down his face and stands. He gets into a press-up position and reaches under the bed.

He pulls out a shoebox, places it onto the bed and sits next to it. He puts his hands on the lid, takes a deep breathe and opens it.

The shoebox is full of photographs. (We'll meet some of the people in them in more detail later.)

On top is a framed print of a ten year old Josh and his PARENTS, smiles all around. Josh takes the print out, studies it a moment and puts it onto the bed.

He pulls out a wad of photographs and has a brief look at each one before placing them on top of the print.

The pictures are of Josh and five FRIENDS on holiday. Judging by their faces, they're having the time of their lives.

Josh can't help but smile as he pulls out another two photographs. The first is of himself, sitting on a hospital bed next his SISTER, holding his new born NIECE.

The second is of Josh and a group of OLDER MEN in an office. They all wear sharp suits and ties, except for Josh who wears the most hideous Hawaiian shirt you can imagine. Behind them hangs a 'Happy Birthday' banner.

He adds the photographs to the pile, stares into the box, pauses and pulls out the few remaining pictures.

His smile fades.

He finds it hard to look at them but takes longer to process each one. The pictures are of Josh and a GIRL a similar age. She's perfect. Stunning figure, blonde hair, blue eyes and a smile that could bring about world peace.

Josh chucks the pictures onto the bed, lies down beside them and lifts the shoebox onto his chest. One item remains. A small, heart shaped, red velvet box.

He takes it out, opens it an inch, but stops. He chucks it inside the shoebox and turns his focus back to the ceiling.

(O.S) The sound of an unhealthy engine rumbles into life.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

A JCB digs a foundation. The SITE MANAGER, too old to be working, sits at the controls. He's in his own little world until a brick bounces off the front of the digger.

He kills the engine, jumps out and hobbles towards a half erected, roofless building incased in scaffolding.

EXT. HALF ERECTED BUILDING - DAY

Three well built BRICKLAYERS, mid to late thirties, stand on scaffold boards in hysterics. The Site Manager stares up at them with bitter rage.

SITE MANAGER

What d'you think you're doing?

BRICKLAYER #1 stops laughing for just long enough to answer.

BRICKLAYER #1

I shouted down three times. You didn't hear me.

SITE MANAGER

What, so you threw a fucking brick at me?

BRICKLAYER #1

No, I threw it at the digger.

SITE MANAGER

I'm getting fucking sick and tired of you lot. Is it too much to ask for one fucking day without my heart nearly packing up.

BRICKLAYER #1

You need to lighten up a bit, gramps. It's Friday.

SITE MANAGER

Gramps? I'll come up there and take the three of you on, with one fucking hand behind my back.

The Bricklayer's laugh even harder. The Site Manager takes a deep breath and sighs.

SITE MANAGER

Well?

BRICKLAYER #1

Well, what?

SITE MANAGER

Well, what did you fucking want?

BRICKLAYER #1

Oh. The pully's broke again.

SITE MANAGER

For fuck sake. Josh!

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Josh wipes away the pool of sweat clinging to his forehead. He wears a hard hat and a high vis jacket.

He takes a deep breath, kneels and lumps a bag of cement over his shoulder. He stands and begins carrying it up the side of the half erected building on a tall ladder.

INT. HALF ERECTED BUILDING - DAY

Josh sits up against a wall on the floor. He pulls a sandwich from his lunch box and takes a bite.

Across the room sit the three Bricklayers. They each puff away on a roll-up and swig an energy drink.

BRICKLAYER #1

So there I was trying to calm Billy down, you know, get him out of there before it all kicks off. When this big fat fucker comes over, and I'm taking twenty stone at least.

The Bricklayer #2 and #3 are engulfed by the story.

BRICKLAYER #1

He gets right up into my face, acting all 'Barry Big Bollocks', and do you know what he said?

The two Bricklayers wait eagerly.

BRICKLAYER #1

I run this town.

All three of them burst out laughing.

BRICKLAYER #2

What did you say?

BRICKLAYER #1

I said you couldn't run a hundred meters you fat cunt.

They laugh harder.

BRICKLAYER #1

Oh he wasn't happy.

BRICKLAYER #3

What'd he do?

BRICKLAYER #1

Bottled it. Probably too tired from the walk over to throw a punch.

The three continue to laugh.

BRICKLAYER #1

Bet if I'd thrown a kebab the cunt  
would've run for it, though.

Josh pulls an iPod from his pocket, unravels a set of headphones and places one firmly in each ear.

BRICKLAYER #3

I wish I would've come out now.

BRICKLAYER #1

It was a good night, we were both  
fucking spangled. I felt like  
absolute shit on...

Josh presses play. He leans his head back against the wall and shuts his eyes to the sound of indie folk music.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh enters, flicks on the lights and chucks his rucksack on the bed. He sits down, unzips it and pulls a packet of Nicotine patches from a shopping bag.

He studies the packet, takes out a patch and sticks it to his arm. He puts his bag on the floor and freezes as he notices the framed print of he and his parents next to it.

He picks it up.

EXT. SHARED HOUSE - DAY

Josh locks the front door and heads down the road. To say he's dressed up is a bit extreme but he's wearing jeans and a casual shirt.

EXT. PETROL GARAGE - DAY

Josh strolls past the entrance, turns back and walks inside.

INT. BUS - DAY

Josh listens to his iPod as he stares out of the window. On the seat next to him is a cheap plastic bag containing a box of chocolates and a small but vibrant bouquet of flowers.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

The bus pulls up at a stop. Josh steps off.

The area is much nicer than that of his shared house. Full of evergreen hedges and cobbled driveways instead of alleyways and iron fences.

Josh takes the box of chocolates and flowers from the bag, chucks the bag in a bin and strolls up the road.

EXT. DAWN'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh stands in a well-kept front garden. He cautiously steps towards the front door, takes a deep breathe, raises his hand to knock but stops.

He takes a step back, puts the chocolates and flowers between his knees, rubs his hands down his hair, checks his breathe on his hand and straightens his shirt.

He picks up the chocolates and flowers, steps up to the door and knocks. He waits a moment and knocks again. No answer.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Across the road from Dawn's house, Josh sits on a wall with the box of chocolates and flowers beside him.

He strikes a match and lets it burn to his fingertips. He blows it out, inhales the smoke and lights another one.

His eyes are drawn to a car pulling up outside Dawn's house. He flicks the match on the ground and stands.

EXT. DAWN'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh's mum, DAWN, just shy of fifty with no attempt to hide her signs of aging, exits the car and opens the boot.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Josh watches as Dawn pulls out two bags of shopping and carries them to her front door. As she returns to the boot, Josh quickly hides behind the wall.

He peers around to check if he's been spotted but Dawn's already inside the house. She shuts the door behind her.

Josh slumps against the wall, rubs his hands down his face and bangs the wall with the back of his fist.

JOSH

Fuck.

He jumps to his feet and strides up the road, throwing the chocolates and flowers in a bin as he passes.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh lies on his bed. Deep bass filters through the ceiling from a stereo downstairs. He closes his eyes briefly until a loud knock at the door forces them open.

He turns his head towards the door but makes no attempt to get up. There's another knock, louder than before.

NATHAN (O.S.)

Josh. Open up, man.

Another knock. This time, testing the door's hinges. Josh stands and reluctantly walks over to the commotion.

He opens the door to find Nathan holding himself up against the door frame. He's well on his way.

NATHAN

Come on, man. You're missing the drinking games.

JOSH

I'm gonna give it a miss, mate. I'm shattered.

NATHAN

No, come on. You can finish having a tug when you get back.

Nathan laughs. Josh is not amused.

NATHAN

Come out.

JOSH

Honestly, I'd love to but...

NATHAN

Go on. Have a little fun.

JOSH

Not tonight.

NATHAN

It's my birthday!

JOSH

Ah shit, yeah happy birthday, and have a good night, but I...

NATHAN

Come on.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Nathan grabs hold of Josh's arm and pulls him towards the stairs.

JOSH  
Mate, honestly...

NATHAN  
You're coming.

JOSH  
Let go.

NATHAN  
We've got Tequila.

JOSH  
Fuck off!

Josh shoves Nathan, hard, against the wall. Nathan's smirk vanishes and turns to shock. Josh's face fills with regret.

JOSH  
Mate, I'm so sorry. I didn't...

NATHAN  
Save it.

Nathan takes a step towards the stairs, stops and looks back.

NATHAN  
It's no wonder you ain't got any  
fucking friends.

He turns and strides downstairs.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The wardrobe door is split down the middle. Josh sits on the edge of his bed, a box of matches in hand.

He pulls a match from the box and attempts to strike it with an already swelling hand, but it doesn't light. He tries again but the match breaks in two.

He launches the matchbox towards the wall.

INT - PETROL GARAGE - NIGHT

A CUSTOMER pays for his shopping. Josh waits eagerly behind him. The Customer thanks the CASHIER and leaves. Josh approaches the counter.

JOSH  
Can I get twenty Richmond's please.

The Cashier picks a packet of cigarettes from a shelf. Josh notices a selection of strong spirits behind the counter. His eyes are now fixed.

The Cashier places the cigarettes in front of him.

CASHIER  
Is there anything else I can help  
you with?

Josh is completely oblivious.

CASHIER  
(raised voice)  
Sir?

Josh's trance is broken.

CASHIER  
Anything else?

JOSH  
No. That's all, thanks.

EXT. SHARED HOUSE - NIGHT

Josh sits on the steps and tokes away on a cigarette. He pulls a phone from his pocket and scrolls through contacts.

He stops at the name 'Andrew', hovers his thumb over the call button but locks it instead.

He flicks the butt of his cigarette, pulls another one from the packet and strikes a match.

A noise from up the road distracts him. The sound of someone sharing their stomach contents with the pavement.

He turns towards it and notices a pair of legs sticking out from a doorway.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Josh approaches the legs to find Nathan, barely conscious, lying face down in a pile of his own sick.

Josh chucks his cigarette and helps him up. Nathan attempts to push him away but is not physically capable.

JOSH  
It's alright, mate. Let's get you  
home.

Josh puts Nathan's arm around his shoulder and walks him towards the house. Nathan leans forward and pukes, covering his own legs and Josh's trainers.

NATHAN

(slurred)

I'm so sorry.

JOSH

Don't be silly. It happens to the best of us.

Nathan manages a few more steps before puking again. Josh rubs his back.

JOSH

Come on. Get it all up.

Nathan chokes a little but nothing comes out.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Josh helps Nathan up the stairs and into his room.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - NATHAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh sits Nathan on his bed and leaves. With great effort, Nathan removes his t-shirt and chucks it on the floor.

He undoes his belt, tries his hardest to kick off his jeans but falls to the side, out for the count as soon as his head hits the pillow.

Josh returns with a bucket and a pint of water. He puts the bucket on the floor below Nathan's head and the pint of water on his bedside cabinet.

Josh looks at him with his jeans around his ankles and grins. He finishes taking them off and chucks them on the floor.

He moves Nathan onto his side, pulls a duvet over him, looks down at the sick-stained clothes, sighs and picks them up.

He chucks the t-shirt in a laundry basket and removes Nathan's belt from his jeans. He pulls a wallet and phone from the pockets and puts them onto the bedside cabinet.

He turns the pockets inside out. A couple of strips of chewing gum, a receipt and a small bag falls to the floor. Josh kneels down to pick them up but stops dead.

On the floor is a see-through baggie containing a small amount of white powder.

He picks up the baggie, sticks of chewing gum and receipt and puts them into Nathan's bedside drawer.

He adds the jeans to the laundry basket, picks it up, flicks the lights off and exits.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY

It's peaceful. No noise pollution, just a welcoming chirp from the odd bird now and again.

As far as graveyards go, it's one of the nicer ones.

A bright white gravestone sits comfortably on a bed of grass. It reads 'Jim Chesil - 1968 - 2015 - Beloved Father and Husband'.

Josh places a packet of 'Werther's Original Butter Candies' on top and kneels in front of it.

He props a card up against the foot which reads 'To The World's Best Dad - Happy Father's day'.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - DAY - LATER

Josh sits on an old wooden bench in the far corner. He takes away on a cigarette.

CAIT (O.S.)

You'll be joining them before long,  
you keep filling your lungs with  
that crap.

Josh turns to see his sister, CAIT, early thirties, walking towards him.

Josh stands.

JOSH

(confused)

Cait.

Cait leans in for a hug. Josh looks surprised but chucks the rest of his cigarette and embraces her.

CAIT

You OK?

Josh lets go.

JOSH

Yeah. Look, if you came here for a  
bit of peace and quiet, I was just  
leaving anyway so...

CAIT

Don't be silly. It's nice to see  
you.

JOSH

Is it?

CAIT  
Of course it is.

A moment of awkward silence passes as Josh tries to think of something to say.

CAIT  
Wher...

JOSH  
How's the littlen?

CAIT  
Oh, she's good, yeah. Bit of a handful at times. I'm picking her up from a party in a minute if you wanna come see her?

More silence.

CAIT  
I'm sure she'd want to see you. She still reads that bloody poem you wrote her about the pig, you know.

Josh smiles.

JOSH  
Really?

CAIT  
Really. You up for it, then?

JOSH  
Umm, I've kind of got somewhere I'm s'pose to be.

CAIT  
You've never been good at lying, Josh. Go on, it'll make her day.

Josh contemplates it.

CAIT  
What's wrong?

JOSH  
Well, do you think she'd even remember me?

CAIT  
She's not a goldfish, Josh. It's only been a year.

INT. CAIT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Josh sits on the sofa and colours in a poorly drawn dog with crayons. SADIE, four, adorable, skips over with a handful of drawings.

SADIE

Here you go.

Sadie dumps the drawings onto Josh's lap, jumps up and sits next to him.

JOSH

Thank you.

Sadie pulls one last drawing from behind her back.

SADIE

This is my favorite.

Josh studies the picture. It features five big stick men and one little one, stood in front of a house next to a tree.

JOSH

Who've we got here, then?

Sadie points at the drawing as she answers.

SADIE

There's mummy and daddy. There's grandma, and that's grandad but he's in heaven now. There's me and that's you, my favorite uncle.

This renders Josh speechless. He's not used to compliments and it shows.

SADIE

Do you like it?

Cait enters the room with two cups of tea.

CAIT

That's her favorite.

Josh composes himself.

JOSH

(whispers to Sadie)

I think it's my favorite too.

INT. CAIT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Cait washes dishes at the sink. Josh sits at a table next to a set of patio doors. Sadie plays with toys in the garden.

JOSH

You sure you don't want a hand?

CAIT

No, honestly. It's one of the many jobs I actually look forward to. Are you working at the moment?

JOSH

Just doing a bit of laboring. Doesn't exactly pay well but, you know, keeps me busy.

CAIT

That's good. How's Andrew?

JOSH

Dunno. Ain't spoke to him in a while.

CAIT

That's a shame. You two used to be inseparable. Have you spoke to mum lately?

Josh stares into the garden.

CAIT

Josh?

He turns back.

CAIT

Have you spoke to mum lately?

JOSH

No.

CAIT

You need to go see her. She worries about you.

JOSH

I will.

CAIT

Promise?

JOSH

Yeah, I promise. How's she doing, anyway?

CAIT

She's OK. Still has her moments, but she's getting there.

JOSH

You think she'd wanna see me?

CAIT

Of course. You're her little golden boy, well, was. What you worried about?

JOSH

I'm not worried, it's just, well, my last visit didn't exactly end well.

CAIT

That was ages ago.

JOSH

I know, but still. She threw a fucking rolling pin at me.

CAIT

Can you blame her? You missed dad's funeral then went round her house after the wake, asking for money.

Josh opens his mouth to speak, but soon realizes there's no words in the English language that can justify his actions.

CAIT

Sorry. I didn't mean...

JOSH

It's fine.

Josh watches Sadie play.

Cait glances over and sees the contrast between Josh's sorrow and Sadie's joy.

CAIT

You know, in all the years growing up, I can't remember you being miserable, not once. Even that time we missed our stop and had to wait at Moreton Station for two hours. I was convinced the Shapwick Monster was gonna get us, but you were too busy climbing trees and looking for treasure to care.

JOSH

Why are you being nice to me?

CAIT

Because you're my brother. And besides, it sounds like you're finally starting to sort yourself out.

Cait puts the washing up down to the sound of a van pulling up outside. She walks out of the kitchen for a second and returns, slightly panicked.

CAIT

Look, Josh, it really has been lovely seeing you, but...

JOSH

It's alright. I better get going anyway.

Cait opens the patio door.

CAIT

(shouting)

Come in and go up to your room please, darling.

Josh stands.

JOSH

Is everything alright?

CAIT

Yeah. Me and Dean had a bit of a falling out this morning.

JOSH

Do you want me to stick around for a bit? I mean, he doesn't...

CAIT

No, it's fine, honestly. It's nothing serious, but he might get the wrong idea if he sees you here. Or have you two met?.

JOSH

No.

Sadie skips through the door.

CAIT

Say goodbye to Josh.

Sadie runs up to Josh and hugs him.

SADIE

Bye Josh. I love you.

JOSH

See you later, mate. I love you too.

CAIT  
(to Sadie)  
Go up to your room and play with  
your doll's house. Mummy will be up  
soon.

Sadie scampers off. She's well aware of this drill.

JOSH  
You sure you're alright?

Cait wraps her arms around Josh.

CAIT  
I'm fine.

She lets go and holds the back door open for him.

JOSH  
OK, I'll see you later. I might pop  
round sometime next week, if that's  
alright?

CAIT  
Of course it is. You're always  
welcome, you know that.

Josh steps out into the garden and heads for the gate.

CAIT  
Make sure you visit mum.

JOSH  
I will.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

A tennis ball bounces off a wall. Josh lies on his bed and  
plays catch.

His phone is on the set of drawers next to him. He stops  
playing and glances at it.

He throws the ball one last time and puts it down.

He picks up his phone, scrolls through the contacts, stops at  
'Andrew' and hovers his thumb over the call button.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Josh takes the last drag of a cigarette and chucks it on the  
ground. He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a packet of  
mints and puts one in his mouth.

He crosses the road and strolls along a smart looking row of houses. He glances at an address scribbled on the back of his hand and stops.

EXT. ANDREW'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh wearily walks up to the door and rings the bell. He waits nervously for what seems an eternity and knocks.

He takes a step back and turns to leave, but stops to the sound of a door being unlocked.

He turns back to see ANDREW, late twenties, built like a rugby player, open the door, completely stone-faced.

Josh remains perfectly still as he finds himself in a staring contest he didn't sign up for.

JOSH

Alright?

Andrew continues to stare at an increasingly sheepish Josh. After a tense moment, Andrew smiles.

ANDREW

Come here.

Andrew walks up to Josh with open arms and hugs him.

ANDREW

How you doing, man?

JOSH

Yeah, not too bad. You?

ANDREW

Good, man, good. Come in, I'll put the kettle on.

INT. ANDREW'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Josh sits on the sofa. His eyes wonder around the room at the various pictures of Andrew and a his wife, KAREN, early thirties, a short-haired beauty.

He focuses on a framed picture on the wall of Andrew and Karen on their wedding day.

Andrew enters the room with two cups of tea. He places them on the table and sits opposite Josh.

JOSH

Cheers.

Silence.

Josh sips tea in a desperate attempt to distract himself from the tension.

ANDREW  
Do you like it?

JOSH  
It's good, yeah. Still a bit hot.

ANDREW  
Not the drink, you tit. The house.

JOSH  
Oh right, yeah, it's nice. Bit of an upgrade from your old place. How many bedrooms is it?

ANDREW  
Three. It's a bit much really, for just me and Karen but, well, they'll be someone else living here soon.

Andrew opens his wallet and passes Josh a picture of a baby scan. Josh smiles.

JOSH  
Congratulations, mate.

ANDREW  
Cheers.

JOSH  
How far gone is she?

ANDREW  
Eleven weeks.

JOSH  
Do you know if it's a boy or girl yet?

Josh passes the photo back to Andrew.

ANDREW  
No. Won't find out for a while. Karen's already buying clothes for it though, mostly pink.

Josh laughs.

JOSH  
How's she doing?

ANDREW  
What Karen? Yeah, she's OK.

JOSH

Good.

Josh glances around the room as another moment of awkward silence passes.

He notices a picture of himself, Andrew and four other LADS a similar age in front of a tent at a festival.

JOSH

You still see any of the others?

Andrew stares at him blankly.

JOSH

You know, Harry and that?

ANDREW

Oh, no, not really. Harry went back to Uni, Jamie's still in Australia. I see Terry and Mark now and again.

JOSH

They good?

ANDREW

Depends on what you mean by good. They certainly haven't changed. Mark ain't settling down any time soon and Terry's still...

Andrew falls silent to the sound of a door being opened. He grows increasingly anxious as loud, stiletto-heeled footsteps approach.

KAREN (O.S.)

I think I'm losing it, that's the second time this week I've forgotten my pur...

Karen stops at the doorway. Her face turns from cheerful to expressionless in a split second. She stares directly at Josh.

KAREN

You finally decided to show up then?

ANDREW

Karen.

KAREN

(to Andrew)  
What's he doing here?

JOSH

Karen, it's not his fault, I...

KAREN

So what, you're all pally, pally again then? Just gonna act like nothing happened?

ANDREW

Karen, please.

KAREN

After all the shit he put you through? You know the money was one thing, but the wedding. It's funny, Josh. Most men worry about the bride not turning up, not their best man.

JOSH

I know there's nothing I can do to make it up to you, either of you, but...

KAREN

Oh there is. You could fuck off out of my house and never come within shouting distance of me, or my husband again.

Andrew stands and attempts to walk Karen out of the room. She's having none of it.

KAREN

Get your fucking hands off me!

ANDREW

Karen, please. Think about...

Andrew nods towards her small but noticeable bump.

KAREN

Oh, I'm thinking about the baby. When he or she is born I want them growing up around role models like her father.

Karen barges past Andrew leans into Josh's face.

KAREN

Not fuck-ups like you.

She snatches her purse from the table and storms off. Andrew follows.

ANDREW (O.S.)

(raised voice)

There was no need for that, Karen.

KAREN (O.S.)  
(raised voice)  
No need? You bring that fucking  
coke head into my house! What d'you  
expect me to do, make him a cuppa?  
Oh no, I see you've already done  
that.

ANDREW (O.S.)  
(raised voice)  
He's not a co...

A door slams, muffling the argument. Josh sits with his head  
in his hands. Another door slams.

Andrew enters the room.

ANDREW  
I'm so sorry, man. She had no right  
to speak to you like that.

Josh stands.

JOSH  
She did.

ANDREW  
Sit down. You don't have to go.

Josh pulls an envelope from his jacket and passes it to  
Andrew.

ANDREW  
What's this?

Andrew looks inside.

JOSH  
It's a couple hundred short. I'll  
put the rest through your door at  
the beginning of next month.

Andrew stares into the envelope as Josh brushes past him.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY

Josh sits against a wall. He finishes a cigarette and stubs  
it out on the floor next to another four butts.

EXT. HIGH STREET - DAY - LATER

Josh strolls towards a corner. As he turns it, BRACKEN, an  
adorable Akita puppy, jumps up at him.

Josh bends down and ruffles its soft fur.

JOSH  
Hello, mate. You're a little cutie,  
aren't ya?

Bracken lapses up the attention, wagging his tail and licking  
Josh's face.

HOLLY (O.S.)  
Come on, Bracken. I'm sure he don't  
want your slobber all over him.

JOSH  
It's alright. How old is he?

Josh looks up to see HOLLY, early twenties, long brown hair  
and a welcoming smile, holding the lead.

HOLLY  
Eight weeks.

Josh stands and smiles.

Holly smiles back, a bit too friendly for someone she's just  
met.

HOLLY  
It's Josh, isn't it?

JOSH  
(confused)  
Yeah.

HOLLY  
I almost didn't recognise you  
without your suit on.

JOSH  
Sorry, you look familiar but...

HOLLY  
It's alright, you wouldn't remember  
me. I worked at the holiday park  
for a few months. Not in sales,  
just on the reception.

Josh's smile grows wider as a realization hits him.

JOSH  
Holly?

HOLLY  
(surprised)  
Yeah. How did you...

JOSH  
Your cakes.

Holly laughs.

JOSH

I remember I used to look forward to Friday's, just to see if you'd made any. I was gutted when you left.

HOLLY

I'll let you in on a secret. I've never baked a cake in my life. I used to buy 'em from the bakery around the corner.

JOSH

Really?

HOLLY

Yeah. Thought it would make a good impression.

Josh shakes his head.

JOSH

Sneaky.

HOLLY

On the plus side, you can just nip round the corner every Friday now and buy some.

JOSH

I would've done, but I don't work there anymore.

HOLLY

Oh, sorry. I just thought, well, you always looked happy is all.

The mood changes slightly as Josh falls silent.

HOLLY

Do you live around here, then?

JOSH

Yeah, just around the corner. You?

HOLLY

As of last week, yeah. My old place didn't allow dogs, so it was either move out or give him away.

Bracken yelps for Josh's attention. Josh kneels and continues to ruffle his fur.

JOSH

Easy choice, then.

Holly smiles and pulls softly on the lead.

HOLLY  
(to Bracken)  
Come on.

Josh stands.

HOLLY  
I better get going. It was nice  
seeing you again.

JOSH  
And you.  
(to Bracken)  
See you later, mate.

Josh and Holly exchange a brief smile before walking their separate ways.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Josh unlocks the door and enters. He bends down, picks up junk mail from the floor and chucks it on the stairs.

He glances up to see Nathan in a dressing gown looking rough, almost zombie-like.

JOSH  
Good night, then?

INT. SHARED HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Nathan sits at the table with his head in his hands.

He glances up with squinted eyes as Josh places a glass of water with an Alka Salsa tablet fizzing away in front of him.

NATHAN  
Cheers.

Josh sits opposite.

NATHAN  
Mate, I'm so sorry about last  
night.

JOSH  
It's not you who should be  
apologizing. I was out of line.

NATHAN  
Yeah, but at least you didn't puke  
on me.

They share a smile which turns to laughter.

JOSH

Where d'you end up, then?

NATHAN

Honestly, I haven't got a clue. I can barely remember leaving here.

JOSH

Yeah, you didn't look too healthy.

NATHAN

I never do when I drink tequila. And now my heads spinning like a Beyblade.

JOSH

A what?

Nathan shakes his head, in no mood to explain.

NATHAN

What time is it?

Josh checks his phone.

JOSH

Ten to seven.

NATHAN

Ah, shit. I better start getting ready.

JOSH

You got work?

NATHAN

No. I promised my mum I'd go see her. I would've went round yesterday if I knew I was gonna feel like this.

JOSH

Can you not just go tomorrow?

NATHAN

I could, but, well, she was diagnosed with dementia a couple years back. Since then she don't really leave the house. Probably been looking forward to seeing me all week.

Nathan knocks back the glass of water and stands. Josh stares at the empty glass.

NATHAN

Besides, she always makes me an awesome birthday cake. If that don't sort my stomach out, nothing will.

EXT. DAWN'S HOUSE - DAY

A FINGER presses a doorbell. After the brief sound of keys rattling, the door swings open.

Dawn stands in her dressing gown, overcome with disbelief. She smiles faintly.

JOSH (O.S.)

Alright, mum.

INT. DAWN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Josh enters. Dawn follows but stops at the doorway.

DAWN

I'll just go and get changed.

JOSH

OK.

Dawn exits the room. Josh studies the kitchen. There's framed family photographs on the walls and window seal, but he doesn't seem to acknowledge them.

He flicks the head of a small nodding dog ornament which bobs up and down.

DAWN (O.S.)

(raised voice)

There's a bit of Shepherd's Pie left in the fridge if you're hungry.

JOSH

(raised voice)

I'm OK, thanks.

Josh fills the kettle with water and flicks it on. He opens the cupboard and pulls out two cups. He puts them on the side and adds a tea bag to each.

He opens a pot of sugar but only a few grains remain.

JOSH

(raised voice)

You got any more sugar, mum?

Josh waits a moment for an answer but there's no response. He starts opening the cupboards one by one.

INT. DAWN'S HOUSE - LANDING - DAY

Dawn walks down the stairs, stops in front of a mirror and takes a deep breathe. She tries to compose herself but can't seem to rid the smile spread across her face.

She walks towards the kitchen but stops dead at the doorway. Her smile fades as she watches Josh search through the cupboards. She turns and storms back upstairs.

INT. DAWN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Josh spots a bag of sugar in the top corner of a cupboard. He reaches up, grabs it, fills the pot and returns it.

The kettle clicks. Josh walks towards it but his attention is drawn to the doorway.

Dawn enters. Angry is an understatement, she looks possessed.

DAWN

Here!

Josh ducks as a tin money box flies towards him. It bounces off a cupboard door and crashes to the floor.

JOSH

Mum!

Dawn pulls a wad of cash from her pocket and throws it at Josh. Two grand in notes flutter to the ground.

DAWN

You got what you came for, now go!

JOSH

Mum, I didn't...

DAWN

Get out of my house!

JOSH

I wasn't...

DAWN

(upset)

Get out.

Dawn bursts into tears. Josh approaches and attempts to comfort her but she shoves him away.

JOSH

Mum.

Dawn exits the room and runs upstairs, leaving Josh alone, confused and upset.

He kneels, picks up the money note by note and places it in a neat stack on the kitchen side.

INT. NEWSAGENTS - DAY

Josh hands over a five pound note to the SHOPKEEPER, mid forties, grumpy, bald and overweight.

Josh picks up a packet of Nicorette chewing gum from the counter and waits for his change.

The Shopkeeper opens the til but is distracted by a curved mirror above. He slams the til shut and hastily heads for the sweets isle.

CODY (O.S.)

Get off!

The Shopkeeper returns, dragging Cody by the arm.

JOSH

What's going on?

SHOPKEEPER

This little shit was stealing from my store.

CODY

I wasn't.

SHOPKEEPER

I've got you on CCTV, you little bastard.

The Shopkeeper barges past Josh, reaches over the counter and grabs a phone. Cody tries his hardest to escape the man's grip.

CODY

I wasn't stealing, I swear.

SHOPKEEPER

You can explain that to the police when they arrive.

The Shopkeeper dials a number and puts the phone to his ear.

JOSH

Listen, mate. Is there anyway we could sort this without getting the police involved?

SHOPKEEPER

No. He needs to learn his bloody lesson.

JOSH

I'll pay for whatever he's taken  
and I promise it won't happen  
again.

SHOPKEEPER

(into phone)  
Yes, police please.

JOSH

(desperate)  
I'll give you twenty quid.

The shopkeeper considers it, lifts the phone from his ear.

SHOPKEEPER

Forty.

EXT. HARBOURSIDE - DAY

Josh and Cody sit on a wall overlooking a harbour with a  
small pile of stones beside them.

They take turns throwing them at a flagged buoy that bobs up  
and down in the water.

CODY

You didn't have to do that you  
know. I could've got away.

JOSH

(sarcastic)  
Oh yeah, you looked like you were  
just about to.

Cody screws his face up at Josh.

CODY

He's a fat idiot anyway.

JOSH

Hey, he's not the problem. You  
shouldn't have been stealing in the  
first place.

CODY

It was only Pick 'n' Mix.

JOSH

It doesn't matter. How do you think  
your mum would feel if she had to  
pick you up from the police  
station?

CODY

I don't know.

JOSH  
Well, do you think she'd be happy?

CODY  
No, she'd be sad.

JOSH  
Exactly. Next time you're about to do something stupid, just have a think about how it might make your mum feel.

Cody bows his head. Josh notices and ruffles his hair.

JOSH  
Come on, chin up. We all do things we ain't proud of.

CODY  
What, even you?

Josh laughs.

JOSH  
Yeah. Even me.

Josh knocks the pile of stones into the water and jumps to his feet.

JOSH  
Right, come on. I gotta get going.

Cody stands and he and Josh walk along the harbourside, playfully bumping into one another.

CODY  
I'll race you to the anchor.

JOSH  
No, not today, my leg's a bit...

Josh breaks into a sprint. Cody laughs as he begins his pursuit.

CODY  
Cheater.

Josh and Cody run into the distance.

EXT. CAIT'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh peers through the window. The lights and TV are on.

He walks over to the front door, knocks, takes a step back and waits.

He notices the curtain twitch through the window. He approaches the front door, kneels and opens the letter box.

JOSH

Cait, I know you're in there, I've just seen you. Can you open up please?

Josh waits a moment for a response.

JOSH

I take it you've spoke to mum, then. I dunno what she told you, but I wasn't looking for money. I was just trying to find some sugar.

Soft footsteps approach from inside the house.

JOSH

Cait?

CAIT (O.S.)

Look Josh, it's really not a good time at the moment. If you want, we can meet up for a coffee next week sometime.

JOSH

You don't believe me, then? I was only trying to make a cup of tea.

CAIT (O.S.)

I haven't spoke to mum.

JOSH

(confused)

Oh. Well, why don't you wanna see me?

CAIT (O.S.)

It's not that, it's just...

JOSH

Just what?

CAIT (O.S.)

I'm really busy at the moment.

JOSH

Too busy to open a door?

(concerned)

Cait. Are you alright?

CAIT (O.S.)

I'm fine. Can you just leave, please.

JOSH  
I'm not leaving til I know you're  
OK.

CAIT (O.S.)  
(on the verge of tears)  
Please, Josh.

JOSH  
Cait. Open the door. Now.

Josh stands, tries the handle and knocks hard on the door. He kneels and opens the letter box to the sound of Cait crying.

JOSH  
Cait.

Josh gets up to the sound of the door being unlocked.

He swings it open to see Cait, her face plastered with foundation in a poor attempt to conceal her swollen eye.

Josh stands stunned for a moment.

JOSH  
(calmly)  
Where is he?

Cait shakes her head.

JOSH  
(aggressive)  
Where the fuck is he?

Josh peers inside from over Cait's shoulder.

INT. CAIT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

DEAN, late thirties, tall, stocky, sits at the bottom of the stairs, his head in his hands.

Josh barges past Cait and approaches him.

CAIT  
Josh, no!

Dean looks up with a face full of genuine remorse.

DEAN  
I lost it, I didn't mean...

Josh lunges at Dean in a fierce rage and wraps both hands around his neck. Dean struggles and attempts to pull Josh's arms away from him.

Cait tries her hardest to separate them, but it's no use.

CAIT  
 (hysterical)  
 Josh! Stop it!

Josh desperately tries to free his hand to land a punch but Dean's grip is too strong. Cait realizes she's powerless, slumps back against the radiator and sobs.

With great effort Josh manages to lift Dean's head and force it back against the stairs. This stuns him, but it takes another two for his grip to loosen.

Josh clenches his fist, pulls back his arm but freezes as he looks up. Sadie stands at the top of the stairs in a princess outfit, holding a stuffed cow animal.

MORRIS (V.O.)  
 So. It's not going too well, then?

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Morris pours a portion of milk into a coffee and stirs it.

Josh is slumped in the seat opposite.

MORRIS  
 Are you sure you don't want a drink?

Josh shakes his head.

MORRIS  
 Best coffee I've tasted.

JOSH  
 I don't like coffee.

MORRIS  
 Tea?

JOSH  
 No.

MORRIS  
 You don't like tea, either?

JOSH  
 I like tea, I just don't want any. I wanted a milk-shake, but they ain't got any, so I'll do without.

MORRIS  
 I could get you a pint of milk instead.

JOSH  
 I'm fine.

MORRIS

You sure? It's practically the same thing.

JOSH

It's not. And I'm OK.

MORRIS

I don't think I've ever had a milkshake. I'm not the biggest fan of milk to begin with, just tastes like water to me.

JOSH

You've never had a milkshake?

MORRIS

I'm getting too old to be trying new things. I think I'll stick to what I know.

JOSH

You're missing out. Anyway, as riveting as it is, I didn't really come here to discuss the fucking drinks menu.

MORRIS

Sorry. So, you were saying things haven't gone too well this past week.

JOSH

Not really, no.

MORRIS

Did you think it would be easy?

Josh shrugs.

MORRIS

Are you ready to give up?

Josh stares at Morris until he can no longer hold eye contact. Morris sighs in disappointment.

Josh sits up.

JOSH

Look, I'm not saying I'm gonna go home, rack up a few lines and sink a crate. It's just, all this making amends and stuff, I don't think it's gonna happen.

MORRIS

And why do you think that?

JOSH

Have you not been listening to a word I've been saying? My mum won't speak to me, Andrew can't even if he wanted to, oh, and now my sister fucking hates me, so that's why I think that.

Morris takes a sip of his drink.

MORRIS

So you are ready to give up.

JOSH

I've made mistakes, and now I'm living with 'em. That's all there is to it.

MORRIS

You may think the mistakes you've made are unforgettable, and they may well be, but that doesn't mean they're unforgivable.

Josh smiles and shakes his head.

JOSH

Where do you get this stuff from? You're either a clever fucker or you read a lot of books.

MORRIS

If I was a clever fucker I'd be sat at home right now with a wife and two kids, waiting for my pension to kick in.

Josh's smile fades.

JOSH

It's just, I don't see what else I can do.

MORRIS

You've tried, that's all you can do. At the very least you've let them know you want to be back in their lives, whether they're ready for it or not. If this Andrew's a true friend like you say he is, he'll come around. And as for your family, I think you'll be surprised how quickly they do. And, for the record, yeah, I do read a lot of books.

Josh and Morris share a pleasant smile.

EXT. BUILDING SITE - DAY

Josh shovels a pile of rubble into a wheelbarrow. He puts the shovel down, picks up the wheelbarrow but drops it again to the sound of his phone ringing.

He takes his work glove off and pulls the phone from his pocket. He stares, puzzled at the caller ID, and after a moments hesitation, answers it.

JOSH  
 (on phone)  
 Hello. Oh right, what's up?.. Just  
 at work at the moment... Tomorrow?  
 Umm, not a lot really.

Josh pauses as he considers something.

JOSH  
 (on phone)  
 Yeah, OK. What time?

EXT. FOOTBALL PITCH - DAY

A football sits on a penalty spot. A worn, muddy trainer connects with it. Andrew leaps into the right hand corner of the goal and punches it to safety.

MARK, early twenties, athletic and well aware of his good looks, catches up with the ball. He nutmegs an OPPONENT, looks up and passes it to TERRY, late twenties, scruffy, nursing a beer belly.

The pitch is small, sixty yards in length. The lads are playing four aside. Josh, Andrew, Terry and Mark against four OPPONENTS a similar age.

Terry spots Josh running up the line and leathers the ball towards him. Josh volleys it at the goal but completely misses.

MARK  
 Unlucky, mate.

EXT. FOOTBALL PITCH - DAY - LATER

Terry slumps to the ground next to Josh and Andrew. They're all caked in mud and out of breath.

Mark skillfully practices keep-ups using his feet, chest and head, like he's still warming up.

TERRY  
 I ain't cut out for all this  
 running around bollocks anymore.

MARK

You're getting old mate.

TERRY

I know. Can we not start playing golf or something.

Mark volleys the ball towards a goal and takes a seat. Terry pulls a packet of cigarettes from his pocket and sparks up.

MARK

Those certainly aren't helping.

Terry offers one to Josh.

JOSH

No, I'm alright thanks.

TERRY

Fuck it. I only wanna live til I'm about sixty anyway.

ANDREW

Why?

TERRY

Well, it's down hill from there, init. New hips, cancer and that. They always dress it up on the Bupa adverts, but really, you're just waiting around to die.

ANDREW

My grandad's seventy two and I reckon he's healthier than me. He goes on a five mile walk every weekend.

TERRY

Well, you've just proved my point then, ain't ya.

Terry takes a big, gleeful drag of his cigarette.

EXT. FOOTBALL PITCH - DAY - LATER

Josh, Andrew, Terry and Mark stroll towards a road at the far end of the field.

ANDREW

What's the plan for tonight?

TERRY

Dunno. Is 'The Clifton' still two pound a pint on Saturdays?

ANDREW

Think so. It's a shit-hole, though.

TERRY

For two pound a pint it could be a fucking crack den for all I care. Mark, you keen?

MARK

I'm easy, mate. As long as it don't turn into a mad one. I'm s'pose to be meeting someone later.

TERRY

You'll be alright.

MARK

You said that last time. And now I'm single.

TERRY

Probably done you a favour. She was a wrongen anyway.

MARK

Don't talk to me about ex's.

TERRY

I admit I've had a few shifty ones in my time, but none of 'em have tried to stab me.

MARK

She didn't try to stab me.

TERRY

She was waiting outside your house with a meat cleaver.

MARK

Right, first off, it was a fucking steak knife, and secondly, she was only gonna let my tyres down.

ANDREW

Only?

TERRY

Josh, what you thinking?

JOSH

Dunno. I never met her.

TERRY

No, about tonight.

JOSH

Oh. I'm probably just gonna stay in to be honest.

TERRY

Fuck off. You ain't been out in ages.

JOSH

I know, but...

TERRY

It'll be a laugh. I can't remember the last time we were all out together.

MARK

It's been years.

Josh, unsure, turns to Andrew.

ANDREW

It has been years.

INT. PUB - BAR - NIGHT

A BARMAN places a pint of lager on a beer mat and hands Andrew his change.

Josh stands at the bar with a glass of orange juice in front of him. They each wear a smart shirt and jeans.

ANDREW

You sure you don't wanna pint?

JOSH

I'm good, thanks.

Andrew takes a big swig of his lager.

ANDREW

Suit yourself. Let's get a seat, my legs are killing me.

Andrew leads the way as they walk across the room.

They pass five ROWDY LADS playing pool. Josh looks straight ahead as if he's trying to avoid being spotted.

INT. PUB - TABLE - NIGHT

Andrew and Josh sit in a quiet corner of the room.

Josh notices two of the lads staring straight at him.

ANDREW  
Are your legs not hurting?

Andrew detects that Josh is distracted and glances over to see what by.

ANDREW  
Do you know them lot?

NED, mid twenties, wouldn't look out of place in a crowd of football hooligans and GABBER, early thirties, wide-eyed and unhealthily thin, approach.

JOSH  
Used to.

Ned downs the rest of his pint and slams it on a table. Gabber is close behind but looks like he's on another planet.

NED  
Josh? I thought that was you.

JOSH  
Ned. Gabber. You alright?

NED  
Quite alright.

Gabber is too fucked up to reply, he can barely stand, let alone he speak.

NED  
Where've you been hiding, then?

JOSH  
Nowhere, mate.

Ned sounds and looks more intimidating each time he speaks.

NED  
Mate? If we were mates, you would've kept in touch.

The mood is tense. Andrew stares at his pint, avoiding eye contact at all costs. Josh looks uneasy.

NED  
I nearly had to remortgage my house after you fucked off.

Josh's mood quickly turns bitter. He stares an Ned, clenches his fists.

NED  
What's wrong? You got cramp or something?

They stare at one another for what seems like an eternity. Andrew looks nervous, Gammer looks lost.

The tension builds and builds until Ned bursts out laughing. He slaps Josh on the shoulder.

NED

I'm only fucking about. I don't blame ya, mate. If it wasn't so good for business, I wouldn't hang around with these useless cunts either.

Ned nods towards Gammer, who's completely oblivious to the insult. Josh fakes a smile.

NED

Anyway, I'll catch up with you later.

Ned lets go of Josh's arm, walks a few steps away but turns back.

NED

Oh, and if you two wanna liven your night up a bit, I got some banging stuff at the minute. Same number Josh, just give us a shout.

Ned pulls Gammer with him as he walks away. Josh watches them leave and turns his focus back to Andrew.

JOSH

Sorry about that.

ANDREW

(relieved)  
How do you know them two?

JOSH

Just some old friends.

ANDREW

They didn't seem too friendly. What did he mean by remortgage his house?

Josh sips his orange juice.

JOSH

I used to buy...

MARK (O.S.)

Here they are.

Mark approaches carrying two pints of lager.

He's dressed to impress. V-neck, chinos, loafers and enough wax in his hair to stop a gale force twelve from shifting it.

MARK

Alright, boys.

(to Josh)

Nice to see you made it.

He places the pints on the table and takes a seat.

ANDREW

Where's Terry?

Mark nods towards the bar.

INT. PUB - BAR - NIGHT

Terry lifts a tray from the bar. He turns and walks cautiously towards the table with a packet of Pork Scratchings between his teeth.

He wears sun faded jeans with a rip in the knee, worn skate shoes and a t-shirt with a giant giraffe print on it.

The tray he's holding consists of two pints of lager, four vodka lemonades and eight shots.

INT. PUB - TABLE - NIGHT

Terry places the tray and Pork Scratchings down.

TERRY

Evening.

He notices the pint of orange juice in front of Josh, grabs it and holds it out to a BARMAID wiping down.

TERRY

Here, love. You can get rid of this, the people sat here before must have left it.

The barmaid reluctantly takes the glass. Terry sits.

TERRY

I dunno about you, but my legs are fucking killing me.

Terry places a pint and two shots in front of Josh, Andrew and Mark. Andrew looks at Terry as if he's just took a shit on the table.

TERRY

What?

ANDREW  
It's six o'clock.

TERRY  
I know. It's getting late.

Terry knocks back a shot and nudges Mark who's texting. Mark looks up, takes a shot and is straight back to his phone.

TERRY  
(to Andrew)  
What you waiting for?

Andrew sighs and knocks back a shot.

TERRY  
That's the spirit. Come on, Josh.  
It's not gonna drink itself.

JOSH  
I'm good, mate.

TERRY  
You will be once you get a few  
drinks down ya.

JOSH  
No. I'm not drinking.

TERRY  
Come on. You've barely said a word  
all day. You need to liven up a  
bit.

JOSH  
I'm alright.

TERRY  
You keep saying that, but you  
clearly ain't. What's up?

JOSH  
I'm just not in the mood.

TERRY  
Not in the mood? All the boys back  
together again. That's a cause for  
a celebration alone. What's wrong  
with ya?

JOSH  
Nothing.

TERRY  
Nothing?

ANDREW

Terry, just drop it. If he don't wanna drink he don't have to.

TERRY

No, I'm not having a go, I'm just saying. You disappear for a couple of years, don't keep in touch. Then you show up out of the blue and it's like you're a different fucking person.

Josh fiddles with a beer matt.

TERRY

You ain't been inside, have ya?

ANDREW

Course he hasn't.

TERRY

It's just, well, I noticed you were walking a bit funnier earlier. Didn't know whether if it was from the football or you had had your prison wallet tampered with.

JOSH

(smiling)  
Fuck off.

TERRY

Look, all I'm saying, it would be nice to have a quiet drink with the four of us back together.

Josh stares at the pint in consideration. He picks it up.

JOSH

A quiet drink.

Terry, now overjoyed, raises his glass and nudges Mark who does the same. Andrew hesitates and joins in.

They touch pints and each take a swig.

INT. PUB - TABLE - NIGHT - LATER

Four empty pint glasses hit the table, now littered with bar snacks, shot glasses and pints of lager.

Josh, Andrew, Terry and Mark are well on their way.

TERRY

It's fucking shit.

MARK

Nah, you can't beat it.

JOSH

I'm gonna have to agree with Terry on this one.

TERRY

Thank you.

MARK

How can you not like it?

TERRY

Because there's nothing to like about it.

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW

You can't beat driving back from work on a Friday afternoon, cracking on a bit of 'Radio 1' to get you in the mood for the weekend.

TERRY

Fucking hell, that's at the top of the shit-list.

MARK

What? 'Radio 1'?

TERRY

Yeah.

ANDREW

It's called 'Radio 1' for a reason. It's the best one.

JOSH

No. If I had to listen to any, it'd be '6 music'.

MARK

Ain't that the one that plays all the old shit?

ANDREW

I'm pretty sure it's what my grandad listens to. It's fucking painful.

JOSH

I take it by old shit, you mean the stuff where people actually play instruments and sing.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Not just some young bird who cleans up well but can't sing a fucking note without Autotune.

MARK

They play all sorts of stuff, even some old shit now and again.

TERRY

It's all shit.

Mark shakes his head.

MARK

I don't see how anyone can not like the radio.

TERRY

I'll tell you how.

MARK

Go on.

TERRY

Because it's full of useless cunts who love the sound of their own voice. I mean, the shit they play's bad enough, without them talking absolute bollocks in between every song. If I wanted to listen to shit music and talking, I'd download a hip hop album.

Josh, Andrew and Mark laugh. Terry stands.

ANDREW

You're not having another one already?

TERRY

I told you, I'm signing out at sixty. And with all this modern medicine, my body's gonna need all the help it can get.

Mark stands.

MARK

I'll join ya.

TERRY

What for?

MARK

A smoke.

TERRY

Fucking hell. Are you feeling alright?

MARK

Yeah. It's only when I drink.

TERRY

That's how it starts. You'll have to keep your distance though. With you dressed like that, I don't want people getting the wrong idea.

MARK

Prick.

Terry and Mark head for the door.

ANDREW

So. What's new?

JOSH

What d'you mean?

ANDREW

Well, what've you been up to? We didn't really get a chance to catch up the other day.

JOSH

Yeah, I'm sorry about that.

ANDREW

Don't be. It's just the way she is, mate. One minute she's cracking a smile, the next minute she wants to crack your head open. I wouldn't take it personally.

JOSH

Are you two OK, then?

ANDREW

Yeah. She'd calmed down a bit by the time she got home. Only had to put up with about ten minutes of shouting before we hit the bedroom. That's one of the joys of being married. I mean, a lot of people say the passion dies as soon as you put the ring on, but with her it's non stop. I reckon I'll be getting more kip when the baby arrives.

Josh and Andrew laugh.

ANDREW

So you're glad you come out, then?

JOSH

Yeah. It's good to see you lot. I have missed it.

ANDREW

Feels just like old times.

JOSH

Yep. We did have some fucking good times, didn't we?

ANDREW

Yeah. The other day after you left, I started thinking about the year we broke up from school. The camping trips, BBQ's...

JOSH

Kamen's house parties.

Josh and Andrew crack up laughing.

JOSH

Every time we'd have to leg it 'cause either his mum or dad would come home.

ANDREW

Every time.

JOSH

I remember me and Shantel were up in his dad's room once when he came in, we had to hide in his wardrobe for six hours til he got up for work.

Josh's smile fades as he realizes what he's just said. He takes a swig of lager.

ANDREW

When was the last time you saw her?

JOSH

A while, year maybe. Did she go to the wedding?

ANDREW

You know what Karen's like, mate.

JOSH

It's alright.

ANDREW

It's not. I told her you wouldn't come but she still fucking invited her.

JOSH

It's not her fault. I was the one who fucked everything up. To tell you the truth, I wouldn't have even known what day it was on, the state I was in.

ANDREW

What d'you mean?

JOSH

Did Shantel not say anything?

ANDREW

She said a lot of things, mate. Most of it was bollocks.

JOSH

What about the coke?

ANDREW

What about it?

JOSH

Did she mention it?

ANDREW

She said something, I dunno, maybe you used to do the odd line now and again. But that was all. Like I said mate, bollocks.

JOSH

Eight hundred pound.

ANDREW

What?

JOSH

That's how much I was putting up my nose a week.

ANDREW

(horrified)

What? Seriously?

Josh nods.

ANDREW

Wha... How did that happen?

JOSH

Honestly, I don't know. First time I tried it was with one of the Sales Agents at work. He was a flash cunt, just done it for the look, but I s'pose I got a taste for it.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Went from doing a couple of grams a month to a couple a day. I even started injecting.

ANDREW

Fuck.

JOSH

Lost my job, all of my savings, Shantel, you lot.

ANDREW

You didn't lose us. We all tried getting hold of ya.

JOSH

I couldn't let you see me like that.

Andrew falls silent, struggling to take it all in.

ANDREW

Eight hundred pound?

Josh smiles and nods.

ANDREW

Shit, man. What happened?

JOSH

I found help. Well, it sort of found me actually.

ANDREW

What, like rehab or AA or whatever it's called?

JOSH

No. I was a bit of a mess one day when this old bloke stopped me, said he could get me what I needed. I went back to his house, convinced I was either gonna get an overpriced bag of sniff or a mouthful of Rohypnol and a sore arse. But it turned out he'd been there and wanted to help. If it weren't for him, I probably wouldn't be sat here now.

Andrew glances at his pint.

ANDREW

You're alright with drink though, aren't ya?

Josh laughs.

JOSH

I haven't started clucking yet.

Andrew forces a smile. Terry staggers towards them.

JOSH

Can you just do us a favour and not say anything. I will tell 'em, just not tonight.

ANDREW

Of course.

Terry snatches his pint, necks it and slams the empty glass on the table.

TERRY

Right. Drink up. Let's do one.

Terry senses the change in mood between Josh and Andrew.

TERRY

What's up with you two?

ANDREW

Nothing.

TERRY

Come on then, let's go.

ANDREW

Go where?

TERRY

Anywhere that ain't here. I've seen more atmosphere in a bowls match. And Mark reckons he's got a couple of birds coming to meet us later. They're not gonna stay long if we're in this shit-hole.

ANDREW

I'm married.

TERRY

Yeah. We're not. Come on.

ANDREW

I think we're gonna call it a night.

TERRY

Piss off. It's nine o'clock.

ANDREW

I've gotta be up early tomorrow and Josh isn't feeling great.

Josh necks the rest of his pint.

JOSH  
Fuck it. Where we heading?

Terry's face lights up like a beacon. Andrew looks concerned.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Josh, Andrew and Terry sit on a table at the edge of the dance floor with three vodka lemonades in front of them.

The drinks are certainly starting to take their toll, but they seem to be hitting Josh the hardest.

Andrew points to Mark, who's sat at a table talking to two unbelievably attractive WOMEN.

ANDREW  
They the girls you're s'pose to be meeting, then?

TERRY  
Yeah. Fuck 'em.

JOSH  
I think Mark's trying to.

TERRY  
He can be my guest. They ain't my type.

JOSH  
They're everybody's type.

Andrew watches as Josh takes a big gulp of his drink.

ANDREW  
It's shit in here. Can we just call it a night?

Josh necks the rest of his drink. This excites Terry and he follows suit.

He stands and ruffles Josh's hair.

TERRY  
This is the Josh we know and love. Same again?

Josh nods and slides his glass to Terry. Andrew's drink is still untouched. Terry heads towards the bar.

ANDREW  
Make sure they're singles.

Terry laughs.

TERRY

Good one.

Andrew turns to Josh.

ANDREW

Slow down a bit.

JOSH

I'm alright.

ANDREW

You won't be in the morning.

They sit in silence a moment. Andrew looks increasingly worried as he notices a BLONDE GIRL sit down at a table.

He stands and grabs Josh's shoulder.

ANDREW

Right. Josh, come on, let's get out of here. You can come back to mine if you want? Get a kebab on the way home, watch a film or something.

Josh shrugs his hand off.

JOSH

I'm good here.

Josh notices Andrew glance across the room and turns to take a look. He freezes as he sees SHANTEL, mid twenties, the same girl from the photographs in Josh's shoebox.

She sits alone at a table and fixes her mascara.

Josh stands.

ANDREW

Josh, don't.

JOSH

I'm just gonna say hello.

ANDREW

Mate, that's not a good idea.

JOSH

It'll be fine.

Josh grabs Andrew's drink, downs it and stumbles towards Shantel.

ANDREW

Josh.

Andrew stands and takes a step towards him but stops, knowing he's powerless.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - SEATING AREA - NIGHT

Shantel sends a text on her phone, oblivious to Josh standing in front of her.

JOSH  
You alright, Shantel?

She looks up, stunned.

SHANTEL  
Josh. What are you doing here?

GARETH, early thirties, looks as if he's come straight from a Mens Health photo shoot, places two drinks on the table.

He leans in and kisses Shantel on the cheek.

GARETH  
Sorry I'm late.

Gareth notices Josh.

GARETH  
This a friend of yours?

SHANTEL  
Um, yeah. He just come over to say hello.

Josh is clearly disheartened but manages a faint smile.

JOSH  
Yeah, I was just leaving actually.  
It was nice seeing you Shantel. You two have a good night.

Josh turns to walk away.

GARETH  
Hey, wait up. Why don't you join us for a drink? It would be nice to finally meet some of Shanny's friends.

Josh glances at a now panicked Shantel briefly and then back to Gareth.

JOSH  
I'd love to, mate, but we were just leaving. I don't wanna keep my friends waiting.

GARETH  
OK, bud. No worries. Maybe some other time.

Gareth extends his arm.

GARETH  
I'm Gareth, by the way.

JOSH  
Josh.

Josh reaches out to shake but Gareth quickly retracts his arm. His charming look vanishes and turns bitter.

GARETH  
You're Josh?

SHANTEL  
Gareth, please. Just leave it.

JOSH  
(confused)  
Yeah.

GARETH  
You got a fucking nerve.

JOSH  
What?  
(to Shantel)  
What have you been telling him?

GARETH  
Don't you even fucking look at her.

SHANTEL  
Gareth, please.

Gareth stares at Josh with clenched fists and demonic eyes.

JOSH  
Look, I don't know what the problem  
is but...

GARETH  
You're clearly the fucking problem,  
mate. Don't take a genius to work  
that out.

Josh shakes his head and turns to walk away but Gareth forcefully grabs his shoulder.

Josh turns and pushes Gareth backwards, almost knocking him over.

SHANTEL  
Stop it!

Josh's face fills with rage, ready for a punch up. Gareth smiles.

GARETH

What you gonna do? Slap me about  
like you did her?

Josh lunges forward but is restrained by Andrew, who grabs him by the waist and clings on for dear life.

JOSH

I never fucking touched her!

Shantel breaks down to tears.

ANDREW

Josh, just leave it.

Andrew manages to pull Josh a few feet backwards but Gareth's smug grin pulls him towards it.

GARETH

Takes a real man to beat a woman  
but can't have a one on one without  
his mates getting involved.

Josh struggles harder and almost escapes Andrew's grasp.

Andrew manages to cling on for a few moments longer until Josh forces the back of his head into Andrew's face.

Andrew falls backwards.

Josh's rage instantly turns to remorse.

He turns to see Andrew on the floor in a dazed state, his shirt soaking up fresh blood from his gushing nose.

Two BOUNCERS approach. Josh rubs his hands down his face.

JOSH

(almost in tears)  
Mate.

Andrew looks Josh in the eye and slowly shakes his head as Bouncer #1 helps him to his feet.

Josh makes a run for the exit before Bouncer #2 can grab him.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

Terry stands near the doorway with two drinks in hand, clueless to what has happened.

TERRY

Josh?

Josh barges past him, spilling both drinks down his t-shirt.

TERRY  
For fuck's sake.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

The doors swing open as Josh bundles out into the street. He falls to his knees and vomits.

BOUNCER #2 (O.S.)  
Hey!

Josh clambers to his feet and sprints up the road.

EXT. HIGH STREET - NIGHT

Josh leans against a wall and catches his breathe. He slumps to the floor with his head in his hands.

He hits his elbow against the wall in frustration.

He pulls his phone from his pocket with shaking hands, dials a number and puts it to his ear.

JOSH  
It's Josh. I need to see you... No,  
now.

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Morris sits alone at a table reading a newspaper. He puts it down, takes a sip of coffee and checks his watch.

He glances up and his expression changes. Somewhere between confused and concerned as Josh strides past the window.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Ned sits on a recycling bin and tokes away on a joint. Two thuggish TEENAGERS stand either side.

Ned jumps to his feet as Josh enters.

NED  
Fucking hell, looks like your night  
took a turn for the worst.

Ned offers Josh the joint but he declines with a stare.

NED  
Go on. You look like you need it.

JOSH  
You know what I need.

Ned smiles.

NED

I was kinda hoping you'd just come to have a bit of a catch up with an old pal.

JOSH

Look, can you just sort us out. I'm not in the mood to fuck about.

Ned laughs.

NED

That rhymed. You could teach these two clowns a lesson.

Ned nods towards the two Teenagers, who don't look amused.

NED

I don't know how 'Grime' got so popular but nowadays every cunt wants to try their hand at it.

JOSH

Ned.

NED

It's non stop. Shank this, murk that, does my fucking head in.

JOSH

Ned.

Josh's hands begin to shake as he grows increasingly impatient.

NED

You don't look too healthy, mate. Maybe you should call it a night.

JOSH

Please.

Ned considers it.

NED

How much?

Josh pulls two ten pound notes and a handful of coins from his pocket.

JOSH

This is all I've got.

NED

You taking the piss?

JOSH  
I'll sort the rest out tomorrow,  
you know I'm good for it.

NED  
I don't know you're good for shit,  
mate, ain't seen you in so long.

Josh's desperation shows. He searches his pockets and pulls out his phone.

JOSH  
Here. That's gotta be worth at  
least a hundred.

NED  
I don't want your fucking phone.

JOSH  
Well just keep hold of it til I pay  
you the rest then.

NED  
That's not how I do things, Josh.  
You know that.

JOSH  
(aggressive)  
The amount of money I've give you,  
you fucking owe me.

NED  
Owe you?

Ned takes a deep breath and smiles.

NED  
(calmly)  
Josh. The reason you ain't on the  
deck right now is because I  
actually like you. Go home.

Josh leans into Ned's face.

JOSH  
Stop acting the hard man in front  
of your little mates and give me  
the fucking gea...

Ned lands a swift headbutt on Josh's nose.

As Josh stumbles backwards, Teenager #1 forcefully pushes him straight into a powerful right hook from Ned.

Josh falls to the ground, attempts to get up, but Teenager #2 stomps on his back, securing him to the concrete.

Teenager #1 joins in and viciously kicks Josh in the head.

Ned turns and walks away.

NED

Let's go. He's had enough.

Teenager #1 has one more kick before catching up with Ned.

TEENAGER #1

(laughing)

Little mates.

Teenager #2 sucks up phlegm and spits on Josh before following Teenager #1 and Ned through the alleyway.

THUG #2

Pussyole.

Josh lies on the concrete, almost lifeless, in a struggle to keep his eyes open. He attempts to spit blood from his mouth but it just dribbles down his chin.

EXT. HARBOURSIDE - NIGHT

Josh staggers beside the harbour wall holding a small, white carrier bag. He slumps against a stack of crab pots, his nose bloody and eye almost swollen shut.

He stares across the water a moment before turning his attention to the carrier bag. He pulls out a small bottle of vodka and a packet of cigarettes.

He cracks open the bottle, takes a big gulp but struggles to keep it down.

He rips open the packet of cigarettes, sparks up and manages a few tokes before breaking down in tears.

He picks up the bottle of vodka and throws it into the harbour, along with the cigarettes. He leans his head back against the crab pots and continues to sob.

MORRIS (O.S.)

Don't you think it's a bit cold to  
be sat out here?

Josh closes his eyes. He knows the voice but doesn't want to acknowledge it.

Morris places a small milk-shake in a plastic cup next to Josh's feet and takes a seat on the wall opposite.

MORRIS

Well, you lasted longer than I did,  
anyway. Eight months. I don't think  
I managed eight days on my first  
attempt.

Josh opens his eyes.

MORRIS

I lasted about a month or two the second time. I remember, I started using again because I was gaining weight.

Morris chuckles.

MORRIS

Imagine that. Marks all up my arms, teeth like a vandalized graveyard and I was worried about putting on a bit of timber.

JOSH

I wanna be alone.

MORRIS

When I look back, it wasn't the programme, or even my sponsor that got me clean. I mean they certainly helped, yeah, but in the end it was an overdose that did it for me.

JOSH

Please, can you just leave me alone.

MORRIS

I remember lying in that doorway in a puddle of my own sick, hoping to die. I could see people walking past, shaking their heads. It was a good twenty minutes before someone called an ambulance. I don't blame 'em to be honest. To them I was just another junkie, getting fucked up off their taxes.

JOSH

Why are you here?

MORRIS

I could ask you the same question.

Josh's drunken slurs turn aggressive and bitter.

JOSH

Just stop with the fucking mind games. You're the reason I'm here.

MORRIS

It's easy to blame other people for your mistakes, but until you own up to...

JOSH

Fuck off! I had everything and I fucked it up. Me! I had come to terms with that, but you, you had to keep pushing me, didn't ya? Couldn't just let me get on with my life. I'd probably be better off if you had died in that fucking doorway.

Morris stares at Josh, clearly wounded.

MORRIS

(softly)

You're probably right.

Morris stands and walks away.

JOSH

What are you doing?

MORRIS

Letting you get on with your life.

Josh pulls himself up stumbles after him.

JOSH

What, so that's it? You've done your bit and now you're just gonna fuck off. Walk away when things don't go the way you planned. Fucking hypocrite.

Morris continues at a steady pace with Josh a few feet behind.

JOSH

Thought you could just come down here, tell me how bad your life was and everything would be alright? Not got anything now then, no? No words of wisdom?

MORRIS

Go home.

Josh laughs.

JOSH

The night's still young. I might head back into town, if I'm lucky I could still get hold of something.

Morris turns around with a face full of anger but he manages to control himself and speaks relatively calmly.

MORRIS

It's gonna be a nice day tomorrow.  
No wind and highs of twenty four  
degrees. I'll let you decide how  
you want to spend it.

Morris walks away, leaving Josh to stand alone in deep thought.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

A set of curtains open to reveal blinding sunlight. Josh's pupils dilate as he stares out of the window.

The swelling around his eye has decreased slightly but dry blood still clings to his nose and face.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Water with a reddish tint runs down a plug hole.

Josh closes his eyes and lets water from the shower head run down his face.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Josh sits on his bed in a pair of shorts. A large bruise is forming around his ribs. He winces as he bends down to put on a pair of socks.

He stands, grabs a t-shirt from his wardrobe and puts it on.

He picks up a towel from the floor and stares at his bloody shirt from the night before.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - UTILITY ROOM - DAY

A small scoop of white powder falls into a tray.

Josh closes the tray and presses a button which sets the washing machine in motion.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Josh searches the cupboards for food with no luck. He opens the last cupboard to reveal a lonely box of cereal.

He grabs the cereal, along with a bowl and fills it. He opens the fridge, grabs a bottle of milk and studies the label.

Undecided, he tilts the bottle up to the light. It's well off. He throws it in the bin.

EXT. SHARED HOUSE - DAY

Josh locks the front door and heads down the street.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Cody sits across the road on his BMX.

He spots Josh, rides over and rolls slowly next to him.

CODY

Whoa, what happened to you?

Josh smiles.

JOSH

I made a mistake.

CODY

Did you get into a fight?

JOSH

Yeah.

CODY

Did you win?

JOSH

No.

CODY

You gonna be alright?

JOSH

Yeah. I think so.

CODY

Where you going?

JOSH

Shop.

CODY

It doesn't open til ten on a Sunday.

JOSH

What time is it?

Cody checks his watch.

CODY

Twenty five to nine.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - UP THE ROAD - DAY

CODY'S MUM, late twenties, exits a house in a hurry and scans the street for her son. She spots him and shakes her head.

CODY'S MUM  
Cody, get back here, now. I told  
you I can't be late again.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Cody glances back and sees his mum waving him towards her.

CODY  
I better go. I'll see you later.

JOSH  
See you later, mate.

Cody turns and quickly pedals off.

Josh moves aside to let a WOMAN pushing a pram past. He exchanges a brief smile before continuing down the road.

JOSH (V.O.)  
I've never been great at apologies  
so I'll try and make it quick. I'm  
sorry, fucking sorry, and I really  
do mean it. I know you don't wanna  
speak to me and I don't blame ya.

EXT. NEWSAGENTS - DAY

Josh paces up and down outside the derelict shop with his phone to his ear.

JOSH  
I was a fucking prick last night.  
And if I listened to you, I  
wouldn't even be leaving this  
message. I wanna try and make  
things right, but I do understand  
if you never wanna see me again.  
Anyway, I hope to hear from you.

EXT. NEWSAGENTS - DAY - LATER

Josh sits at the shop entrance with his back against the wall. He taps out a beat on the concrete to pass time.

He stops as he notices Holly walking towards him from a distance with Bracken by her side.

Josh shuffles into a corner behind a bin, in an attempt to remain unseen. But knocks over an empty can in the process.

JOSH  
 (under his breathe)  
 Shit.

Holly is oblivious but Bracken runs straight for him. He rolls over next to Josh, demanding attention. Josh rubs his stomach.

HOLLY (O.S.)  
 Bracken.

Josh stops petting him and points towards Holly.

JOSH  
 (under his breath)  
 Go on. Go see mummy.

Bracken yelps loudly, giving away his location. Josh sighs and shakes his head, but can't help but smile at Bracken.

Holly appears from behind the bin wearing a cute, somewhat mismatched summer outfit.

HOLLY  
 (to Bracken)  
 There you are.

She notices Josh.

HOLLY  
 (startled)  
 Hiya.

Josh looks like a kid who's just been caught stealing.

JOSH  
 Alright?

Holly bends down and puts a lead on Bracken.

HOLLY  
 I would be if this little bugger didn't keep running off. What you up to?

JOSH  
 Not a lot. Just waiting for the shop to open.

HOLLY  
 What you after, a bag of peas?

Josh looks at her, puzzled.

HOLLY  
 For your eye?

JOSH

Oh right, no. Just some milk.

Holly peers into the shop window.

HOLLY

I think it's shut.

JOSH

Opens at ten on a Sunday.

HOLLY

Oh.

Holly checks her phone.

HOLLY

You know it's only just gone nine,  
don't ya?

JOSH

Prefer to be sat here for an hour  
than at home.

HOLLY

Fair enough.

Holly smiles.

HOLLY

Right, I better get going before he  
starts yapping. Enjoy your milk.

JOSH

Cheers. Have a good day.

Holly's smile grows wider as she turns and strolls down the street.

Josh watches her, but quickly looks down as she turns back.

HOLLY

Josh?

Josh looks up.

HOLLY

You can keep me company for an hour  
if you want?

Josh stares at her blankly.

HOLLY

You know, til the shop opens. You  
don't have to. Just thought you  
might want a change of scenery is  
all.

JOSH  
No, I mean, yeah, that would be nice.

Josh pulls himself up, doing a bad job trying to hide the pain from his bruised ribs, and joins Holly.

Josh, Holly and Bracken stroll into the distance.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

A bright green tennis ball bounces along the grass. Bracken scurries after it and pounces, missing the ball completely.

He rolls over and takes another swipe, this time securing it in his mouth.

EXT. FIELD - OAK TREE - DAY

Josh and Holly sit at the foot of a large oak tree. Holly grins as she searches the internet on her phone.

JOSH  
Well?

HOLLY  
It's still loading.

Bracken returns with the ball in his mouth. He drops it for Josh who throws it across the grass.

JOSH  
You can't find it, can you?

HOLLY  
You wait.

JOSH  
Just admit that you made it up.

HOLLY  
I didn't. I used to have them all the time when I was little.

JOSH  
Are you sure you're not on about a Kinder Egg?

HOLLY  
No. It was definitely a yoghurt. It was round and pink, and it had a toy in the middle.

JOSH  
I've never heard of a yoghurt with a toy in the middle.

HOLLY

You must have. Everyone had them at school. We used to swap the aliens at lunch.

JOSH

Aliens? It's sounding more believable by the second.

Holly playfully bumps into Josh.

HOLLY

The toys. I'm pretty sure they were like little green alien things with fishbowls on their heads.

JOSH

You sure you weren't on some sort of medication.

HOLLY

I hope not. I must've only been about six or seven.

Bracken returns with the ball and waits eagerly for Josh to throw it.

JOSH

(to Bracken)

One more and that's it.

Josh picks up the ball and throws it. Holly's face lights up.

HOLLY

FruFoo's!

Josh laughs.

JOSH

What?

Holly shoves her phone in Josh's face.

HOLLY

I told you.

Josh studies the phone a minute and smiles.

JOSH

Alright, I'll give you that.

HOLLY

Thank you. Wish we would've bet on it now.

JOSH

I...

Josh hesitates. Holly smiles.

HOLLY

What?

JOSH

No, it's nothing.

HOLLY

Go on.

JOSH

I was just gonna say. I could take you out for something to eat sometime. I doubt they'll have any of them on the menu, but I might treat you to a Kinder Egg afterwards, if you're lucky.

Holly's smile fades.

HOLLY

I'm sorry, but I'm sort of seeing someone at the moment.

JOSH

Oh. I just meant, like, I dunno a takeaway or something, nothing major, like a friends sort of thing.

HOLLY

Really?

JOSH

Well, no. Not really.

HOLLY

I'm sorry.

JOSH

Don't be silly. I'd be more surprised if you were single to be honest. He's a lucky...

HOLLY

She.

JOSH

What?

HOLLY

She. It's a girl.

JOSH

Oh, um, sorry. She, she's a lucky girl.

Josh, overcome with embarrassment, turns his attention to the ground. Holly stares at him, curiously.

After an awkward moment, Josh looks up to see Holly grinning mischievously.

JOSH  
What?

Holly's grin widens.

JOSH  
Are you...

She bursts out laughing.

JOSH  
You're winding me up.

HOLLY  
Thought I'd get you back for not believing me.

Josh smiles and shakes his head.

Holly places her hand on top of Josh's as they stare across the park in a moment of pleasant silence.

HOLLY  
Where you gonna take me, then?

INT. SHARED HOUSE - JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

A wet paintbrush slaps against a wall. Josh and Nathan paint the room light blue. A small radio pumps out cheerful rock music in the corner which reflects the mood in the room.

NATHAN  
Where did you take her, then?

JOSH  
That place that does all the different types of chicken.

NATHAN  
Nando's?

JOSH  
No. The one on the corner, over the road from the laundrettes.

NATHAN  
Bantam and Robin?

JOSH  
Yeah, that's the one.

NATHAN

Fucking hell. You're splashing out a bit.

JOSH

Yeah, was worth it though. Best night I've had in a long time. And the food was spot on.

NATHAN

It should be at the prices they charge. I s'pose the word 'Rob' in the name's a hint.

Josh laughs.

NATHAN

I shit you not. I went there once, had two pints and a chicken burger, and it came to about thirty quid. I said to the waiter, I wanted a bite to eat, not shares in the business.

JOSH

Like I said. It was worth it.

NATHAN

Sounds like you're in love to me.

JOSH

Behave. I've only known her a week.

NATHAN

I thought you said you used to work together.

JOSH

Yeah, well sort of. The same place but not together. But that was years ago. We must have only spoke a couple of times. She did admit that she used to fancy me, though.

NATHAN

You must've done more than speak to her last night.

Josh grins.

NATHAN

I heard you come in. You ain't the biggest talker in the world so I can only imagine what you were up to til half eight this morning.

JOSH

You sure the landlord won't mind us decorating?

NATHAN

Don't change the subject.

JOSH

I'm not. Just don't want him  
kicking off.

NATHAN

It's fine.

Josh puts his brush down and reaches into his pocket.

NATHAN

Go on then, fill me in.

Josh looks relieved as he pulls out his vibrating phone. The screen reads 'Unknown Number'.

NATHAN

Thinking of it, I bet that's what  
she said.

JOSH

Sorry. I better get this.

Nathan smiles and shakes his head as Josh leaves the room.

INT. SHARED HOUSE - LANDING - DAY

Josh puts the phone to his ear.

NATHAN (O.S.)

(raised voice)

It's worse if you leave it to my  
imagination.

Josh shuts the door.

JOSH

Sorry about that. You still haven't  
got your phone fixed then?

Josh's cheerful expression turns serious.

JOSH

Oh, um, sorry. I thought it was  
someone else.

INT. PUBLIC PARK - DAY

Josh and Cait sit on a bench overlooking a small lake with a gap big enough to fit another two people between them.

The mood is tense. After a moment Josh looks to Cait.

JOSH  
I am sorry.

Cait continues to look straight ahead.

JOSH  
Cait?

CAIT  
I heard you the first three times.

JOSH  
Well you haven't exactly said much.

CAIT  
I didn't come here for an apology.

JOSH  
Oh. What did you...

CAIT  
I spoke to mum.

JOSH  
Oh right. What about?

CAIT  
What do you think?

Josh turns his focus back to the lake.

CAIT  
I told her what you said about the sugar. I still haven't got a clue what you're on about but she seemed to.

JOSH  
What did she say?

CAIT  
Not much. She wants you to go round on Saturday.

JOSH  
Saturday?

CAIT  
Yeah. Is that a problem?

JOSH  
I've sort of made plans.

CAIT  
I'm sure your mates can live without you for a couple of hours, Josh.

JOSH  
It's not my mates. It's, a girl.

CAIT  
(pleasantly surprised)  
Oh.

JOSH  
Do you reckon she'd mind if I went  
Sunday instead?

CAIT  
Probably, yeah.

JOSH  
Why?

CAIT  
I don't know. Maybe she wants to  
see her fucking son on his  
birthday.

JOSH  
What time?

CAIT  
Twelve.

JOSH  
Alright.

CAIT  
Don't let her down.

JOSH  
I won't.

Cait stands.

JOSH  
Cait, wait a minute. About the  
other day.

CAIT  
I don't wanna hear it.

Cait begins to walk off. Josh stands.

JOSH  
Cait, please. I'm sorry, I lost my  
temper. I was just trying to look  
out for you.

Cait turns back and snaps at him.

CAIT  
It wasn't your place, Josh. A few  
years ago, maybe, but not now.  
(MORE)

CAIT (CONT'D)

He's only done it once before and  
if he does it again I'll leave him.  
But that's my business, not yours.

JOSH

I'm sorry. Can we just sit down.  
Please.

Josh sits. Cait hesitates and slumps down next to him, closer than before. She reaches into her handbag and pulls out a packet of cigarettes.

She snatches one from the packet, puts it to her lips and sparks up.

JOSH

I didn't know you smoked.

Cait remains silent.

JOSH

They're not good for you, you know.

Cait warns Josh with a look.

JOSH

I just heard it's addictive is all.

Cait continues to stare. Josh cracks a cheeky smile.

CAIT

Don't.

JOSH

I won't say another word.

Josh notices a YOUNG BOY and his FATHER on the other side of the lake, feeding swans.

JOSH

Where's Sadie?

CAIT

At her friends house.

JOSH

How is she?

CAIT

Fine.

JOSH

Did she say anything about what  
happened?

CAIT

Of course she did.

JOSH  
What did you tell her?

CAIT  
I told her, her uncle's a useless  
prick.

This hurts Josh. Cait notices and takes pity.

CAIT  
I said you were just playing. She's  
still at an age where she believes  
everything I say, but she won't be  
for much longer. If you want to be  
involved in her life, you need to  
start using that head of yours.

JOSH  
I am trying.

Cait looks to Josh with a forgiving smile.

CAIT  
I know. So, who's this girl?

JOSH  
Just a friend.

CAIT  
I think you forget I'm your sister  
sometimes. What's her name?

JOSH  
Holly.

CAIT  
Why don't you take her to mum's  
with you?

JOSH  
What?

CAIT  
Well, you said you've made plans  
with her. Just take her with you?

JOSH  
We're not exactly at the meet the  
parents stage yet.

CAIT  
Do you like her?

JOSH  
Well, yeah. She's nice.

CAIT  
Then why wait?

JOSH  
I dunno, I might do, I'll see.

CAIT  
You should at least ask her. It would make mum's day, seeing you with a girl.

JOSH  
Alright, I'll ask her. As long as you stop going on about it.

CAIT  
You promise?

JOSH  
Yes.

Cait pulls out the packet of cigarettes and offers Josh one.

JOSH  
I've quit.

Cait puts the cigarettes back into her bag.

INT. CAFÉ - NIGHT

Morris enters, walks towards his usual table and sits.

WAITRESS (O.S.)  
Morris.

A middle aged WAITRESS approaches him.

WAITRESS  
A young man was in here looking for you. He waited for about an hour, but said he had to get going.

The Waitress hands Morris a small, square envelope.

WAITRESS  
He came back a few minutes later and asked me to give you this.

Morris stares at it puzzled.

WAITRESS  
I'll be over in a minute to take your order.

MORRIS  
Thank you.

Morris studies the envelope. He tears it open and pulls out a 'Thank You' card.

He opens it, reads its contents and is clearly moved by it. He smiles, but looks like he could tear up at any moment.

WAITRESS (O.S.)

The usual is it? Americano and a Custard Danish.

Morris proudly props the card up in front of him and turns to the Waitress, who waits eagerly with a notebook.

MORRIS

I'll stick with the Danish, but I'd like a milk-shake instead of the coffee, please.

WAITRESS

What flavour?

MORRIS

Surprise me.

WAITRESS

OK.

The waitress returns to the counter. Morris stares at the card and then out of the window.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Josh and Holly walk hand in hand. Josh is clearly anxious, but Holly looks more than comfortable.

JOSH

Are you sure you wanna do this?

HOLLY

Is there something you're not telling me?

JOSH

What d'you mean?

HOLLY

Well, if your mum's some sort of ax murderer, I've got the right to know. You look like you're about to start a driving test.

JOSH

I'm alright. I'm glad you're here.

Josh pulls Holly in and puts his arm around her as they walk towards Dawn's house.

EXT. DAWN'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh lets go of Holly, takes a deep breath and knocks.

The door swings open. Dawn smiles, leans in and hugs Josh.

DAWN  
Happy birthday, son.

JOSH  
Thanks, mum.

She lets go and turns her attention to Holly. Her smile widens.

JOSH  
This is Holly.

HOLLY  
Nice to meet you.

DAWN  
Lovely to meet you too, dear.  
(to Josh)  
Your sister said you might be  
bringing someone. Come in.

Dawn walks inside. Josh is still a bag of nerves, but Holly reassures him with a smile before following Dawn in.

INT. DAWN'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh closes the door and follows Holly into the kitchen.

INT. DAWN'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Holly looks around at the various ornaments and photographs of Josh and his family.

DAWN  
What can I get you to drink? Tea,  
coffee, orange juice, lemonade?

HOLLY  
Orange juice will be fine, thank  
you.

DAWN  
Josh?

JOSH  
Um, yeah. I'll have the same,  
please.

Dawn pulls two glasses from a cupboard which has a noticeable dent in the door from the tin money box.

She pours two drinks and hands them to Josh and Holly.

HOLLY  
Thank you.

JOSH  
Cheers, mum.

DAWN  
Shall we sit out in the garden  
while the sun's out?

JOSH  
If you want.

Dawn leads them to a blinded back door. She attempts to open it but struggles with the lock.

DAWN  
Can you try, Josh. You always had a  
knack for it.

Dawn steps back. Josh approaches the door and unlocks it without effort. He pulls it open, steps outside but is stopped in his tracks by what he see's.

EXT. DAWN'S HOUSE - GARDEN - DAY

A small gathering is in full swing. A 'Happy Birthday' banner flutters in between two trees. A portable iPod dock is lit up on a table, but all is quiet. Not a sound.

Mark and Terry talk amongst themselves while Andrew attends to a barbecue. Steak, burgers, lamb, chicken, the full works.

Cait sits on a fold out chair with Sadie on her lap. Sadie colours in a drawing. She notices Josh, jumps to her feet and runs towards him.

Josh scoops her up in his arms and glances at Cait for approval. She smiles and mouths the words 'happy birthday'.

Terry and Mark raise their glasses of coke. Andrew puts down the tongs and nods at Josh with a forgiving smile.

Dawn and Holly step out into the garden and stand either side of Josh. Holly puts her arm on his back for comfort as he takes it all in.

Folk-rock music slowly filters through the silence until all sound returns to normal.

SADIE  
Josh, Josh, look what I drew.

Sadie holds out a drawing for Josh to see.

JOSH

Wow. That's amazing.

Josh turns to Dawn, who's on the verge of tears, wraps his spare arm around her and kisses the top of her head.

Sadie holds her drawing out for Holly to see.

HOLLY

Wow, that's pretty.

(whispers to Sadie)

But not as pretty as the artist.

Terry waits eagerly next to the barbecue.

TERRY (O.S.)

Right, can we get started now? I  
can feel my stomach eating itself.

MARK

It'll be pretty full up soon, then.

Andrew slaps a burger in between two buns. Terry grabs a plate and holds it out, but looks disheartened as Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW

Birthday boy first.

Josh walks towards Cait, Terry, Mark and Andrew with Sadie in his arms and Dawn and Holly close behind.

FADE OUT: