

A Transitional Period

by
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OVER BLACK:

Rain falls in constant sheets.

THUNDER RUMBLES.

A LOW WAILING SIREN cries out in the distance.

LIGHTNING CRACKS.

FADE IN:

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The ashen grey sky looms heavy overhead. Rain pours into the house like discarded shotgun shells. The roof seemingly ripped off its foundation like tattered duct tape.

The WHIRLING SIREN echoes in the distance.

ADAM CALLOW (24), unspectacular, stands amongst the prosaic wooden furniture and homey decor. He doesn't seem to notice the rain pouring into the house, let alone care, as he stares stolidly towards the sky: cold, soaked and alone.

A maladroit reproduction of Friedrich's "Gazing at the Moon" hangs neatly above the bed.

The SIREN grows with intensity. Closer. Ringing like a child's piercing scream.

A LIGHT FLASHES in the sky high above and then-

AN AIRPLANE

sweeps directly overhead in slow motion.

The RINGING is unbearable.

Adam calmly closes his eyes, as the plane continues overhead.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - DAY

The RINGING of the SIREN continues, bearing down on us.

ADAM'S EYES

float open, as he sits callously behind the wheel. Out the-

DRIVER SIDE WINDOW

an AMBULANCE whips mere inches past the car.

The ambulance and the siren quickly disappear into the distant haze of bumper-to-bumper traffic on the I-10 Freeway.

Finally, the RADIO is audible. CHRISTMAS MUZAK christens the already jaded car ride.

Adam stares deadpan out the window at the lurching traffic.

COLIN (O.S.)

Fucking Christmas carols. They're like Prozac for spoiled little rich kids and their alcoholic mothers.

Adam looks over at COLIN (22). Brazen. Confident. Clearly the exact definition of what he just described.

COLIN (CONT'D)

You know you're going to miss all your friends out here, right? I mean seriously, whose in Florida?

ADAM

Nobody.

COLIN

Exactly. Nobody.

Adam glances into the rearview mirror at the large U-Haul trailer hooked to the car, tuning Colin out.

COLIN (cont'd)

You could've stayed and went to college with the cow humpers in Texas, but you didn't. You came here. And you loved it. And now we're talking about you leaving here. Leaving your friends. Leaving the beautiful women. For what? A job?

He whistles.

COLIN (CONT'D)

That's heavy shit. You sure you're man enough to handle the responsibility?

Adam turns back to the windshield and stares blankly out at the endless line of cars.

EXT. I-10 FREEWAY - CONTINUE

Cars jam bumper-to-bumper like refrigerator magnets. Adam's SUV just another speck in the myriad of unspectacular cars.

EXT. HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Adam backs the car, with trailer, up the driveway.

FROM THE SIDE MIRROR

Colin signals Adam back.

COLIN

Plenty of room. Keep her coming...
keep coming... keep coming.

The U-Haul smacks into the roof's low overhang.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Okay, you're good. Lock her down.

Adam's sits unaffected.

INT. HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

Boxes litter the near empty room. Colin exits with a box.

Adam tosses a few items into an open box. He finds a pair of mangled running shoes nearby. They're beaten. Worn and battered over time and many miles.

He stares at them, contemplating. Then slings the shoes over his shoulder.

AN ANSWERING MACHINE

blinks on the nightstand. Beside it a fish bowl. A single goldfish inside. Adam sees the flashing light and hits PLAY.

BEEP!

Adam picks up a picture frame off the nightstand and turns it over as the message plays.

A PICTURE

of a fair woman, MEGAN JADE, (24). Her sweet smile unable to mask her heavy eyes. Beside her, SHAYFER JADE, (5). A wide toothy grin spread across his innocent face.

MEGAN (V.O.)
(through tears)
Adam?... Are you there?... It's
Megan... Chris died last night.

Adam looks up from the photo with dulled eyes. Unexpressive.

MEGAN (V.O.)
There was a car accident...
(a beat, she cries)
I don't know why I'm even calling
you... I just thought you should
know... The funeral's Saturday.

His eyes shift back to the photo. Frozen. His face casting a reflection in the glass frame. A ring of sleeplessness handcuffs his heavy eyes; just as heavy as Megan's. He's tired and has been for quite some time.

MEGAN (V.O.)
I have to go. Don't call this
number. Gabe might get upset. I'll
call you later. Sorry.

BEEP.

Adam casually turns the frame over and sets it face down inside the box. Then looks up and catches sight of the fishbowl.

He stares stoically at the goldfish inside. Then turns away and grabs the answering machine from the nightstand. Tosses it inside the box and tapes it shut.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Adam sets a box down and looks up at the trailer. It's completely full. Boxes wedged and smashed haphazardly on top of one another. One big cluster fuck.

Colin tries to wedge one more box inside. He backs up and runs, ramming his shoulder into the box. Forcing it in. Then turns proudly back to Adam, who calmly shifts his gaze to the pile of still unpacked boxes at his feet.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Empty boxes discarded along the pavement. Adam and Colin load stuffed trash bags into the trailer. Adam tosses the last bag inside the full trailer. Packed much tidier this time around.

COLIN

You sure you really want to do this? Cause I really don't see what the big rush is. You just got out of college like two years ago. Life's not goin' anywhere fast.

Adam slams the trailer shut.

ADAM

Exactly.

He padlocks the trailer and starts towards the driver side.

COLIN

When do you have to be in Florida?

ADAM

A couple weeks. I figured I might stop over at home for the holidays.

COLIN

Cool. I used to do that.

Adam opens the car door, climbs in.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Oh, yeah, I almost forgot. We're having your going away party tonight. You should come. It's gonna be kick ass.

Adam stops, stares sideways back at Colin.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Oh... Well, it won't be all fun. I mean we totally plan on having like one of those moments of silence or something for ya.

Adam holds blankly on Colin for a moment. Then looks away.

COLIN (CONT'D)

You sure? Gonna be fuckin' fun.

Adam shuts the door without an answer and starts the car.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Okay. Fine... Oh, by the way, guess whose got two hot dates tonight? That'd be me. I could loan you one, if you decided to stay.

ADAM

Five says they both ditch you by
the end of the night.

COLIN

Who said I can't love them both
equally at the same time?
Polygamy's the new monogamy, baby.

Adam re-adjusts the rearview mirror, checks the trailer.

COLIN (CONT'D)

I'll have to come visit you in
Florida sometime.

Adam looks at him, fully aware it'll never happen.

ADAM

Yeah. That'd be cool.

COLIN

Good-bye hug?

Colin smiles, holds his arms out. Adam flicks him off and
they slap hands instead.

COLIN (CONT'D)

You can still rethink this thing.

A beat. Adam pops the car into gear.

ADAM

I'll see ya, bud.

Adam backs down the driveway. He watches out the windshield
as Colin waves good-bye. Just before he's out of sight, Colin
grabs his crotch in one grand gesture.

Adam reverses out of the driveway. He pauses and looks back
towards the house atop the hill. His eyes slide back out the
windshield as a-

STRAY DOG

jogs across the empty street and into a nearby yard.

Adam watches the dog disappear. He lets out a deep breath,
pops the car into gear and pulls away.

IN THE SIDE MIRROR

the house recedes in the distance getting smaller and smaller
until it's only a speck on the horizon.

MUSIC KICKS IN.

EXT. I-10 FREEWAY - ON-RAMP - DAY

Adam's car rushes up the on-ramp smack into traffic.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - I-10 FREEWAY - DAY

Adam, stuck in traffic, glances out the window-

INSIDE THE CAR BESIDE HIM

A TORRID YOUNG BOY points a toy gun at Adam and "shoots" him. Adam blinks tiredly and turns back to the windshield.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

Adam argues with an OLDER HISPANIC MAN, obviously lost. He points at a map. Then at the road. The Hispanic Man grabs the map from Adam. Adam yanks it back.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - I-10 - ROAD - DAY

Adam cruises comfortably down an empty stretch of highway.

BING.

He checks the dash. The "CHECK ENGINE" light flashes on.

EXT. ROAD SIDE - MOMENTS LATER

Hood popped. Adam reaches inside the engine. He quickly pulls his hand away and steps back, hands on his head, confused.

EXT. I-10 - DAY - TEXAS

Adam's SUV sweeps past the "LONE STAR STATE" sign.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - I-10 - DAY - TEXAS

Adam sips on a Red Bull. A piece of white tape now covers the engine light. Adam finishes the can and tosses it to the floor next to five other empty cans-

OUT THE WINDSHIELD

A busted truck pulls past. Smoke fumes from its exhaust like a rusted chimney. Adam eyes a sticker on the truck window-

JESUS PISSING ON A DARWIN FISH.

Adam blinks coolly and cracks open another Red Bull.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - HIGHWAY - NIGHT - TEXAS

Street lights whip past Adam's face, as he drives. Outside, a large water tower - "ALLEN, TEXAS" - emblazoned over a painting of a soaring eagle. Wings spread. Determined eyes bearing down on the highway.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam's car stops outside a modest middle-class home. Subdued Christmas lights string across the gutters. Adam exits the car, duffle bag in hand.

He gazes out at the man made lake across the street. The moon glints off the water. Quiet and calm, just as it was probably intended to be built.

Behind him, the front door of the house opens. SUSAN CALLOW (late 40's), plain, stands silhouetted in the doorway.

SUSAN

Adam? Is that you?

Adam turns away from the lake and moves towards the house.

ADAM

Hey, Mom.

SUSAN

My baby boy.

They hug awkwardly. She kisses his cheek.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

It's great to have you home, honey.
Hurry and get inside. It's freezing
out here.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Inside is exactly like you'd imagine. Clean. Quaint with just a slight dash of style. Everything screams suburban middle-class. Christmas MUSIC plays lightly in the background.

Adam stands in the foyer, gazes around the house.

ADAM

Where's Dad?

SUSAN

Working late tonight. He's got a
big presentation at work this week.

She steps back, takes in her son.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Did I tell you how great it is to
 finally have you home again? You
 look skinny. Are you eating enough?

ADAM
 I'm fine.

She hugs Adam, again. Then pulls back and looks him over.

SUSAN
 Is everything okay? You look a
 little pale? Are you hungry?

ADAM
 I'm fine.

A timer BEEPS from the kitchen.

SUSAN
 Ooh. Excuse me.

Adam looks away. Susan disappears into the kitchen. Adam scans the house, taking it all in. The awkward homecoming.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
 Feel free to make yourself at home!

He picks up the duffle bag at his feet.

SUSAN (O.S.)
 We redid your old room!

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door swings open. The light flips on.

The same bedroom from the opening scene. Country decor. Farm animal ornaments. Frilly pillows. A pale white Porcelain doll on the bed. Friedrich's picture just above the headboard.

Adam, visibly uncomfortable, sets the fishbowl down on the dresser top and tosses his bag onto the oversized bed. He stops for a moment, catching sight of the painting.

A MAN and a WOMAN holding hands. The full moon shines brightly between a large tree in front of them.

Adam shrugs and lays down next to the doll. He squirms and pulls a pillow from behind his back.

Then stares up at the ceiling. His eyes widen, sensing someone or something watching him.

Slowly he turns his head to the side. His eyes shifting down to the porcelain doll on the bed. Its beady little eyes stare directly back at Adam.

SUSAN (O.S.)
I haven't baked cookies in years. I
hope they taste alright.

Susan poses in the doorway. A plate of cookies in hand. Adam politely takes one, bites into it.

ADAM
They're fine.

SUSAN
Your father and I are really proud
of you. Big new job in Miami.
Everything's falling right into
place. I bet you're really excited.

ADAM
Yeah. Thrilled.

Susan sets the plate down next to the fishbowl. Looks at the goldfish. She shrugs.

SUSAN
The room looks nice, huh?

ADAM
Yeah. It's nice.

They stare at each other. Both unsure of what to say next.

SUSAN
You probably want to get settled.

Adam nods. Susan starts out the door, but stops. Spins back.

SUSAN
By the way, I heard about Chris.
Too sad really.

Adam's looks away, disinterested.

ADAM
Yeah.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

If you want, I could go with you to the funeral. You know, if you want me to.

He looks back at Susan.

ADAM

Maybe... I'll think about it.

They hold on one another for an awkward beat. Susan smiles.

SUSAN

Well, it's great to have you home.

She exits. Adam takes another bite of the cookie. He grimaces and sets the cookie down, sits up and ambles out of the room.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Adam gazes up at-

A LARGE OAK TREE

Its branches stretch like gangly arms into the clear Texas night. Halfway up, rests an old wooden treehouse. Dead leaves, dirt and vines have overgrown the childhood fort.

INT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

The door to the fort flies open. Dust scatters as Adam crawls inside. Moonlight seeps in through a nearby window space.

Old sports posters hang like yellowed newspapers on the rotted walls: Joe Montana, Troy Aikman, Dan Marino. Along another wall a collage of old pictures.

IN THE CORNER

rests a small metal lock box. Adam grabs the box. Opens it.

INSIDE THE BOX

A few trading cards... a porno mag... pilots' wings... a replica Dale Earnhardt Hotwheels race car.

Adam picks up the car and brings it to his face. He spins the plastic wheels in the air.

A PHONE RINGS. Adam sets down the car and digs out his cell.

ADAM

Yeah?

On the other end - TREVOR (24) - a country twang about him.

TREVOR (V.O.)

Yeah?! You come into town and you don't even call your best friend and then you answer with yeah?

ADAM

Give me a break. I just got in.

TREVOR (V.O.)

Jessica wants your skinny ass over for dinner. I'll swing by and pick you up.

Adam opens his mouth to protest, but Trevor cuts him off.

TREVOR (V.O.)

No, excuses. I'm not having the nag on my ass because you bailed. I'll pick you up in a few. Late.

Trevor hangs up. Adam stares at the phone. Then shuts it.

He lies on his back. Strips of moonlight seep through the cracks in the shoddy wooden roof cascading shards of light across the dusty floorboards.

Adam's gaze drifts from the roof to the car on the floor. Beside it the phone. He grabs the phone and dials. Finally, an answering machine kicks in.

MEGAN (V.O.)

Hey, it's Megan. Sorry I missed your call. Leave me one.

BEEP.

Adam stares up at the roof as he listens to the silence of the phone. Unsure of what even to say. Finally, he hangs up.

A MAN'S VOICE shouts from outside the treehouse.

TREVOR (O.S.)

Shitty treehouse. You should tear this piece down.

ADAM

It's a fort!

TREVOR (O.S.)

Then where's the fucking moat?

Adam drops the car in the lock box and pokes his head out the window.

ON THE GROUND

Trevor. Skinny. Pale. Country in every sense of the word.

ADAM
That was quick.

TREVOR
Eh, I was in the neighborhood.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Trevor and Adam bound out of the front door. Susan calls after them.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Be safe! Don't stay out too late.
Love you!

Adam lets the door slam shut. Trevor stops, glares at Adam.

ADAM
What?!

TREVOR
She said she loves you.

ADAM
So?

TREVOR
So you're gonna feel bad if we die
tonight and you never said it back.

Adam shakes his head and continues down the sidewalk.

ADAM
Don't start.

TREVOR
We can trade moms if you want. Mine
drinks and has lots of cats. She
doesn't care if you say you love
her.

They stop at the end of the sidewalk. Trevor grandly gestures to a slightly beat up truck parked halfway on the curb.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Your chariot, Mr. Hollywood. I know
it's no Ferrari, but she does her
job.

INT. TREVOR'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The car door swings open. Adam freezes. His eyes falling on-
HANK WILLIAMS, JR,

Trevor's bulldog. Buckled tightly into a child's seat. He
pants. A long stringy line of drool dripping off his chin.

They stare at one another. Neither budging. Finally, Adam
shakes his head and climbs into the backseat.

Trevor starts the car. It stalls.

TREVOR

No worries. Baby, just needs a a
little kick start to get her going.

Trevor smacks the dash. The truck purrs to life.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A neon sign flickers above the store.

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Trevor grabs a basket.

TREVOR

Grab the beer. I'll get the other
shit and meet you back at the
register.

Trevor disappears down an aisle.

INT. GROCERY STORE - ALCOHOL AISLE

Adam stares straight ahead. His eyes shifting back and
forth... back and forth...

ADAM'S POV

Light beer... Original beer... He finally settles on the
light beer.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)

Please scan item.

INT. GROCERY STORE - SELF CHECKOUT

Adam scans the beer and sets it in the plastic bag.

Beep.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Unrecognized item in bagging area.
Please remove item and continue.

Adam grabs the case, scans it again and sets it in the bag.

Beep.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Unrecognized item in bagging area.
Please remove item and continue.

Adam removes the case. He glances around the store for help. But none of the employees are anywhere nearby.

Beep.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Unrecognized item....

Adam looks down at the case in his hands. Then back up at the scanner. He didn't even scan it this time.

A GIRL LAUGHS nearby. Adam spins around.

Behind him, at her own checkout, snickers SHELBY KOLVIN (20), cute, spunky. A vibrant energy about life. The type of girl whose laugh could break any man from his shell.

ADAM
Enjoying this?

SHELBY
Just a little bit. You look like
you could use some help over there.

She saunters over and takes the case from Adam.

ADAM
You sure you're old enough to hold
that?

SHELBY
You sure you're man enough to drink
it?

Adam nods and steps back. He motions for Shelby to continue.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
See the trick is you have to be
smarter than the scanner. You can't
just tell it what you want. You
have to sort of trick it.

ADAM
Is that so?

SHELBY
Most definitely.

Shelby tilts the case. Scans and bags it.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
See.

Beep.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Unrecognized item in bagging area.
Please remove item and continue.

Adam laughs. Shelby scans it again. Beep.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Unrecognized item in bagging area.

SHELBY
I give up.

She sets the beer down. Nods her head in thought. Suddenly-

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Ooh, idea! Plan B!

She shoves the case at Adam and quickly scours the store.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Quick, while none of the employees
are looking. Go.

ADAM
What?!

SHELBY
Go! I'll cover you.

ADAM
I'm not stealing the beer.

SHELBY
Why not?

ADAM
Cause it's stealing.

SHELBY
What's your point?

ADAM
People get arrested for stealing.

SHELBY
Hmm. Good point... Okay. Here. I'll do it then. You cover me.

Shelby takes the case. Slips it under her shirt. She flinches and rips the case back out and plants it on the counter.

SHELBY
Okay, too cold.

ADAM
You're nuts, you know that?

SHELBY
If you really think about it, who isn't nuts these days? The single mother? The middle-class family? The love struck teen? The rich guy with the expensive hairpiece driving the convertible that costs just as much? I mean, nuts is just a loosely based conversational piece, don't you think?

She smiles. An innocent quirky smile. There's something about her fleeting rambling that Adam can't quite help but admire.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
So, what do they call you?

ADAM
"They", call me Adam.

He extends his hand. She slaps it instead.

SHELBY
Shelby.

Adam stares at her, blankly. She glances back at the beer.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
I think you might be shit out of luck with your beer.
(MORE)

SHELBY(cont'd)

You really should just take it. I mean, no one's even looking.

Adam just stares; completely infatuated. She waits for his response. When one doesn't come...

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Okay then. Maybe not. Well, it was nice, uh, nice chatting with you anyways, Adam.

She spins and starts back to her checkout. Sensing he's about to lose her, Adam blurts out.

ADAM

You're really pretty, you know.

She stops and turns back, her interest peaked.

SHELBY

You know? Is that like a "everyone's a pretty person," thing? Cause my mom used to say that type of crap when I was little. Or is it like I'm pretty because I don't already know it and I should. Ooh, or like a conceited, "oh you think you're so pretty, don't you", sort of way?

ADAM

What?... No. I just mean you're pretty. It's a compliment. Like you're a pretty girl.

SHELBY

Pretty? Like cute, pretty?

ADAM

Yeah.

She shakes her head.

SHELBY

No. No, that's no good. Little kids say pretty. A woman wants to be beautiful. Sublime. Breathtaking.

ADAM

Okay, then you're beautiful.

SHELBY

Nice try.

She pats Adam on the shoulder and parades back to her checkout. Grabs her bags and heads for the door.

ADAM
Wait. You're just gonna leave?

SHELBY
Yep.

ADAM
Because I won't take the beer?

She shrugs.

SHELBY
More or less.

ADAM
What if I take the beer?

SHELBY
Too late.

And with that she hurries to the exit. The automatic doors peel open. Shelby stops, turns back for one last look and then is gone.

Adam just stares towards the exit, his mind reeling.

A BASKET

smacks onto the scanner. Trevor notices the light beer. He shakes his head in disgust.

TREVOR
Light beer?! What are you forty?

He pulls out the items in his basket. Potpourri. Tampons. Scans them. Then grabs the beer and scans it effortlessly.

Beep.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)
Please place item in bagging area.
Thank you and have a nice day.

Adam looks on in disbelief.

INT. TREVOR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door opens and Hank scurries inside. Trevor staggers in behind, groceries in hand.

TREVOR

Honey, the giver of beer is home!

Adam enters with the beer. He stops, taking in the apartment.

A tiny Christmas Tree on a small kitchen table. A mounted alligator head above the fireplace. Two flower print couches. A TV. Scant, but comfortable.

ADAM

Nice tree.

TREVOR

Jess decorated it. She said I get to pick out one ornament. I'm waiting for something really good like a giant vibrating penis or something.

ADAM

Well, of course.

JESSICA (O.S.)

What have they been feeding you out there in that Los Angeles, California, boy!? Twigs and grass?

Adam spins around to see - JESSICA (23) - a southern belle with attitude posing in the bedroom doorway.

ADAM

Hey, Jess. You look good.

JESSICA

Damn right. Been on that Weight Watcher's diet. It's based on a point system. But I don't necessarily use all the points. Now get over here and give me a hug.

Adam tries to hug Jessica, but the beer he's holding blocks any actual contact. Jessica engulfs him in a bear hug anyways, the beer still clutched between them.

ADAM

Should I put this somewhere?

JESSICA

Let me handle that.

She takes the case and throws it on the counter

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Honey, toss this in the fridge.

Trevor cracks open a beer and hands it to Jessica.

TREVOR

You see that? Open already. Am I a gentleman or what?

JESSICA

Regular Hump Bogart.

(to Adam)

Beer. Twelve points. Want one?

ADAM

Maybe once they're colder.

Trevor tosses Adam a can anyways.

TREVOR

That's as cold as it's gonna get. Damn fridge can't keep a friggin' ice cube cold.

JESSICA

So buy a new one.

TREVOR

That would cost money. Money we don't have.

JESSICA

It's not a house. It's a new fridge. Is that too much to ask for?

TREVOR

And a new car. And a wedding ring.

JESSICA

Hey, I deserve a wedding ring.

TREVOR

Deserve? You hear that? Like it's some prize she won from fuckin' Bob Barker.

JESSICA

Well, I ain't gettin' any younger.

TREVOR

Yeah, twenty-three. You're so ancient.

JESSICA

I'm not puttin' up with this back talk once we're married. I'm not gonna let you teach our kids your bad habits.

She takes a healthy gulp from her beer.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I'm gonna be a kick ass mother.

Adam flops down on the couch beside Hank, who lies spread eagle. His hairy balls slapped blatantly against the couch cushions.

ON TV

A surfing competition.

Adam cracks his can, takes a sip. Within seconds, Hank climbs onto Adam's lap and licks his face. Adam pushes Hank away.

TREVOR

Give me one good reason to marry you and no love doesn't count.

Trevor falls onto the couch. Jessica sits beside him.

JESSICA

I told Trevor that if we got married we'd honeymoon in Hawaii so he could go surfing.

Adam holds Hank's head at arm's length, drool dripping off his lapping tongue.

ADAM

Don't you actually have to know how to surf first to go surfing?

JESSICA

Fine, I'll throw in lessons too.

TREVOR

I don't need no damn lessons. I'll ride those waves like Michael Jackson on children's briefs. Look at it. It can't be that hard.

ON TV

A MASSIVE WAVE pounds a SURFER. His board splits into two.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Walk it off, you pussy.

Adam chuckles, takes a drink.

JESSICA
I gotta use the can.

Jessica stands and moves to the bathroom, leaving the door wide open behind her. She squats on the toilet in plain view.

TREVOR
Jesus, Jess. Shut the door. Adam doesn't want to watch you take a crap.

JESSICA
Adam, do you love me?

Hank smothers Adam to the point that he can barely move.

ADAM
Sure?

JESSICA
Then I don't see the problem.

TREVOR
Jess seems to think that if you love someone enough then dropping massive amounts of turd in front of them can't even change that fact.

JESSICA
Do you or do you not still have sex with me after you see me poop?

TREVOR
Yeah, but that doesn't mean Adam wants to have sex with you.

Jess turns to Adam. Waiting for his response.

ADAM
No thanks?

JESSICA
Fine. Irrelevant, but whatever.

Jessica shuts the door. A beat. She calls out.

JESSICA (O.S.)
Do something useful and take Hank
out. I'm gonna be in here a while.

Trevor grabs the leash nearby. Hank springs off of Adam and
rushes towards the door.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

Adam and Trevor walk side-by-side. Hank, up ahead, sniffs the
grass searching for the right spot.

TREVOR
When are you taking off to Florida?

ADAM
I don't know. Couple days I
suppose.

TREVOR
Not staying through the holidays?

ADAM
Eh, probably not.

TREVOR
That's weird, you know? Not being
home for the holidays.

ADAM
I just got a lot of stuff to take
care of. The holidays will always
be here next year.

TREVOR
Oh, I forgot. Big PR man for the
pros now. What's it you do for them
again? 24/7 on-call fellatio?

ADAM
Kiss it.

Hank circles, sniffs as Trevor and Adam look on in silence.
Waiting. But nope, not the right spot and Hank continues on.

TREVOR
So I was thinking about going ring
shopping tomorrow. Wanna tag along
and convince me I'm an idiot?

ADAM
Don't need any help there.

TREVOR
Thanks, bud.

He pats Adam on the back. They continue after Hank.

ADAM
Megan called me the other day.

TREVOR
I didn't know you two still spoke.

ADAM
Occasionally.

TREVOR
Cool... How's she doing?

ADAM
Her brother died in a car accident.

TREVOR
Chris? The rocker kid?

ADAM
Yeah.

TREVOR
No, shit? Wow. He didn't O.D.? I
swore he O.D.'ed, didn't he?

Trevor eyes Hank up ahead, growing annoyed.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Find a damn spot already!

Hank glances back at Trevor briefly. Then continues sniffing.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
(softly)
We think Hank might have down
syndrome. I don't know. Jess read
about it on some website.

Adam looks at Hank, still sniffing the grass in circles.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Is she still married?

ADAM
Who? Megan? Yeah. I think so.

TREVOR
Cool... How's the kid?

Hank wipes his feet on the grass and squats.

ADAM
Good, I suppose.

TREVOR
Cool.

The guys look on in silence as Hank does his business.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam enters the house. He moves into the living room. Leno flickers on the TV. Susan asleep on the couch.

Adam pulls an afghan off the couch and lays it gently over Susan. Then turns off the TV.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adam climbs into bed and flicks off the lamp.

OVER BLACK:

A calmness fills the room only to be shattered moments later by Adam's CELL PHONE RINGING.

A hand smacks at the nightstand until it finally locates the FLASHING DISPLAY.

ADAM
Yea- Hello?

MEGAN (V.O.)
(sniffles)
Hey.

The lamp flips back on. Adam sits up.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Adam drives down a dark winding country road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD

The car rounds a bend in the road. The headlights falling across a large oak tree in the distance. An imposing fortress in the wide open countryside.

A parked car not too far away.

Adam pulls off the road.

EXT. OAK TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam walks around the front of the parked car. Up against the door slumps Megan. A half empty bottle of wine beside her.

Adam slides down next to her. He notices a spray of flowers and a makeshift cross near the tree. Then spots the bottle.

ADAM

I always thought liquor was the drink of choice for an occasion like this.

MEGAN

This is all I had in my trunk.

ADAM

Trunk wine. Nice. I got some box wine in my car. If you want we can bust it out?

MEGAN

That's not funny.

She takes a drink from the bottle and passes it to Adam.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Why are you here?

ADAM

I heard there was free alcohol.

Megan glares at Adam. His attempt at humor lost on her. They lock eyes. Megan breaks first. Back to the bottle.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Adam drinks. Then passes the bottle back. Silence as Megan traces circles across the rim of the bottle. She chuckles.

MEGAN

When I was little I used to think alcohol was that stuff your mom used whenever you cut yourself.

Adam takes a drink, passes the bottle back to Megan who takes it without even a sideways glance. She laughs to herself.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I remember this one time Chris was chasing me in the yard.

(MORE)

MEGAN(cont'd)

And he crashed into me and I scraped my knee up real bad. My mom pulled out the rubbing alcohol and made me sit still as she poured the alcohol over the cut. I remember it burned so bad, but I couldn't scream because I knew if I did she wouldn't let me pick out which color band-aid I wanted.

She laughs again. Then looks up at Adam with pained eyes.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

You can't put a band-aid on this, can you?

Adam stares at her, no response.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I didn't think so.

Megan looks away and takes a drink. She passes the bottle to Adam. Gingerly, she reaches her hand out towards the base of the large oak tree.

Her fingers draw across a large scar in the trunk. Caressing the length of the gutted wood.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Do you think I'm a bad mother?

Adam watches Megan's fingers caress the trunk. He holds the bottle out to her. Megan glances at Adam. She takes the bottle. Then leans back against the car in silence.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Adam drives. The occasional streetlight whips across his bathetic face. He glances over at-

MEGAN

asleep against the passenger window.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight pushes through sheer white curtains into a simple bedroom. GABE (28), Megan's husband - asleep in bed.

A DOOR OPENS.

A moment later and Megan ambles in, quickly moving to the adjacent bathroom without even a glance at Gabe.

She takes an empty glass off the sink and fills it with water. Then grabs a bottle of pills off the counter top and pops one into her mouth.

She staggers back into the bedroom and slides into bed. Her back to Gabe.

She stares, eyes open, blankly towards the bedroom window.

Slowly, HER EYES float closed.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

ADAM'S EYES

dart back and forth. Asleep peacefully. Like two children chasing one another.

TWO WOMEN LAUGH.

The eyelids stop. Adam slowly lets his eyes peel open.

He lays motionless in bed, staring up at the ceiling fan, the porcelain doll beside him on the bed, as he listens to the TWO WOMEN'S LAUGHTER.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Adam lingers into the kitchen, as Susan and BETH ANNE (40's), cleavage bursting from her skimpy tube top like it was its job, gossip at the table over coffee.

SUSAN

Morning, hun. You remember Beth Anne, right?

Beth smiles.

Adam grabs a coffee mug from the cabinet and pours a cup of orange juice. He turns back, meekly smiles.

BETH ANNE

You've sure grown up.

ADAM

Hi. How's your husband?

BETH ANNE

He's well.

SUSAN

I made some breakfast.

Adam sits, sips his juice.

ADAM
I don't really eat breakfast.

SUSAN
Nonsense. I'll fix you a plate.

Susan stands and moves into the kitchen.

BETH ANNE
I hear you got a big new job.

Beth leans forward, her breasts rising under her crossed arms, aching to breathe from beneath their constricting top.

ADAM
Uh, yeah... It's not much, but it's a start.

BETH ANNE
Wow, look at you, big boy. Flying up the corporate ladder all independent like. I wish my kids were like you. They still live at home. Brian thought about going into the military but he gets these anxiety attacks.

She leans closer. Her breasts grazing Adam's arm.

BETH ANNE (CONT'D)
He's really just a big pussy. Practically still living off the tit, if you know what I mean.

Adam nods uncomfortably. Susan returns with a plate of food. Adam looks away from Beth, changing the subject.

ADAM
Where's Dad?

SUSAN
He had to go into the office early. He told me to tell you hi though.

ADAM
On a weekend?

Susan shrugs and sits.

BETH ANNE
So, Adam, what big plans do you
have for the day?

Adam takes a bite of bacon, matter-of-factly.

ADAM
Well, actually, my friend's brother
just died. So I was thinking I
might go to his funeral.

Beth stares at Adam. The whole mood suddenly changed.

BETH ANNE
Oh.

Adam eats. Beth stares at him for a silent beat. Then turns
back to Susan, totally dismissing the awkward moment.

BETH ANNE (CONT'D)
Anyways, like I was saying. These
puppies are definitely worth the
money.

Beth flicks her nipples. Adam's gaze shifts towards Susan.

BETH ANNE (CONT'D)
My nipples are hard as fucking
marbles, like all the time now. I
feel like I'm fucking sixteen
again. And Frank, he can't keep his
hands off the damn things.

Susan looks back at Adam, red-faced.

ADAM
I think I'm gonna go for a run.
Excuse me. It was nice seeing you
again.

He stands, reaches for another piece of bacon and leaves.

BETH ANNE
The pleasure was all mine.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Adam unzips his duffel bag. Pulls out the worn running shoes.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - LAKE - DAY

Adam poses in front of the house, taking in the view. The U-
Haul out front. The lake. A man mowing his lawn.

Adam jogs to the end of the sidewalk, waits for a car to pass and then takes off towards the lake across the street.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Adam runs around the lake. He weaves through a crowd of DUCKS scattered across the sidewalk...

Past PEOPLE fishing... A FATHER and SON play catch nearby...

A LITTLE GIRL chases after the ducks... A MATURE WOMAN power-walks past Adam...

A HOUSEWIFE walks her DOG. The dog leaps at Adam, but he sidesteps it effortlessly and continues in stride.

Adam rounds the lake. As he does-

ADAM'S POV

Beth Anne waves from her car, calls out to Adam.

BETH ANNE
Looking good, stud!

Adam shakes her off and turns back just in time to see a little girl - AIMEE (4) - dart across his path.

Adam spins off of the sidewalk. Dodging a near crash. But he can't regain his footing and trips. Tumbling down the hill and rolling to a stop a few feet from the lake.

Adam slowly rolls onto his back and looks back up the hill, just as Aimee scampers away.

Adam's gaze drifts down to his knee, scraped up from the fall. A DUCK waddles past. Adam shoos the duck. Just as the sprinklers erupt soaking Adam. He gives up and lays back, laughing to himself as the water rushes over him.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Adam, dripping wet, dabs a cotton ball of rubbing alcohol on his knee. He winces and then sticks a bright red band-aid over the cut.

Susan steps out from the bedroom.

SUSAN
Cut yourself?

ADAM
It's nothing.

He caps the alcohol and moves to the refrigerator. He opens the door and peers inside.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You know if we have any bottle
water left?

SUSAN
I think we're all out. I can pick
some up later.

ADAM
It's fine. I'll just run out.

SUSAN
You sure?

ADAM
Yeah, it's fine. I can get it.

Adam grabs a set of keys from a bowl on the counter and heads for the door.

SUSAN
What time is the funeral?

Adam stops, turns back.

ADAM
About that. I was thinking maybe I
should just go alone.

SUSAN
Oh. Okay... Are you sure?

ADAM
Yeah. But thanks anyways.

He scoots out the front door leaving Susan behind.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - DAY

Adam starts the car. The ENGINE GRINDS and tries to kick over, but won't start. He tries again. Still nothing.

Adam peels the piece of white tape off the dashboard. The "CHECK ENGINE" light flashes underneath.

EXT. ADAM'S CAR

Hood popped. Adam reaches inside. He jumps back suddenly.

ADAM
Mother fucker.

He kicks the car. Then steps back with his hands on his head and stares at the engine, dumbfounded.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)
AIMEE, STOP!

Adam's head swings towards the voice as-

AIMEE

darts from the sidewalk into the road. A speeding car rushing quickly down the street straight towards her...

Adam sees the car and rushes out into the road... He sweeps Aimee into his arms and out of harm's way... just as the car screeches past to a halt.

The IRATE DRIVER leans out.

IRATE DRIVER
Watch your kid, asshole!

The driver peels away. Adam waves back coolly.

ADAM
Thanks. No, she's fine. Asshole.

He sets Aimee down. She rushes back across the street.

GIRL (O.S.)
What did I tell you, Aimee!?

Adam wipes the dirt off his shirt. Without looking up-

ADAM
You should really watch your sister closer.

GIRL (O.S.)
Thanks, but she's my daughter.

Adam looks up at the girl. It's Shelby!

ADAM
You.

SHELBY
You.

ADAM
Sorry. I didn't know you had a kid?

SHELBY
I don't. But it usually keeps guys
from hitting on me.

ADAM
Am I hitting on you?

SHELBY
You mean intentionally?

ADAM
Whatever. Either way you should
keep a better eye on her.

SHELBY
Thanks. It's Dr. Phil, right?

ADAM
Shut up.

Adam looks back at the engine, scratches his head.

SHELBY
Sounded like you could use a jump.

ADAM
I think it might be the belt.

She pats Adam on the shoulder.

SHELBY
Trust me. It's not the belt.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Jumper cables string from Adam's car battery to Shelby's.

SHELBY (O.S.)
Try starting it again.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Adam tries the ignition. The ENGINE COUGHS but still won't
kick over. He pokes his head out the window.

ADAM
So, Aimee, is she your sister or
your daughter?

Shelby looks up from the engine.

SHELBY
Do I seriously look like I could
handle having a kid right now?

Adam cocks his head, as Shelby fiddles with the engine.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Don't answer that... Okay, try it
one more time.

Adam tries the ignition once more. The engine winds up like a tea kettle and BURPS. Then finally kicks over.

Adam climbs out of the car and walks around to the engine, as Shelby unhooks the cables.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
That doesn't sound too hot. You
should take her in while she's
still running.

ADAM
Thanks.

SHELBY
You know, I always thought the man
in the relationship was supposed to
know more about cars than the
woman.

ADAM
Relationship?

SHELBY
Well, not yet. But if we keep
running into each other like this
then we have to start calling it
something. You getting in trouble,
me always bailing you out. I'm kind
of like a superhero in that way.
Quick. Give me a superhero name.

ADAM
A superhero name?

SHELBY
Yeah. Quick. Don't think about it.
Just throw out the first thing you
think of.

ADAM
Are you serious?

SHELBY
Oh, come on. Humor me. First thing
that pops in your head.

ADAM
I don't know... Tit girl?!

Shelby's shoulders drop. She cocks her head in disgust.

SHELBY
Tit girl?! I have a four year old
in the car who can come up with
something better than "Tit Girl".

ADAM
I'm sorry... my mom, she had this
friend over this morning and-

Shelby glares at Adam.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Hey, you said spit out the first
thing that popped into my head.

Shelby winds the cable up and closes her hood.

SHELBY
First you won't take the beer and
now "Tit Girl"? Wow, you really
suck at this game.

ADAM
Game? I'm not playing any game.

SHELBY
That's quite apparent.

Shelby climbs into the car and shuts the door. Adam just
stares at the car. Then turns away and closes his hood.

Shelby rolls down the window.

SHELBY
Hey, Tit Boy! So you want me to
follow you to the mechanic or what?

Adam looks back at her.

INT. SHELBY'S CAR - OUTSIDE MECHANIC - DAY

Adam talks with a MECHANIC inside the store. He hands his
keys over, exits the store and strolls towards Shelby.

SHELBY

So?

ADAM

They're not sure. Said it might take a few days.

SHELBY

And?

ADAM

And you're right it wasn't the belt.

She smiles slyly.

SHELBY

Does this mean you're begging me for a ride then?

INT. SHELBY'S CAR - DAY

SOFT INDIE MUSIC fills the car.

The wind whips at Adam's hair as he stares out the open window at the clouds reflected in the side-view mirror.

He looks over at Shelby behind the wheel. Her pink rockstar shades trained on the road as she hums along to the music.

Adam twists around to the backseat and eyes-

AIMEE

asleep in her car seat.

SHELBY

You saved her life. You're like totally her hero Tit Boy.

Adam watches as Aimee's head bounces gently with each bump in the road. The picture of innocence.

ADAM

So, if she's not your daughter or your sister, then who is she?

SHELBY

Black market baby. She's big money... Cute girl, huh?

(whispers)

Except for the whole Frida uni-brow thing she has going on.

(MORE)

SHELBY(cont'd)

Dad was Italian and like Northern Eskimo or something like that.

Adam turns back to Shelby.

ADAM

She doesn't have a uni-brow.

She hushes him.

SHELBY

She's very self conscious about it.

Adam doesn't see it, but nods anyways.

ADAM

So, you're her nanny?

SHELBY

More or less.

(beat)

So what's your story? Why are you here?

ADAM

Let's not sugarcoat it or anything.

SHELBY

What's the point? I mean, why spend thirty minutes of needless conversation when all we're really waiting on is to get to the real point of the conversation anyways. So come on. Out with it.

ADAM

Are we being honest?

SHELBY

Is there any other way?

Adam thinks about it, as Shelby eases back into her humming.

ADAM

Okay... well I'm on my way to Florida to start a new job... It's a pretty big opportunity.

SHELBY

Are you trying to impress me with that or just convincing yourself?

ADAM

Are you always this blunt?

SHELBY
Mostly. Does that bother you?

ADAM
Not really.

SHELBY
Good... So, this job you got.
What's so bad about it?

ADAM
I didn't say anything's bad.

SHELBY
Bullshit. That self motivated spiel
about it being a big opportunity.
Are you kidding me?! You're scared.
Why are you scared?

ADAM
What are you a psych major?

She shrugs with a smart little smirk.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Fine... so it's not anything
glamorous. But it's a start.
(beat)
Then again I guess it could always
be worse. I could end up working
some second rate construction job
in the middle of some dungy podunk
town

SHELBY
Like here?

Adam glances out the window.

ADAM
Sure. Suppose someplace like here.

Shelby looks away.

SHELBY
Well, I guess as long as you don't
do that then everything will be
just fine, huh?

ADAM
It's not that easy.

She turns back to Adam. Their eyes meet.

SHELBY

Yes it is. It's always that easy.

Silence. Except for the soft beat of the song.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Ooh, best part.

She lunges for the radio and flips up the volume. The MUSIC rises. Adam lingers on Shelby as she sways with the rhythm.

EXT. ROBINSON HOUSE - DAY

Adam, Shelby and Aimee stand at the front door. Shelby knocks, as Adam peers back over his shoulder at the lake.

ADAM

Your boss lives here? Cause my folks live just on the other side of the lake.

SHELBY

Cool. You two ever met before?

ADAM

I don't think so.

SHELBY

Good.

The door opens. CAROL ROBINSON (late 30's), cute, businesslike, poses in the doorway in wrinkled scrubs. Aimee rushes past her and inside the house.

SHELBY

Hey, Carol. This is Adam, my boyfriend... Adam, Carol.

Adam looks from Carol to Shelby, confused.

CAROL

It's a pleasure to meet you, Adam.

ADAM

Uh, yeah... you too, ma'am.

INT. ROBINSON HOUSE

Carol leads them through the house.

CAROL

You guys thirsty?

ADAM
No, thanks.

SHELBY
Sure.

Carol disappears around the corner. Adam stops Shelby.

ADAM
Your boyfriend?

SHELBY
What? I told her my boyfriend and I
were taking Aimee fishing today.

ADAM
You have a boyfriend?

SHELBY
No. But I used to. We broke up... I
think. I stopped calling him.

ADAM
Then maybe you shouldn't have told
her your boyfriend was going with
you.

She waves him off with a flick of her wrist.

SHELBY
Details. If it bothers you that
much, you're free to bail... Here.

She tosses Adam the car keys and bounds ahead. Adam looks
down at the keys.

INT. ROBINSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Adam and Shelby sink into the puffy cushions like pygmies on
an oversized couch.

Adam fiddles with a coaster as he sips lemonade and gazes
uncomfortably around the house.

CAROL
Shelby tells me you're a big car
buff?

Adam's eyes wander around the room. Finally, he stops and
looks to Carol, realizing she means him.

ADAM
Um, sure. Love cars.

CAROL
My husband was a big car buff.
What's your favorite?

ADAM
My favorite? Oh, wow. There's just
too many to name.

Adam takes a drink. Carol eyes him, waiting for a response. Adam forcefully gulps down his drink and looks up awkwardly with shifty eyes.

ADAM
... the Mustang series?

Carol nods.

CAROL
I should've known that. Shelby said
you drove a '67. What color was it
again?

Adam puckers his lips, trying to will the right answer.

ADAM
Bl...

He catches Shelby shaking her head from the corner of his eye.

ADAM
Red. Cherry red.

CAROL
That's right. Beautiful color. V6?

ADAM
Yep. Uh, huh, that's right.

Adam cracks a smile, starting to have a little fun with this.

CAROL
Nice. Bet you can really open her
up on these country roads.

ADAM
Yep. Top comes right down.

CAROL
Oh, it's a convertible too?

ADAM
Yep. Of course.

CAROL
Well, then we'll have to go for a
ride sometime.

ADAM
Sure. Once it gets out of the shop.

Shelby muffles her laughter. Adam shoots her a cocky grin.

ADAM (CONT'D)
So what kind of car does your
husband drive?

Shelby freezes. Carol quiets and lessens.

CAROL
Actually, my husband died a few
years back.

ADAM
Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't know.

CAROL
You didn't?

ADAM
I mean, I did. Because Shelby told
me he did. But I forgot. So I said
I didn't know. But now I remember.

Adam nods. His eyes wander to Shelby, hands clasped tight
against her mouth trying mightily to stifle her laughter. But
she can't hold it back any longer and erupts.

And then Carol bursts with laughter as well.

ADAM
You two are assholes.

CAROL
I'm sorry. She made me do it.

EXT. ROBINSON HOUSE - LATER

Shelby and Adam exit the house.

CAROL
It was a pleasure meeting you,
Adam.

ADAM
You too.

He extends his hand. But Carol slaps it instead. Adam shakes his head and chuckles lightly to himself.

CAROL
I'll call you about next week,
Shelby.

SHELBY
Okay. Sweet.

Carol shuts the door. Adam immediately turns to Shelby.

ADAM
You're horrible. I bet there isn't
even a real boyfriend.

SHELBY
That's a personal question. You
shouldn't be so nosey.

She skips towards the car.

ADAM
After what you just put me through
I think I deserve to know about
this phantom boyfriend.

SHELBY
Nope. It's rude to ask personal
questions. Didn't your mother teach
you any manners?

Shelby tries to open the car door. But it's locked. Adam pulls the keys from his pocket and dangles them in the air.

ADAM
These enough manners for you?

SHELBY
Hmmm... nope.

She hops off, down the sidewalk leaving the car behind.

ADAM
You're just gonna leave your car
here like this?

SHELBY
Yep.

Adam watches as Shelby walks away.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Shelby walks alone.

Moments later, Shelby's car coasts up alongside her. The window rolls down. Adam is behind the wheel with Shelby's rockstar sunglasses on.

ADAM
Hey, stranger. Want a ride?

SHELBY
Nice shades.

ADAM
Yeah. I stole 'em. And this sweet ride too.

SHELBY
Oh, is that so?

ADAM
Yeah. I'm a bad boy.

SHELBY
Well, in that case.

Shelby moves to the car and hops in.

EXT. SHELBY'S HOUSE - DAY

Adam and Shelby stand side-by-side on the front porch of an elegant country home. He hands the keys to Shelby.

SHELBY
You can come in if you want.

ADAM
Can I wear the shades?

SHELBY
Hmmm... No.

She snatches the glasses off Adam and pushes the door open.

ROGER (O.S.)
Shelbs! Is that you?

ROGER KOLVIN (early 40's), scruffy. A woodsman more than a father, rounds the corner into the foyer.

ROGER (CONT'D)
Oh, hello there.

SHELBY
Dad, this is my friend Adam.

Roger extends his hand.

ROGER
Roger Kolvin. Pleasure to meet you.

Adam looks at Roger's hand. And then slaps it. Roger stares at Adam, a bit bewildered. Shelby laughs.

ROGER (CONT'D)
I see you've met Carol.
(to Shelby)
I have to run out, but I'll be back
in an hour or so.

Adam gazes around the house in awe. Up at the large cathedral ceiling. At the pieces of hand carved furniture and trinkets.

Shelby nudges Roger.

SHELBY
You got a hot date, huh?

ROGER
Actually, I need to pick up a few
things from the hardware store. I
won't be long. It was nice meeting
you, Adam.

Adam snaps back.

ADAM
Oh, you too, sir.

Roger kisses Shelby's forehead and disappears out the door.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Wow, this place is beautiful.

Adam drifts over to an intricately hand carved wooden chair.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Who made this?

SHELBY
My dad. He built the whole house
actually. He fancies the carpentry
but I'd say he's more of a
construction worker really.

Shelby smiles at a red-faced Adam.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Come on.

She drags Adam towards the stairs.

INT. SHELBY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The door knob turns and opens. Shelby and Adam step inside.

SHELBY

Well, here it is.

Adam surveys the room.

It's pristine. Sparkling clean. Almost like its never been used; let alone lived in. Everything in its rightful place. An easel and canvas in one corner. A guitar hangs on the wall. A telescope near the patio window. A full bookcase.

Adam whistles in shock.

SHELBY

I know. Clean, huh? I'm a bit of a clean freak. It's too clean, right?

Adam glides through the room. Over to the easel. He gazes at the beginning remnants of a painting.

ADAM

No, it's fine. You paint?

SHELBY

I used to paint. I mean I started, but I never finished. I have this problem. I get really into something for like five minutes and then I like totally switch and get really interested in something else. One time it was painting, another time it was music.

Adam drifts to the telescope and peers through it. Shelby's face lights up.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

You wanna see something?

She excitedly pulls the guitar down off the wall.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

I taught myself how to play. Quick, name a song?

ADAM
Like what?

SHELBY
Anything.

ADAM
Okay, how about some Johnny Cash.

SHELBY
Ooh, good choice on the Cash. But,
okay, I actually only know twinkle,
twinkle little star, so...

ADAM
What kind of concert is this?

SHELBY
A free one.

ADAM
Nice counterpoint. Okay, play
twinkle, twinkle.

She smiles and settles onto the edge of the bed.

SHELBY
With pleasure.

She diligently places her fingers on the strings.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Now don't laugh. It's been a while.

She begins. Slowly. Roughly. But the pieces are definitely there. Adam watches from across the room. He inches towards the bed and sits beside Shelby as she plays.

Finished, she stops and sets the guitar aside.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
I didn't really stick with the
guitar very long.

ADAM
You know some people might say
that's a complex. Starting things
and never seeing them all the way
through.

He picks up the guitar and strums it gently.

SHELBY

Why? I've just never found anything I've loved enough to pursue it all the way. What's so wrong with that?

Adam stops strumming and looks up at Shelby.

ADAM

Actually, nothing. Nothing is wrong with that.

SHELBY

Damn, right... Wow, you suck.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Thanks, Hendrix. Are you always this encouraging to beginners?

He tosses the guitar back into her lap.

SHELBY

Only if they suck this bad.

Shelby replaces the guitar back on the wall.

Adam moves to the bookcase. He fingers a few of the spines: An automotive guide... a psychology book... monologues.

He plucks the monologue book out and flips open to one of the many pages that have been marked off with sticky pads.

ADAM

Monologues? Don't tell me you're also into acting.

Shelby grabs the book, closes it and returns it to the shelf.

SHELBY

Maybe.

ADAM

Really? What have you been in?

SHELBY

Well, nothing yet.

ADAM

So you're an actress whose never acted before?

SHELBY

There's nothing wrong with that. You gotta start somewhere.

He plucks the book off the shelf and pushes it to Shelby.

ADAM
Do one for me.

SHELBY
No.

ADAM
Come on. Show me what you got,
Brando.

SHELBY
I know this might be hard for you
to believe, but I'm actually quite
the shy girl.

Adam laughs.

ADAM
Sure you are.

Shelby yanks the book away from him.

Adam lingers to the nightstand and picks up a wooden carving
of an unicorn, as Shelby shoves the book back into its place.

SHELBY
What's so hard to believe about
that? So I'm a little afraid of big
crowds staring at me. One on ones
I'm a pro. Big crowds, nah, uh.

She glances back at Adam. Notices the unicorn.

ADAM
It's nice.

SHELBY
Thanks. My dad made it when I was
little.

Adam hands the unicorn to Shelby.

ADAM
I didn't really mean that thing I
said earlier in the car about
construction workers. It was just-

SHELBY
Cliche?

ADAM
Yeah... Sorry.

Shelby holds the unicorn. Her fingers glide across the mane.

SHELBY
It's cool. He wasn't always a
"lowly" construction worker, you
know. He used to be just like you.
Fast track in the white collar
life. He used to be a V.P. at some
big company or something. He was
always at the office, working late.
After a while my mom got tired of
never seeing him and just packed up
and left.

She sets the figurine carefully back on the nightstand.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
After that he started spending more
time in his workshop. Pretty soon
he wasn't even going to work
anymore. And then one day - boom -
he just decided he wanted to be a
carpenter or something. He said
there weren't any honest men left
in business. The only honest thing
left a man could do was with his
hands.

Something BEEPS. Adam digs his cell phone out and checks it.

ADAM
Shit. I'm gonna be late.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Adam exits the car, but stops and turns back to the window.

ADAM
Thanks for helping with the car.

SHELBY
Ain't nothin.

ADAM
So, when will I see you again?

SHELBY
I'm pretty sure you'll be able to
find me.

He smiles. Then jogs up the sidewalk and into the house.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Adam yanks his shirt off. On the bed, a suit bag. A note pinned to the hangar.

Adam eyes the note - "This should fit you. It's one of your father's old ones. Love, Mom".

He sets the note aside and unzips the bag.

A BABY BLUE SUIT

gleams inside. Crisp. Pressed. Straight from the 70's.

Adam stares deadpan at the suit.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

A finger smashes the garage door opener. The door winds up. Sunlight streams in and strikes the-

BRIGHT PINK SEDAN

parked inside. Adam stands in the doorway. The nostalgic suit just a bit too tight around all the important parts.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A MARY KAY STICKER on the back of the sedan.

Adam cruises behind the wheel. A set of pink fuzzy dice hang from the rearview mirror.

EXT. CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY

Adam's car pulls into the packed church parking lot.

HOLLOWED ORGAN MUSIC echoes from the cathedral.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A large picture of CHRIS DAYTON (19), rests next to a pearly white coffin. Atop the coffin, amongst the spray of flowers, a black guitar.

JANE JADE (40's), Megan's mother, stands at the podium, just finishing up a hymn.

Adam quietly finds an open seat in the back; his suit pants rising like high waters as he sits.

Megan climbs the podium. She adjusts the mic and carefully unfolds a piece of paper from her pocket. She begins slowly:

MEGAN

The world seems like a very quiet place right now. Driving through town the cars whip by with eerie silence. The sun shines just a tad dimmer. And a piece of me, no longer shines at all.

Adam looks on from his seat.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I remember sitting in that chilly, damp hospital room looking down over my brother's body...

Megan scans the group of black clad parishioners. Each one more unnoteworthy than the next. She continues past the nameless faces searching for someone to latch onto.

Finally, her eyes settle on Adam nestled in a back pew. Adam's gaze holds frozen on her, unreactive.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I watch as the doctors peeled back his eyelids, the beam of their flashlights darting across his cold and lifeless eyes, but nothing. I hold his hand and for a moment hope I feel him twinge. Or at the very least, I hope he knows I'm there. But nothing reacts anymore.

Megan's eyes locked on Adam. Unwavering.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I learned a lot from my brother over the years, but as I stood in that room holding his icy hand, none of those memories come flooding back. Countless times, I came home drunk to find my brother still awake, gently strumming away on his guitar. And every time he'd tell me how one day I was going to wind up killing myself. But I never did. I never got in an accident and I never got hurt. Pretty soon the chastising became less and less until eventually Chris said nothing at all.

(MORE)

MEGAN(cont'd)

My brother taught me a lot of things, but the one thing I taught my brother killed him...

Megan starts to cry.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

So I just stood there... I couldn't even tell him I love him. All I could say was I'm sorry. I guess a part of me is still there. Still trapped in that cold, damp hospital room waiting for him to wake up.

Adam watches as Megan steps down from the podium.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - LATER

A CROWD OF MOURNERS. Adam exits the church and moves to a nearby water fountain.

VOICE (O.S.)

Adam? Adam Callow?

Adam turns to find SHAWN WILLIAMS (25), perpetually dirty and overweight, wearing a wrinkled suit nearby.

SHAWN

Fucking shit, I thought that was you.

(catches himself)

Oops. House of God. No cursing.

He crosses himself carelessly and laughs.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

I'm not really Baptist.

ADAM

You mean Catholic.

SHAWN

What?

ADAM

You mean Catholic, not Baptist.

SHAWN

What?

ADAM

Nevermind.

SHAWN

So fuck man, how you been? I haven't seen you since like high school. You go to college? I did for like a semester, but then I dropped out. Got a job and shit.

ADAM

Oh. That's um, that's cool.

SHAWN

Yeah. Got my own place now. Fuckin' sweet pad. Doing real well. I work down at the Shop-a-Lot. Assistant manager. Good hours. Can't be forever young, ya know?

He drapes his arm around Adam.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

It's a Mel Gibson movie. "Forever Young". Yeah, I Tivo'ed it last night... on my Tivo. Yep, got one of those things too. XM Radio, got that shit too.

ADAM

Cool. Well it sounds like you're doing really well.

SHAWN

Awesome. Doing awesome. I also recently discovered that I'm gay.

He squeezes Adam's arm tighter.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Shit, man. We should hang out while you're in town. You know? Exchange numbers.

(low; deep)

I get a little lonely sometimes.

Adam's eyes shift about the room. He laughs uneasily.

ADAM

Um, yeah. We should do that. Let me go grab my phone out of the car. I'll be right back.

Adam wiggles free and quickly heads for the door.

SHAWN
I'll just wait right here then!

Just as Adam's hand reaches the door-

SHAYFER (O.S.)
ADAM!

Adam turns, just in time to catch a leaping Shayfer.

ADAM
Hey, buddy, what's going on?

SHAYFER
Nothing.

ADAM
Where's your mom at?

SHAYFER
I don't know.

As if on cue, Jane, and Jane's husband RANDY (40's) approach.

JANE
Shayfer, get over here.
(she spots Adam)
Oh, Adam. I didn't even see you.

ADAM
Hi, Mrs. Jade.

Adam sets Shayfer down. They hug. She kisses his cheek. Then steps back and looks him over, his suit.

ADAM (CONT'D)
It's a California thing.

She nods, "getting" it.

JANE
(to Randy)
It's a California thing.

Randy nods.

ADAM
Sir.

RANDY
Adam.

They shake hands.

JANE

Megan didn't mention you were in town.

ADAM

I was just passing through and heard about Chris. My condolences.

JANE

Thank you. It's been hard.

(a beat)

Well, how have you been? It's been so long.

ADAM

I'm doing really well.

JANE

Well, you look... great.

Shayfer tugs at Adam's arm.

SHAYFER

Guess what, Adam?

ADAM

What?!

SHAYFER

My mom said that since I was good we get to go get ice cream.

ADAM

Really?!

SHAYFER

Yeah. I want chocolate with sprinkles. Lots of 'em.

ADAM

That sounds good.

Adam looks up as Megan approaches with Gabe.

MEGAN

Hey.

ADAM

Hey.

JANE

We should probably be going.
There's still a lot of people to
talk to. It was great seeing you,
Adam. You should stop by the house
sometime. Not the same without you.

(to Megan)

We'll see you guys at home. Good
seeing you again, Adam.

Jane and Randy wander off leaving Megan, Gabe and Adam alone
in silence. Finally-

MEGAN

Nice suit.

Adam shrugs. He looks over at Gabe.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry. This is my husband Gabe.

The two shake.

ADAM

Hey, Adam. How you doing?

GABE

What's up?

SHAYFER

You coming with us, Adam!?

Adam looks down at Shayfer, then back up at Megan.

ADAM

I had some ice cream earlier so I'm
still really full.

Adam, Megan and Gabe just look at each other in silence.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You gave a really good speech.

MEGAN

Thanks.

(beat)

Well, we should probably get going
as well. I'm glad you made it.

ADAM

Yeah. Me too.

(to Gabe)

It was nice meeting you.

GABE
Yeah, you too.

Adam squats down to Shayfer.

ADAM
Alright, bud. I gotta jet. Later,
alligator.

He holds his fist out to Shayfer.

SHAYFER
After a while crocodile.

They pound fists. Gabe takes Shayfer by the hand and the three of them walk away. Back into the mass of gatherers.

Adam stands alone, surrounded by clusters of nameless faces, as he watches the family disappear into the dense crowd.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Adam enters the kitchen. The sound of the garage door closes behind him.

ON THE COUCH

reclines GREG CALLOW (50's), Adam's father. He watches a ball game on TV; doesn't even bother to look up.

GREG
Yo, bucko. What's going on?

ADAM
Hey, Dad.

GREG
How was the trip? The car hold up
alright?

Adam tosses his mother's keys back into bowl on the counter.

ADAM
Kind of. It started making this
like weird grinding noise today and
it wouldn't start. So I got a jump
and took it into the shop. They
said it might take a few days.

GREG
Sounds like a belt problem.

ADAM
It's not the belt.

GREG
Well, did you make sure and get a checkup before you left? Cars don't take care of themselves, you know. You gotta do a little up keep on 'em once in a while if you want them to last.

ADAM
Yeah, I know.

GREG
Looks like you're stuck here for a while then.

Adam eyes his father. Greg looks over from the couch and catches sight of the blue suit. Shrugs. Turns back to the TV.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Adam is on the phone. He fiddles with the computer mouse as he talks. He clicks open a minimized browser.

ADAM
A few days... uh, huh... that's in the engine, right?

ON SCREEN

A website for breast augmentation pops up on the monitor.

Adam eyes the website, as he listens on the phone.

He looks away from the monitor and out the nearby wooden palatial picture window.

OUTSIDE

Susan waters the yard.

ADAM
Yeah, sorry... Well, how much is that gonna cost? ...no, no that's fine... Yeah, I'm sure. Thanks a lot. Bye.

He hangs up the phone and lets out a deep breath. He looks up blankly at the website again and clicks the window closed.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV flickers across Adam's face in the darkness. He yawns.

His CELL PHONE RINGS. He jumps, startled, and reaches around in the darkness. Finally answers.

ADAM

Hello?

TREVOR (V.O.)

Get in the car. We're going shopping.

Adam leans back on the couch, looks towards the front door.

Outside, parked in front of the house, sits Trevor's truck.

INT. WAL-MART - NIGHT

A JEWELRY STORE DISPLAY.

Inside, the cheap rings gleam like polished scrap metal.

ADAM

So, you like work here?

Adam stands beside Trevor, decked out in a low scale rental security uniform. A police-esque ball cap atop his head.

TREVOR

I'm the security guard. Wal-Mart is the seventeenth most vandalized chain store in the nation. Eighteenth during the holidays. Fuckin' Toys 'R Us. Plus the benefits are like kick ass. I get twenty percent off everything in the store.

ADAM

Yeah, but you can't buy an engagement ring at Wal-Mart.

Adam walks off. Trevor hustles after him. He throws his arm around Adam's shoulder and ushers him towards the Food Court.

TREVOR

Why not? Hello, discount! I'm telling you, bud, this isn't such a bad gig. Think about it. An empty store all to myself. All night.

(MORE)

TREVOR(cont'd)

That translates into great benefits. For example.

An ICEE MACHINE HUMS nearby.

Trevor grabs a cup and fills it halfway. Then with the flask from his pocket tops off the Icee with liquor.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Liquor smoothies.

Adam takes a sip; nods in approval.

INT. WAL-MART - MOMENTS LATER

Adam walks through the store drinking. Trevor pushes a shopping cart full of beer beside him. They turn the corner into the appliance section. Microwaves, toasters and...

A SPARKLING WHITE REFRIGERATOR

spinning on a pedestal display. White lights beam upwards illuminating the frig in an aura of beauty. A god of a machine. Frig/Freezer combo. Ice dispenser. The works.

Trevor gawks at it. Adam whistles.

ADAM

Jess would love this one. You should buy it for Christmas.

Trevor checks the price tag.

TREVOR

Fifteen hundred bucks for a frig. Fuck that. She can use the old one.

INT. WAL-MART - ELECTRONICS - LATER

Empty bottles surround a boom box on the floor. Adam and Trevor sit side-by-side in lawn chairs. Both drunk. A half empty case of beer between them. They watch a surfing DVD on all of the display TVs.

TREVOR

Oh, check this part out.

ON TV

A SURFER barrels seamlessly through a wave.

Trevor grins with pure pleasure.

ADAM

You really think you're ready to get married?

TREVOR

Sure. Why not?

ADAM

Isn't there anything left you still want to do first?... Like surfing?

TREVOR

Let's be honest, we both fuckin' saw Jaws. I know what happens to a drunk white boy who can't swim.

He takes a drink.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

At some point you have to accept that not all dreams can be reality.

ADAM

Why? Who said you had to stop dreaming? Because I don't remember some big moment where life came up and slapped me in the face and said wake up, it's time to get old and bitter.

TREVOR

Probably about the same time we hit puberty and discovered a little wonder I like to call masturbation. Accept it. Our lives are destined to be pretty damn ordinary.

ADAM

But what if you didn't accept it. What if you just packed your shit up, bought yourself a board and just went and did it?

TREVOR

Okay, sure and just forget about the bills and the car payment too, right? People go to jail for that.

ADAM

Wow. How's it feel to be 24 going on 40?

TREVOR

Suck me.

ADAM

How bad can it be, really?

ON TV

A SURFER crashes hard into the waves.

ADAM (cont'd)

Okay, so maybe you fail and wind up returning to Wal-Mart and you spend the rest of your life on the couch with the wife and dog watching Leno. But at least you can say you took a shot at it.

TREVOR

Dude, I'm okay with my life being ordinary. Shit, ordinary is something I can tip my cap to. Ordinary I can relate to.

He pops open another beer.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

What about you? What would you do?

Adam stops and thinks about it.

ADAM

I don't know.

TREVOR

Well, just so you know, running for President is probably out of the question, cause I'm pretty sure they haven't started electing homosexuals for office yet.

Adam laughs.

ADAM

Fuck you.

Trevor chuckles and taps the top of Adam's beer. Beer foams and spits out of the bottle like a geyser. Adam quickly shoves the bottle into his mouth and chokes down the beer.

Trevor bursts with laughter. He leans back and falls out of the lawn chair. Adam finally pulls the bottle from his mouth, as beer drips off his chin. He burps.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I don't feel so good.

He doubles over and vomits, loud. Really loud; like a firehose erupting. Trevor, still on the floor, laughs harder. He grabs his stomach in pain.

CLOSE ON ADAM'S EYES

He slowly blinks his eyes open.

VOICE (O.S.)
I need an employee to electronics,
please.

Adam sits up. His double vision focuses and we finally see he's been sleeping in a model bed in the Home Department.

He looks around the store groggily.

VOICE (O.S.)
Clean up in electronics, please.

Nearby, an OLD WOMAN stares at Adam. Adam meets her eyes, then turns away, climbs out of the bed and staggers off.

INT. ROBINSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Shelby and Adam stare straight ahead.

SHELBY
It's just like peeling off a band-aid.

ADAM
No way. We're not doing it.

SHELBY
Why not? She'll thank us in the long run.

Aimee sits on the sofa. Waxing paper between her eyebrows.

ADAM
I'm not waxing a little girl's uni-brow.

SHELBY
Too late.
(to Aimee)
Okay, now just pull it off real quick.

Aimee's little hands grasp the paper and... RIP! She SCREAMS.
Adam and Shelby cringe in pain.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
It's okay. We can fix that.

AIMEE

An entire half of an eyebrow missing.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Adam, Greg and Susan sit around the dinner table. The TV plays in the background, as the family eats in silence.

Susan tries to scoop some food onto Adam's plate.

ADAM
I got it.

He takes the spoon from her and digs out a spoonful.

The family continues in silence. Adam looks up at his father, who watches TV as he eats. Then glances over at Susan from the corner of his eye. Her head hung low, eating quietly.

A DOORBELL RINGS.

ADAM
I got it.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam opens the door. Slumped under the porch light stands Megan, more than a little drunk.

ADAM
What are you doing here?

She pulls a half empty bottle from her coat and shakes it.

MEGAN
It's Margarita time.

GREG (O.S.)
WHO IS IT!?

ADAM
I got it.

Adam steps outside and shuts the door.

ADAM
Are you drunk?

MEGAN
Maybe. Maybe not.

She shakes the bottle again.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Wanna play?

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Suburban houses guard the quiet park like large brick towers. In the middle of the empty playground swing Adam and Megan side-by-side. Megan takes a drink from an open liquor bottle.

ADAM
I see we finally got the good stuff
to grieve with.

MEGAN
You drank all the wine, you lush.

She takes a drink and kicks her swing a little harder, picking up momentum.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I used to be a really good swinger
when I was a kid.

ADAM
Yeah, but you could never beat me.

Adam kicks, his swing nudges just a tad higher.

MEGAN
Show off.
(beat)
So, go ahead. Ask. You know you
want to.

ADAM
I don't need to.

MEGAN
Well, he said he could kick your
ass if it came down to it.

ADAM
That's mature. Is he waiting nearby
in a car ready to jump me?

MEGAN

No. I told Gabe I needed a night off. So he took Shayfer over to his brother's house for "guy's night".

Megan takes a healthy swig and passes the bottle. She looks up into the clear sky, a blanket of stars. Thousands of them like judging eyes. None more distinct than the other.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

Do you ever wish you could just rewind your life and start over at a different point. Kinda like a Tivo for your life?

ADAM

I don't know. Maybe. Why?

Adam looks at her. She doesn't answer. Instead, she swings faster. Gaining momentum.

Adam sets the bottle down and fights to keep up.

MEGAN

Go ahead. Ask me if he treats me right?

ADAM

Fine. Does he treat you right?

He kicks harder, passing her.

MEGAN

Does it really matter?

She kicks faster. Rising higher.

ADAM

Yeah it matters.

(beat)

Does he?

They continue to swing. Outdoing the other with each kick.

MEGAN

Okay. On the count of three, jump.

One... two... THREE!

They reach the swing's peak and jump. Adam lands first. Then Megan. She rolls over and sprawls out, staring up at the sky. Adam rolls over beside her. Both breathing heavily.

MEGAN
I totally won.

ADAM
You wish.

They both lay there, catching their breath, as they stare up at the glossy moon high above.

MEGAN
You ever wonder how it's gonna be
when we don't know each other
anymore?

Adam turns to Megan. He watches her for a moment. Then turns back to the sky.

Megan hooks her arm into Adam's and slides closer, staring up into the night sky in silence.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I wonder what that'll feel like.

High above, the flashing light of a plane passes overhead.

EXT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Megan fiddles with the lock. Finally she pops the door open. Adam turns and starts to walk away.

MEGAN
You want to come in?

He stops and looks back, deciding.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Megan turns on the stereo and disappears around the corner. Adam drifts around the room. Moving from picture frame to picture frame, stopping on a wedding photo of Megan and Gabe.

MEGAN (O.S.)
So, you're moving to Florida, huh?
I thought you had this whole
California bright lights and
silicone dreams thing in mind.

She returns with two beers. Tosses one to Adam.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Nightcap... So, how'd that work out
for ya?

She plops down on the couch and cracks open her beer. Adam chuckles and takes a drink.

ADAM
Just fine. Thank you.

MEGAN
That's cool. I always wanted to visit California. I went to Florida once. It wasn't all that cool.

Adam looks back at her. She grins slyly.

ADAM
Thanks.

MEGAN
Just saying, California looks cool.

She takes another drink as Adam picks up a photo of Shayfer. Megan notices.

MEGAN
He's gotten big, huh? Like a little adult. It's freaky.

She takes a drink. Silence.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
You know what I miss most about growing up? I miss recess. Cause think about it. It was like, okay, your day's getting a little too tough, so we're all going to take a time-out and just go run around for twenty minutes. How cool was that... That was pretty cool... Chris always liked recess

Megan leans back on the couch, letting the soothing music rush over her. She sways her tipsy head with the beat and hums along to the song.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
You wanna know something funny? When we first started dating I told Chris that one day I was gonna marry you... That's funny, huh?

ADAM
Yeah.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I think Chris liked you the best though. He always said you were good to me and Shayfer.

(beat)

How come we never got married?

She turns her head back to Adam. He sets the picture down.

ADAM

I don't know. You tell me.

She sits up.

MEGAN

Well, you ran away to California.

Adam moves to the couch and sits.

ADAM

I didn't run.

MEGAN

Run. Sped off. Same thing. You were so eager to leave this town. You obviously got what you wanted.

ADAM

You broke up with me before I left.

MEGAN

Cause I was a good girlfriend. No one goes off to college with a single mom for a girlfriend. Who does that? Nobody does that.

Adam takes a drink and looks down at the beer in his hand, his fingers twisting at the can's tab.

Megan reaches over and takes Adam's hand. He looks up at her and they lock eyes. She leans over and kisses him.

INT. MEGAN'S BEDROOM

Sparsely decorated. A white mattress in the corner. Sheer white curtains. So bland it's almost grey with the moonlight.

IN THE BED

Under the covers. Adam is on top of Megan. She tugs at Adam's shirt and tosses it aside.

Adam pulls her top off. A silver cross necklace dangles around Megan's neck. He fumbles with the strap of her bra, finally pulling it loose.

They kiss as they struggle to undress each other.

MEGAN
I want to feel you.

Adam stops, drawing back to look into her tired eyes. Megan pulls Adam down and kisses him.

Adam maneuvers himself under the sheets. Megan's face tightens momentarily, as they have sex. She whispers gently into his ear.

MEGAN
Fuck me, Adam...

Adam stares, transfixed on the cross around Megan's neck.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
... Fuck me.

Adam's pace quickens. He pumps harder. And harder. The cross bouncing against Megan's pale chest with each thrust.

He looks up into her eyes as tears start to roll down her cheeks. Adam lessens.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Don't stop.

He fucks her harder. But it's over just as soon as it began. Adam rolls over slowly, clearly disappointed.

They say nothing.

Finally, Megan rolls out of the bed and staggers into the adjacent bathroom.

Adam looks towards the open door. He watches as Megan sits on the toilet and tears a piece of toilet paper off the roll.

She makes eye contact with Adam. A beat. Then shuts the door.

Adam lingers on the wooden door. Then climbs out of the bed.

INT. SHAYFER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A tiny Christmas tree shines by the window, decorated in kid crafted paper rings. Nearby-

ADAM

scans the toys in the room. He picks up a Dale Earnhardt hot wheels car off a shelf and spins its wheels.

MEGAN (O.S.)

He still talks about you.

Adam spins around. Megan stands in the doorway, now dressed. A bottle of sleeping pills and water in hand. She offers a pill to Adam. He waves her off.

ADAM

Is he a good father?

MEGAN

He loves Shayfer.

She swallows the pill. Adam looks back at the car.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

They cook together.

She watches Adam for a moment. Nods her head and walks away.

Adam carefully sets the car back on the shelf beside the spine of a large grey book.

Adam fingers the book out and examines the cover: "Allen High School Class of 2000". He quickly thumbs through the pages stopping on his own picture.

A much younger, happier, carefree Adam.

He stares at the picture of himself without any real expression. After a moment, he flips towards the back of the book. Past a few pages. Stops. He scans the names down the side until he finds-

SHELBY KOLVIN

He follows the name on the left hand side across to the matching photo of Shelby in all her freshman glory. Hair cut in a short, spiky do. Eyes crossed. Tongue stuck out. Still cute despite the obvious teen angst-ness of it all.

Adam chuckles to himself. The corners of his lips just barely turning up in a smile.

INT. MEGAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The white ceiling fan whips methodically above the bare room.

Adam, wide awake, watches the blades of the fan stoically from the bed. Megan asleep peacefully beside him.

A DOOR OPENS OFF-SCREEN.

GABE (O.S.)

Megan?!

Adam shakes Megan awake. He covers her mouth and nods towards the noise. Adam quickly grabs his clothes and heads for an exit. He throws the bedroom window open, climbs out and with quiet precision shuts it behind him.

OUTSIDE

Adam pulls his pants on and then peers back into the house as-

GABE and SHAYFER

enter the bedroom. Megan sits up in bed. She smiles as Shayfer jumps into the bed. Gabe leans down and kisses her.

ADAM

watches solemnly from the window before turning and leaving.

INT. WAL-MART - DAY

A cheap Casio rendition of "Jingle Bells" echoes through the store. A HEAVYSET BOY poses for a picture on the lap of a BLACK SANTA CLAUSE.

Nearby, Adam and Trevor (in his security uniform) look on. Both of them sipping diligently on ICEE's.

TREVOR

There just aren't enough black Santa's out there.

ADAM

Definitely not.

The Boy hops up and rushes off. Trevor opens the rope and lets the next kid pass, holding back another. Maintaining order to the Santa Clause line.

ADAM

Do you think it's possible to love two people at once?

TREVOR

Man, I have enough trouble keeping one woman happy.

(MORE)

TREVOR (cont'd)
 (he looks at Adam)
 Why?

A MALEVOLENT KID pushes at Trevor. Trevor effortlessly shoves the kid backwards.

ADAM
 No reason.
 (beat)
 I was wondering if you could do me
 a favor tonight.

Malevolent Kid pushes at Trevor again. Trevor spins around.

TREVOR
 I will whoop you boy if you don't
 cut that shit out!
 (back to Adam; calm)
 Sure. Whatever you need.

They sip their ICEE's.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam enters. He hears Susan in the other room.

SUSAN (O.S.)
 Again?... Why can't you just do the
 work from home?...

Adam creeps towards the kitchen and peeks around the corner.

AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

Susan on the phone. Dinner laid out neatly before her.

SUSAN (cont'd)
 Okay... no, I'm fine... bye.

Susan hangs up and drops her head. She begins to cry.

Adam watches for a moment. Then ducks back behind the corner.

The FRONT DOOR SLAMS.

Susan looks up startled. She quickly wipes at her tears and forces a smile, just as Adam bounds into the kitchen.

ADAM
 Hey, Mom! Something smells good.

Adam sits and stabs a piece of chicken with his fork. He looks back up at Susan and smiles. She smiles back meekly.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam hits the clicker. The HORN CHIRPS and the LIGHTS of the pink sedan FLASH. Adam opens the driver side door, but a sound not far off catches his attention.

NEXT DOOR

A GROUP OF CAROLERS SING. One of them strums on a guitar.

Adam watches. Then closes the car door and approaches.

A DOORBELL DINGS.

INT. SHELBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shelby bounces down the stairs. Past Roger as he works on an elaborate wooden birdhouse in the living room. The weather channel playing on the nearby TV.

SHELBY

I got it.

She opens the front door.

OUTSIDE ON THE PORCH

a throng of CHRISTMAS CAROLERS. "DECK THE HALLS" echoing with overzealous holiday cheer.

Shelby looks on with a smile. They finish and Shelby thanks them as they leave. Just as she goes to close the door-

ADAM (O.S.)

(singing)

*Jingle bells. Batman smells, Robin
laid an egg. The Bat Mobile lost a
wheel and the Joker got away, HEY!*

She pauses with a smile and re-opens the door.

SHELBY

Wow, that has got to be the all-
time worst Christmas caroling I
have ever heard.

Adam "tips his cap".

ADAM

Compliment noted, ma'am. Come on, I
got a surprise for you.

SHELBY
Dad, I'm going out!

ROGER
Mmm, hmm. Bring a coat, Shelbs. I
hear it might snow tonight.

She signals for Adam to wait one-sec and rushes off. Adam
peeks his head around the door.

ADAM
Hi, Mr. Kolvin.

ROGER
Nice to see you again, Adam. Lovely
crooning.

Shelby returns with a coat. She grabs Adam by the arm and
they're out the door.

INT. PINK SEDAN - MOMENTS LATER

Shelby fondles the pink fuzzy dice, as Adam starts the car.

SHELBY
So where are we going?

ADAM
It's a surprise.

SHELBY
(mockingly)
Ooh, I'm so excited. I hope it's
somewhere fancy.

EXT. WAL-MART - NIGHT

Adam and Shelby stand in the empty parking lot. They stare up
at the lit store marquee.

SHELBY
It's, um... lovely. Not quite the
Four Seasons, but what can I expect
from you.

She pats Adam on the shoulder and approaches the entrance.

INT. WAL-MART: HOME FURNISHINGS DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Adam weaves Shelby through an aisle. His hands over her eyes.

ADAM
Wait right here.

Adam rushes off. Shelby starts to open her eyes, but Adam calls back.

ADAM (CONT'D)
No peeking.

Shelby keeps them closed and waits. The STORE INTERCOM BEEPS.

Adam lays a cordless phone down beside a boom box speaker. He hits PLAY. SOFT MUSIC rises from the stereo into the phone and over the LOUDSPEAKER.

Shelby, eyes still closed, smiles.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Okay. Open them.

Shelby opens her eyes.

Neatly laid out in the middle of the Home Furnishings section a makeshift picnic. The boombox on top of the box it was just pulled out from. ICEE cups. Hot dogs from the food court.

Shelby beams as Adam pulls two bottles from behind his back: yellow and red.

ADAM
Choose your poison?

SHELBY
Ooh, just one?

INT. WAL-MART - TOYS

The aisle is silent. Nobody anywhere to be found. Until suddenly around the corner screams a Barbie Power Wheels car. Shelby behind the wheel, a giant SuperSoaker to her side.

Right behind, Adam's Jeep peels around a bouncy ball display.

They race down the aisles. Weaving around displays. Shooting water guns off at each other.

INT. WAL-MART - SPORTING GOODS

A hockey goal in the middle of the aisle. Adam smacks a hockey stick against his legs and drops the mask over his determined face.

Opposite him, Shelby stumbles on roller blades with a hockey stick twice her size. She winds up, swings and misses completely.

INT. WAL-MART - CANDY AISLE

Adam and Shelby sit in the middle of the aisle. Empty candy wrappers strewn about.

Shelby takes a shot of whip cream from the can. She offers some to Adam. He opens wide. She squirts him across the face.

INT. WAL-MART - DRESSING ROOMS

Adam and Shelby side-by-side in front of two dressing room doors. Their arms overflowing with clothes. They enter separate doors.

A MOMENT LATER

They both exit. Shelby in rock star sunglasses and a feather boa. Adam in a cut off flannel, trucker hat and silk boxers.

They take one look at each other and head right back inside.

INT. WAL-MART - ELECTRONICS

Shelby and Adam, both with big puffy headphones on, rock out to the sample demos in the CD aisle.

INT. WAL-MART

Adam and Shelby chomp on cotton candy as they approach the check-out registers. Adam hauls a boom box over his shoulder.

SHELBY

This was fun.

ADAM

Oh, it's not over yet.

Adam hustles over to one of the registers. He sets the boom box down on the counter and grabs the phone intercom from its holster beside the register. He hits a few buttons.

The PHONE BEEPS and kicks in over the STORE INTERCOM.

ADAM

Testing... One... Two.

SHELBY

You really don't need to sing to me again tonight. Seriously.

ADAM

Shut up.

Adam looks around. Then grabs a nearby stool from behind the register. He drags it to Shelby and motions for her to sit. Then he steps back and clears his throat, using the phone as a microphone. The newly crowned Ringmaster of Wal-Mart.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Wal-Mart store number 1477, where tonight, for one night only, history will be made at register twelve.

Adam flips a switch. The light above the register flashes on mimicking a stage spotlight. He reaches under the register and pulls back the same monologue book from Shelby's bedroom; only this one is unmarked and appears to be brand new.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You've heard her singing in the shower. You've seen her posing in the infamous yearbook photos. Now be the first to see her live in person. The talented. The vivacious. The actress. Miss Shelby Kolvin. Folks give her a hand.

Adam tucks the book under his arm and applauds. He tries to hand the phone to Shelby, but she pushes it back at him.

SHELBY

No way.

ADAM

Come on. Stage fright is a very debilitating disorder among females five to ninety.

She still refuses to take the mic. Adam looks around.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Nobody's even here. How embarrassing can it possibly get?

SHELBY

No. I'm not doing it.

Adam sighs.

ADAM

Fine. I had hoped it wouldn't have to come to this. But if this is where it has to happen, then this is where it has to happen.

Adam reaches over, hits "PLAY" on the boom box and twists the volume up. Bruce Springsteen's "SECRET GARDEN" begins.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm not letting you get rid of me,
how about that?

SHELBY

What are you doing?!

ADAM

Proving that you can't be afraid to
make an ass out of yourself.

Adam pulls his shirt off. Then undoes his pants and kicks them to the floor, leaving Adam in only his boxer-briefs.

Shelby chuckles at the sight of Adam's pale chest. He hushes her, grabs the phone and flips the monologue book open. He clears his throat, throws his arms out and begins; launching into possibly the worst display of overacting ever.

ADAM (CONT'D)

This used to be my specialty. I was
good in...

(he looks around; shrugs)

...the living room. They send me
in there, I'll do it alone. And now
I just...

He pauses looking around the store frantically. He finds a giant kid's lollipop stand and whips one out like the poker from the fireplace.

He hops on top of the check-out counter in a grandiose gesture and swipes the lollipop like a mighty sword.

ADAM (CONT'D)

But tonight, our little project,
our company had a very big night. A
very, very big night.

Shelby laughs, enjoying the antics. Adam throws his arms out, waving the lollipop around in large sweeping circles.

ADAM (CONT'D)

But it wasn't complete. It wasn't
nearly close to being in the same
vicinity as complete because I
couldn't share it with you.

Adam calms and sits gently on the counter.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I couldn't hear your voice. Or
laugh about it with you... I miss
my wife.

Shelby raises her eyes and points to herself in pseudo shock.
Adam nods back.

ADAM (CONT'D)
We live in a cynical world. A
cynical world. And we work in a
business of tough competitors.

He breaks character and looks directly at Shelby.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Try not to laugh-

But of course she already is. Adam takes a deep breath,
instantly back into character. He focuses his gaze on Shelby.

ADAM (CONT'D)
I love you.

Then in one smooth motion, he grabs the boom box, leaps to
his feet atop the counter and sweeps the stereo high above
his head as the song continues. With one hand he points
directly at Shelby.

ADAM (CONT'D)
...You ...

He bites his lip willing himself to a new level of melodrama.

Shelby is cracking up. Adam holds up his finger and reaches
into his pant's pocket. He pulls out a bottle of wet eyes and
dabs a drop into his eyes.

He looks back up at Shelby with a huge smile. A large streaky
fake tear rolling down the side of his face.

ADAM (CONT'D)
...You complete me.

Adam drops his head and holds the pose.

ADAM (CONT'D)
And end scene.

Adam hops down off the counter and takes a gracious bow.
Shelby stands and applauds, her cheers echoing through the
mostly dark, completely empty Wal-Mart.

EXT. WAL-MART - NIGHT

Adam steers a shopping cart through the empty parking lot. Shelby like a child in the basket. Their icy breath fills the frigid Texas air.

ADAM
It's totally your turn next time.

SHELBY
Did you seriously expect me to follow a Jerry Maguire like that? You can't. You just can't.

Adam wheels the cart to their car and stops.

ADAM
I know. I was good, huh?

Shelby looks up from the cart with child-like admiration. She nods with a smile. They hold eye contact.

SHELBY
Why are you doing this for me?

ADAM
Sometimes people just need a good hard push.

SHELBY
Do you go around pushing everyone?

ADAM
Only the child like ones.

He pats Shelby on the head.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Come on, I got one more thing to show you.

EXT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

The moon shines softly on the treehouse.

INT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

Beams of moonlight shine through slits in the wood, falling over Adam and Shelby on their backs in the middle of the treehouse. The open lock box between them. The pilot wings pinned to Shelby's coat.

SHELBY

I wish I had a place like this when my mom left. It's a pleasant fort.

She looks at Adam.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

What are you thinking? Right now. At this very moment. Whatever's in your head that's real. What is it?

Adam looks at her. Thinking.

ADAM

When I was little, I swore I could see God from here.

SHELBY

And how'd that work out for ya?

ADAM

I ended up back here, didn't I?

Shelby shrugs. Then picks up the metal Earnhardt car from the lock box and wheels it across the floorboards.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Do you know what I think's worse though? It's not coming back... it's just that, now that I think about it, I don't even remember what it felt like when I left.

Adam watches as Shelby's hand pushes the car in circles, tracing outlines in the dirt.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's like the longer I'm away from something good, the less I can actually remember any of it.

Adam looks back towards the roof of the treehouse. A crack of moonlight strikes his face. Adam raises his hand and waves it gently through the beam of light.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Like I remember who my first kiss was with. And I remember graduating. But I don't remember how any of it actually felt... I don't feel like I grew up.

Adam stops his hand as the light splits a gap in his fingers.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's like part of me can't help but feel like I'm being cheated somehow. Like there's this person out there taking my memories away from me until they think I'm old enough to be able to handle them. But what if I'm never ready? What if I'm just never old enough?

Shelby stops the car and looks at Adam.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's funny though. The only thing I actually remember when I left is pulling away from my house. And in the rearview mirror all I could see was my mom in the driveway in tears, slowly getting smaller and smaller, until she wasn't even there anymore... And I realized I wasn't happy at all. I was supposed to be but I wasn't. I was sad... because everything looked so much prettier in the rearview mirror.

Shelby pinches Adam.

ADAM

Ow! What'd you do that for?

SHELBY

You felt that, didn't you?

ADAM

Yeah. So?

SHELBY

So you're obviously alive... and trust me, that's a real good thing.

Adam looks down where Shelby was playing with the car. A long line in the dirt stretches across the floor separating Adam and Shelby.

Adam picks the car up off the floorboards and brings it to his face. He spins the wheels.

Shelby lays back and stares up at the roof.

Silence. Then-

SHOUTING

nearby swings their attention out of the treehouse and down to the large patio window of the house.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

Greg and Susan yell at each other. Greg throws his hands up in disgust and storms out of the room, leaving Susan behind. Alone.

SHELBY

It's getting kinda late. My dad's probably getting worried.

ADAM

Yeah.

Adam sets the car back into the lock box and closes it.

INT. PINK SEDAN - OUTSIDE SHELBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shelby and Adam sit in the car. Shelby peers out the window towards the house.

The living room lights are still on. Through the window she can see Roger passed out on the sofa having waited up.

SHELBY

We should find him someone cute.

Shelby pops the door open and exits. Adam follows.

ADAM

I'll check the yellow pages in the morning.

He walks around to the passenger side beside Shelby; bouncing up and down trying to keep warm.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Wow, it's cold.

SHELBY

I think it's nice.

Adam blows on his hands. Soon light specks of snow begin to fall.

Adam glances up at the single streetlight above, watching as the snowflakes begin to drift softly towards the ground.

Shelby turns and bounds to the front of the car; climbs on top of the hood and then onto the roof.

ADAM

What are you doing?

She throws her head back and opens her mouth; flicking her tongue out at the falling snowflakes.

SHELBY

What's it look like?

Adam watches as Shelby spins on top of the car; laughing; carefree. She spins back to Adam.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Come on.

Adam gives in and climbs up onto the roof beside Shelby. He looks at Shelby, head thrown back. Twisting to catch the falling snowflakes. He too throws his head back and opens his mouth.

Adam and Shelby side-by-side, heads thrown back, as tiny flakes of snow fall softly around them.

SHELBY

reaches down and grabs hold of Adam's hand. Adam looks down at their hands and then back up at Shelby. Their eyes meet.

The snow continues to fall around them, as Shelby and Adam stand hand-in-hand on the roof of the car. The full moon just above the house. The naked branches of a large oak tree in the front yard dart out just across the corner of the moon.

A modern rendition of Friedrich's "Gazing at the Moon".

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

ADAM'S EYES peacefully asleep. A SWEET GIRL'S VOICE speaks.

GIRL'S VOICE (O.S.)

Wake up, Adam.

Adam, eyes still closed, smiles. And then WHACK! A snowball nails Adam in the face, startling him from his dream.

TREVOR (O.S.)

Morning, sunshine.

Trevor hovers over Adam with a large toothy grin.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

Let's go. Today's the day.

ADAM
How'd you get in here?

TREVOR
Your mother let me in. Oh, yeah,
she also said to tell you you're
car is fixed.

Adam throws the pillow over his head.

ADAM
Good. Now go away.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

A simple engagement ring on a FINGER.

Adam's eyes shift nervously, his hand outstretched as he
models the ring for Trevor and a GOOSEY EMPLOYEE.

TREVOR
What do you think?

GOOSEY EMPLOYEE
It's simple. Classic. How does it
feel?

They both turn to Adam.

ADAM
It's um... okay... It feels good.

TREVOR
But does it feel sexy?

ADAM
Yeah... I mean yeah it's sexy.

TREVOR
I don't know. Let me see the
others.

Adam holds up his other hand. There is an engagement ring,
sometimes two, on every finger. Trevor nods.

TREVOR
Yeah. Okay, that's the one.

GOOSEY EMPLOYEE
Wonderful. We'll just ring you up
and you'll be all set.

Trevor turns to Adam.

TREVOR

How do you think I should ask her?

ADAM

I don't know. Just don't screw it up. Even Jess doesn't want you to do it on the couch with a six pack and the dog licking his own crotch.

Goosey Employee boxes up the ring.

GOOSEY EMPLOYEE

Aw... Now that's truly romantic. It's like the anti-romantic, which makes it really romantic. I wish I had a sweet guy like that.

TREVOR

Oh, trust me, there's a beer drinking, fatty out there for everyone.

(beat)

You take bail bonds?

INT. TREVOR'S CAR - OUTSIDE MECHANIC - DAY

Adam opens the passenger door, steps out.

TREVOR

I suppose now that your cars fixed you'll probably be leaving soon.

He stops and looks back at Trevor.

ADAM

Probably.

TREVOR

That's too bad. It's been nice having you back around, kid.

Adam stares at Trevor. Then exits the car and approaches the store.

EXT. ADAM'S CAR - SUNSET

Adam pulls up to his house and stops. He exits the car and turns to the lake. Across the way, he spots-

SHELBY'S CAR

parked outside of Carol's house.

EXT. ROBINSON HOUSE - SUNSET

Adam knocks. A moment later, Shelby opens the door, in tears.

SHELBY
Hey, what are you doing here?

ADAM
I just got home and saw your car. I
thought you got off an hour ago.

SHELBY
My car broke down. My dad's on the
way over to give me a jump.

ADAM
Are you crying?

Shelby turns and disappears back into the house. Adam follows her inside and shuts the door.

INT. ROBINSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Shelby sits on the couch beside Dr. Robinson, also crying; a box of tissues clutched tight against her chest. A massive pile of used ones scattered across the couch and floor.

ON TV: "THE NOTEBOOK".

Adam plops down between them. Carol offers Adam a tissue. He kindly waves her off.

CAROL
I wish I had a man like that.

ADAM
A man that'll make you cry?

Both of the girls ignore him and blow their noses.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

CAROL
My turn.

She stands.

INT. ROBINSON HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Carol opens the door. Roger stands on the porch; a set of jumper cables in hand.

ROGER
Someone order a jump?

CAROL
Hi, Roger.

ROGER
Hello, Carol.

They both smile. A sweet moment, until Shelby hops around the corner, trailed by Adam, interrupting the occasion.

SHELBY
Thanks, Dad.

She swipes the cables from Roger, tosses them back at Adam and then is quickly out the door.

EXT. ROBINSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Shelby pops open the driver side door and climbs in. Adam stands near the car, jumper cables in hand.

ADAM
Do you want me to pull my car up?

Shelby starts the car with ease. Then pokes her head out.

SHELBY
Get in.

Adam looks on confused. But climbs in anyways.

INT. SHELBY'S CAR - NIGHT

ADAM
What happened to the dead battery?

Shelby takes the cables from Adam and tosses them in the backseat, next to her own set of jumper cables.

SHELBY
Sometimes cupid has to lie too.
It's how us women get what we want
all the time... Drive you home?

ADAM
All that way?

SHELBY
Sure.

Shelby pops the car into drive and pulls away.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

You think he likes her? I think they could work. Did you see the way they were looking at each other?

ADAM

Sure.

SHELBY

I mean they're about the same age and all. He just needs a woman. Cause I don't have any room for more fucking birdhouses.

Adam chuckles.

The car rolls to a stop outside Adam's house.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Well, here you go.

Adam looks out the window at the mostly dark house. The stale monotone Christmas lights flicker, completely depressing.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

I figured I'd take the old couple out to dinner tonight. You know, supervise and all. Wanna tag along?

Adam lingers on the house. He turns back to Shelby.

ADAM

That's okay. I kind of made plans already.

SHELBY

You sure? It's gonna be like watching two high-schoolers on a first date.

ADAM

Yeah. But thanks.

SHELBY

Suit yourself.

They look at one another. Adam grabs the door handle but lingers. Not making any real attempt to get out of the car.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
 Hurry up. If he's alone with her
 for too long he's liable to screw
 up all my planning.

Adam opens the door.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
 You were thinking about kissing me,
 weren't you?

ADAM
 No.

She smiles.

SHELBY
 Sure, slick.

Adam smiles and exits.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam enters. The house is empty. Quiet.

ADAM
 Mom!?

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - MEANWHILE

Susan peers forlorn at her reflection in the mirror; her
 blouse pulled just above her bare breasts. Worn and sagging
 with years. A figment of her once upon a time youth.

She cups her left breast and lifts. She sighs and pulls the
 shirt down, just as Adam appears in the mirror behind her.

ADAM (CONT'D)
 You busy?

Susan jumps.

SUSAN
 Jesus! You scared me.

ADAM
 Sorry... Are you busy?

SUSAN
 No. I was just in the bathroom...
 Why?

ADAM

I was just thinking maybe we'd cook dinner tonight. You and me.

Susan smiles.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Adam and Susan cook dinner together.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

A neatly prepared dinner table. A single light from the chandelier shines softly overhead on Adam and Susan as they talk, just the two of them. The TV is off in the background.

SUSAN

This was fun.

ADAM

Yeah, it was.

Silence except for the faint clatter of silverware.

SUSAN

The car's fixed now, huh?

ADAM

Yeah.

SUSAN

Does that mean you're leaving soon?

ADAM

Probably. I just got a lot of stuff to take care of, you know.

She nods. Silence.

SUSAN

It's been really nice having you around again. I wish you didn't have to go so soon.

ADAM

Please don't start.

She sets her fork down, stands and collects her plate.

SUSAN

What? I can't miss my baby?

ADAM
Don't do that. You always do that.

SUSAN
Well, it's not everyday I get to see you anymore. It's been what, two years since you last came home.

She goes to grab Adam's plate.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
With the new job, who knows when the next time will be.

He stops her.

ADAM
You don't have to do this.

SUSAN
Do what?

ADAM
This whole guilt trip thing.

SUSAN
I'm not guilt-tripping you.

ADAM
Yes, you are.

She tries to pull the plate away but Adam doesn't let go. She stops and looks at him.

ADAM (CONT'D)
It's okay to just let go. It's okay to let me breathe a little. I'm not that child anymore, and that's okay... you know that right? It's okay.

She finally releases her grip on the plate and walks into the kitchen leaving Adam alone at the table.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Snow falls gently. Christmas lights gleam in the placid frosty night. A flicker of the TV can be seen through the window.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam and Susan sit on the couch watching Leno. Susan yawns.

SUSAN
Goodnight, hun.

She rises and kisses Adam on the forehead.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
I love you.

Adam barely glances up as she exits.

As soon as she's gone, he grabs the remote and flips the channel. A nature show on TV.

A pack of stray dogs linger through barren war torn streets. One freezes and looks directly back towards the camera. Almost like he's matching eyes with Adam. They hold on each other until Adam's PHONE RINGS. The dog rushes off.

Adam fishes out the phone and checks the display - "MEGAN". He watches the flashing display, unreactive.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT - SLOW MOTION

Adam races through the quiet suburban neighborhood.

The glow of streetlights whip slowly across his stern face. His determined eyes frozen on the white lines of the road ahead. Each one passing by as if it were a floating feather gliding swiftly with purpose through the dark night.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Adam's SUV sweeps down the deserted country road.

EXT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam's car rolls up to the house. He jumps out and moves determined towards the large oak front door and knocks hard.

Megan answers in tears. Her right eye swollen and red.

ADAM
Where is he?

MEGAN
He left.

Adam looks behind Megan at Shayfer standing timidly in the living room.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

I don't know what happened.
Everything was fine and then the
next minute he's yelling how he
doesn't want to be Shayfer's father
anymore-

ADAM

Did he touch him?

MEGAN

No.
(beat)
What did I do?

Megan breaks down. She holds onto Adam and cries.

Adam strokes Megan's head in silence. His eyes staring
forlorn at Shayfer in the living room. Then-

TIRES SCREECHING ON PAVEMENT

swing Adam's gaze back towards the driveway as a car skids to
a halt. The door swings open and out steps Gabe, drunk.

He staggers a few feet. Then stops, noticing Adam.

GABE

Oh, now this is just fucking great.
What the fuck is he doing here?

Adam lets go of Megan and steps out into the front yard.

ADAM

I think you should probably leave.

Gabe stumbles towards Adam.

GABE

This is my house. And I'm pretty
sure that's my wife you're all
over, so maybe you should be the
one leaving.

ADAM

You mean the wife you hit?

MEGAN

Adam, leave it alone.

ADAM

Does that make you a big man?
Hitting women?

GABE
This is none of your fucking
business.

ADAM
Does that make you feel big? Does
hitting a woman make you feel big?

MEGAN
Stop it.

GABE
Don't fucking push me.

ADAM
Or what? You'll hit me? Cause I'm
not like her. I fight back.

Gabe winds up and swings drunkenly. Adam sidesteps the punch easily sending Gabe stumbling to the ground.

MEGAN
Cut it out, Gabe! You're drunk.

ADAM
How about you just get in your car
and sleep it off.

Adam moves towards Gabe's car, the door still open.

Gabe staggers back to his feet.

Adam reaches inside the car and grabs the keys from the ignition. Just as he rises back up, Gabe darts towards Adam and spears him. Adam drops the keys.

They wrestle in the snow. Gabe winds up on top of Adam and decks him across the face.

MEGAN
Stop it, Gabe!

Gabe takes another shot and climbs off of Adam. He stares coldly towards Megan.

GABE
Is this what you'd rather have!?

Gabe looks back at Adam.

GABE (CONT'D)

She doesn't love you. If she did
don't you think she'd have married
you. Get over it.

Adam looks up dazed from the ground. He sees Shayfer at the
front door in tears. Shayfer looks away from Adam.

Gabe spins back to Megan.

GABE (CONT'D)

Tell him.

Adam looks to Megan. Their eyes meet and she too looks away.

GABE (CONT'D)

Fuck this. I don't need this
childish shit. Not from a whore!

Gabe stares sharply at Megan. Then storms towards the car. He
grabs the keys off the ground, gets in and speeds away.

Adam climbs slowly to his feet; scraped up a bit from the
fight. He wipes the snow away and moves towards Megan.

ADAM

You told him?

MEGAN

Don't start.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Why are you still with him?

MEGAN

He's my husband, Adam.

ADAM

Do you hear yourself!?

Adam catches sight of Shayfer still in the open doorway
behind Megan and stops himself. He looks away as Megan turns
around to see Shayfer in the door. She ushers him inside and
closes the door. A beat.

ADAM

Why'd you call me?

Megan doesn't say anything. Adam looks back at her, earnest.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I have always been there for you,
Megan... Always.

MEGAN
I have a family now.

ADAM
So you're gonna stay with him? Do
you even realize how much of a
fucking cliché that makes you!?

MEGAN
Don't preach to me! You have no
idea how I feel! You left me here
and I'm doing the best I can with
that! God, for once can't you just
let me breathe!

Adam lessens, the words hitting him like daggers. He steps
back. His gaze drifts to the window.

SHAYFER

peers out, trapped behind the bars of the window. Alone.

ADAM
(softly)
You're making a mistake.

MEGAN
At least it's my mistake.

Megan looks away. Adam nods to himself softly and starts to
leave. He stops a few feet away.

ADAM
If you didn't love me then why'd
you run to me when Chris died?

He turns back. Megan looks directly at Adam.

MEGAN
Because I knew I could.

She turns away and enters the house. The door shuts.

Adam watches through the window as Megan takes Shayfer into
her arms and disappears into the black.

He lingers on the house. At the black void behind the bars of
the empty window. At the large oak door sealed shut.

Adam bends down and grabs a handful of snow. He sets it
against his eye and trudges to his car. He gets in and slowly
drives away.

The somber moon glows overhead.

INT. SHELBY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight spills into the bedroom window. Shelby, in bed, reads from the monologue book, quietly mouthing to herself. A small bedside lamp on beside her.

A CAR DOOR SHUTS outside.

Shelby sets down the book and glances out the window.

EXT. SHELBY'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Shelby opens the door. Adam's head hangs under the dimly lit porch light. He looks up, his eye starting to swell where Gabe struck him.

SHELBY

What happened to your eye?

Shelby reaches out, but Adam pulls away.

ADAM

It's nothing. Just a little misunderstanding.

SHELBY

Wait here. I'll get you some ice.

Shelby hustles back into the house. Adam drifts towards the bench swing at the end of the porch and sits.

Adam stares out into the night as Shelby returns with a pack of frozen peas.

SHELBY

Here. Throw this on.

ADAM

What? No corn?

SHELBY

Corn is the second worst vegetable for you. No redeeming qualities.

She tosses the bag at Adam. He places it against his eye.

ADAM

How was the date?

SHELBY

With me as a chaperone, absolutely perfect. They already got another one lined up for tomorrow night.

She smiles.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

I'm like probably the best cupid ever.

Adam forces a slight smile and looks away. Silence.

ADAM

I was thinking... what would you think if I stayed here?

SHELBY

Sure. But my dad would probably make you stay in the guest room.

Adam chuckles uncomfortably.

ADAM

No. I mean here in Texas.

SHELBY

Oh... Why?

ADAM

Are we being honest?

SHELBY

Is there any other way?

ADAM

Okay. Honestly. Well, let's see...

Adam takes a deep breathe and looks at Shelby.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm twenty-four and it's just recently occurred to me that I honestly don't think I've ever seen a real relationship... you know, love without all the fighting.

He stops, realizing it for the first time.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I'm twenty-four and I don't know what love is.

Adam lets this sink in, as he stares out into the dark distance. He stops himself.

SHELBY

Don't stop. Keep going. Talk it out. It's the only way.

Adam takes a moment. Finally, he continues.

ADAM (CONT'D)

It's just that- do you ever wonder how a dog can find it's way home from a hundred miles away? Or how certain animals always migrate back to the same exact spot year after year. It's like they're afraid to leave what they know. Because without it they might not feel the same thing they've always felt.

Shelby searches Adam's eyes.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I think we're all just like that, always trying to connect to something. To not feel alone. Or to know that we feel at all. That we're capable of feeling things we can't explain. Things for which there are no words to describe it... Just to know that inside of us somewhere, something churns and we can feel connected.

He turns to Shelby.

ADAM (CONT'D)

And that feels good. Because without it we're all lost... We're all afraid that if we leave home there's a good possibility we may never find it again.

He stops, letting it hit him.

ADAM (CONT'D)

I don't want to not feel this again because this feels so real.

Shelby looks away. Absorbing everything Adam just said. She takes a deep breathe and stares stolidly towards the yard.

Adam holds on Shelby, waiting for a response. For a look. For anything. But nothing ever comes. Finally, he turns away and looks up into the night sky as high above the blinking lights of a plane pass overhead.

The glow of the porch light glimmers down on Adam and Shelby, side-by-side on the swing in complete silence.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - NIGHT

Adam drives down a winding country road.

His eyes, completely empty, focused out the windshield at the white lines of the road. Sweeping by in an almost dream-like state.

Occasionally, the lights of a passing car whip across Adam's dulled face, as he stares deadpan out the windshield.

IN THE DARK DISTANCE

like a massive steel tower looms the large oak tree. Chris' tree.

Adam vacantly eyes the tree in the distance...

His foot gradually presses down on the accelerator...

The speedometer climbs steadily...

Adam's grip tightens on the steering wheel...

His empty eyes focused straight ahead...

The tree growing closer. Larger...

The speedometer still rising...

The sound of wind whipping outside howls deeper...

As he nears the tree, ADAM'S EYES slowly float closed, too heavy to stay open.

He slides his foot off of the pedal...

And everything goes silent.

The wind no longer howls. The roar of the engine dies away.

Just silence.

ADAM'S EYES

Hold shut. Peaceful.

And then they fly open. No longer empty. Or afraid. Something sparks deep inside of them, inspired!

Adam slides his foot over to the brake and gradually applies pressure...

The speedometer declines and the car starts to slow...

Adam's grip on the wheel lessens.

COUNTRY ROAD

Adam's car rounds the bend in the road, past the tree...

INT. ADAM'S CAR

Adam glances up at the

REAR VIEW MIRROR

and watches as the once imposing tree decreases in size. Smaller and smaller until it's no longer visible in the evaporating darkness.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adam enters the front door. The house is completely dark except for the lit Christmas tree in the living room. Adam ambles through the silent house. Past the large patio window.

He quietly reaches out for Susan's bedroom door. He pushes the door open a crack and peeks inside.

IN THE BED

Susan sleeps peacefully, alone.

Adam carefully pulls the door closed. As he does, the sound of another door opening pulls Adam's attention across the house to the front door as Greg enters.

GREG

Hey. Didn't figure you'd still be up.

ADAM

Yeah.

Greg moves to the fridge. He grabs a beer and cracks it open.

GREG
Rough night?

He offers a beer to Adam, but Adam waves him off. Greg takes a drink, the two of them on opposite ends of the kitchen.

Behind them, the glow of the Christmas tree and the snow falling outside the large patio window.

GREG
Saw the car got fixed. You leaving soon?

Silence.

ADAM
What are you doing?

GREG
What do you mean?

ADAM
Don't patronize me like a child. I saw you two tonight.

GREG
Things are a little busy right now. You wouldn't understand.

ADAM
Try me.

GREG
Okay... You want the truth?

ADAM
Is there any other way?

They stare at each other.

GREG (CONT'D)
I got demoted. You happy?

Adam shows no reaction, as Greg takes a long drink.

GREG (CONT'D)
Apparently providing for a family isn't something you or your mother understand anything about. Maybe once you grow up you'll actually know what I mean.

ADAM

Take a look in the mirror, Dad.
You're not exactly the squeaky
clean image of adult perfection.

GREG

What's that supposed to mean?

ADAM

Oh, come on. I've spent more time
with your wife in the last week
then you have in the past month.

GREG

I provide for her.

ADAM

But you don't provide her with
love.

Greg quiets. Adam continues, passionate. Finally getting it.
Spewing words like fire from somewhere deep inside of him
he's never even known possible.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You're not a child anymore. You're
old enough to know when you have a
great thing going. And you're damn
well old enough to know when you're
screwing something great up so bad
you're about to lose it. And
ultimately, that'll be your
fault... not mine and not hers.

Adam walks away leaving Greg alone in the kitchen.

Outside the snow continues to fall in constant sheets.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - SHAYFER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

THROUGH THE BARS OF THE WINDOW

shines the tiny decorated Christmas tree. Outside, the snow
falls covering the ground in a mucky gray blanket.

GABE'S CAR

pulls up to the house, his headlights shining into the dark
bedroom, falling in streaks across

SHAYFER and MEGAN

asleep in bed. The lights flick off and a moment later a DOOR OPENS from outside the bedroom. A small night light shines near the crack in the bedroom door.

The door pushes open with a creak and Gabe enters. He creeps quietly towards the bed and stares down over Megan and Shayfer, dreaming peacefully.

He pulls the blanket tight around the two. He bends down and kisses Shayfer gently on the forehead. Then turns to leave.

SHAYFER (O.S.)

Gabe?

Gabe stops in the doorway. Shayfer peers innocently up at Gabe from the bed.

SHAYFER (CONT'D)

Please don't stop being my daddy.

Gabe fights back tears.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Snow capped rooftops. The entire neighborhood in a blanket of white snow. The streets empty and calm.

In the distance, a clad figure jogs around the lake.

ADAM

in grey sweats. He runs. Alone. His battered running shoes traipse through the snow, leaving footprints trailing behind marking his entire path.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Adam sits on a snow covered bench and gazes out over the halcyon lake glistening amidst the sheer whiteness.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Christmas morning. Wrapping paper thrown around the floor.

Greg hands Susan a box. She slowly peels back the wrapping paper and pulls out a card. It reads: "I'm sorry. I love you. - Greg".

Susan lowers the card with a smile.

Adam sits nearby. He stares out the window at the treehouse in a blank daze.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

The roof of the treehouse. Slits in the rotted wood scattered every few feet across the weathered boards.

ADAM

lies on the floor, staring up at rooftop. Suddenly, he lifts his foot and kicks at the roof... Then again... And again until he smashes through the wood, ripping the roof off its foundation.

Adam lies back, letting the snow pour down over him. Watching as the snowflakes float freely through the open hole.

He closes his eyes, content.

Silence.

A SNOWBALL

smacks Adam in the face. He opens his eyes and turns to see Shelby at the door of the treehouse.

SHELBY

Merry Christmas.

Adam stares at her for a moment. He wipes the snow off his face and turns back to the hole in the roof.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Okay. I guess I can accept that.

Shelby crawls over and lays beside Adam. The two of them stare up at the ashen grey sky in silence as the snow pours in. Finally-

SHELBY (CONT'D)

I'm jealous of you, you know that?
I've never even left this place and
I look at you and I'm jealous.

She glances at Adam. But he doesn't look away from the hole in the roof.

Shelby turns back to the hole. Her eyes searching the gray sky. High above the blinking lights of a plane pass overhead.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

I wish I could do that. Just pack
my stuff up and escape to someplace
exotic or new or just... better.

(MORE)

SHELBY(cont'd)

For once I just want to do something worth doing. And if I fail, then at least I can look back one day and not wonder what if. Because what ever happens next when living your life right now isn't getting you anywhere?

Adam turns to Shelby. Searches her eyes. THEIR EYES lock on one another. Deep in each other's eyes.

ADAM

I don't know.

Shelby slides her hand into Adam's. A beat.

ADAM (CONT'D)

You're beautiful.

Their eyes hold on each other. Neither looking away.

SHELBY

I've never seen a guy with worse timing in my life.

Adam looks away. Silence. A beat.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Kiss me.

He looks back, surprised.

ADAM

What?

SHELBY

I want you to kiss me goodbye. It'll be more memorable this way.

Shelby softly closes her eyes. Adam watches her, lingering on her sweet angelic face.

He closes his eyes and kisses her gently. Holding in this moment for as long as possible.

Finally, they separate and lay back. Back to the hole in roof. Back to the allaying gray sky above.

INT. TREEHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Adam watches Shelby climb down the treehouse. She reaches the ground and starts across the yard.

Adam calls out to her.

ADAM

So what do we do now?

She stops and looks back up at Adam with that intoxicating smile.

SHELBY

We live!

She blows Adam a kiss and then disappears out the gate.

Adam lingers on the empty gate below. Finally, he leans back into the treehouse and lays down. The corners of his lips just barely turning up in a smile.

EXT. TREVOR'S APARTMENT - PARKING LOT - DAY - SLOW MOTION

AN ALUMINUM BAT

smacks into the frame of an old refrigerator.

TREVOR

winds up and takes another swing at the fridge. A piece of the door handle falls off.

He flips the bat to Adam, who winds up and smacks the front panel of the fridge, smashing a dent into the door.

They continue to demolish the refrigerator. Shot after shot. Plastic pieces fly off. Glass shelves shatter. Alternating turns. Cans of beers in hand.

Hank watches nearby, panting; his drool collecting in a pool below him.

Trevor finishes a can of beer and tosses it into the air. Then swings the bat, knocking the can across the parking lot.

EXT. TREVOR'S APARTMENT - PARKING LOT - LATER

The destruction of the refrigerator is scattered all across the parking lot. Trevor and Adam sit on the tailgate of Trevor's truck. An open case of beer between them.

ADAM

I take it she liked the new fridge.

TREVOR

Loved it.

Nearby, a ORNERY OLD NEIGHBOR strolls past. He makes it a point to glare at Adam and Trevor and their destruction. Trevor raises his beer.

TREVOR
Happy Hanukkah!

The Ornery Neighbor scoffs and storms off.

TREVOR (CONT'D)
Old people. Gotta love 'em. All that age and wisdom and shit. Best piece of advice I ever got was from an old person. He said, "Trevor, you have to start making choices so that you can live your life right now, not so you can live your life ten years from now."

ADAM
Did your grandpa tell you that?

TREVOR
Nah. It was one of the Wal-Mart greeters... I think. Swell guy. Smelled kinda funky.

Trevor takes a drink.

ADAM
I almost forgot. I got you something.

Adam pulls a gift from his back pocket. Trevor takes it and rips it open to reveal a LITTLE BLACK SANTA CLAUSE.

Trevor is speechless.

ADAM (CONT'D)
It's for your tree. I know it's not a big vibrating dildo, but-

TREVOR
I love it. This shit is going on top of the tree right next to that woman with the baby Jess has up.

ADAM
The Virgin Mary.

TREVOR
Nah. This woman's got a kid.

Adam nods, laughs to himself.

ADAM
Okay... So, you thought about how
you're going to propose yet?

TREVOR
Eh, I figure I'll know when I know.

ADAM
Jess is a good woman. She must
really love you.

TREVOR
That she does.

They drink.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Adam packs a few last items into a duffle bag on the bed.
Zips it up and exits.

The fishbowl and goldfish left behind on the dresser.

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Adam hooks the U-Haul trailer up to the SUV. Then turns back
to Susan on the sidewalk. A glow about her.

SUSAN
Be safe, honey.

ADAM
I will.

They hug.

Adam moves to his father. They shake hands. And then Adam
steps back and climbs into the car.

He starts the engine with ease and pulls away.

FROM THE REARVIEW MIRROR

Adam glances into the mirror at Susan on the sidewalk. Then
he looks away towards the road. Staring blankly out the
windshield as he drives through the neighborhood.

The reflection of an endless line of nearly identical
suburban houses casting across his face.

EXT. SHELBY'S HOUSE - DAY

The SUV slows at a stop sign.

INT. ADAM'S CAR

Adam looks stoically out the windshield at-

SHELBY'S CAR

parked outside of her house.

Adam rubs his hands against the steering wheel. Slowly, he lets his left hand slide down the wheel to the turn signal, clicking it on.

ADAM'S EYES

stare empty out the windshield, lingering.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - MEANWHILE

Megan picks up a few stragglings remains of wrapping paper. She rounds the corner of the house and stops at the kitchen.

MEGAN'S POV

Gabe and Shayfer, in matching aprons, cooking together. Shayfer watches from his step stool with eager eyes. A large toothy grin smeared across his face.

Megan leans against the door frame and watches.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MEANWHILE

Susan screams like a schoolgirl behind the kitchen island. Opposite her is Greg. He fakes one way. Then darts the opposite way towards Susan.

She squeals and runs away. They chase each other around the kitchen. Finally, Greg catches her. They embrace with a kiss.

INT. TREVOR'S APARTMENT - MEANWHILE

The Black Santa ornament hangs from the petite Christmas tree on the kitchen table.

ON THE COUCH

sits Trevor. The TV on. Jessica beside him. Trevor glances down at Hank wedged between them, licking his own crotch.

Trevor smiles slightly and looks down at his hands. A ring box rests in his palm. He says something to Jessica. She turns to him.

INT. AIRPORT - MEANWHILE

Roger and Carol, hand-in-hand, wave good-bye.

SHELBY

waves back from the security checkpoint. She smiles, throws her backpack onto the conveyor belt and walks through the metal detector.

A SECURITY GUARD

takes Shelby's ticket. Checks it: "LAX - Los Angeles, California".

The Security Guard hands the ticket back. Shelby grabs her bag off of the belt and walks towards her gate. Gliding through the airport terminal, past the hordes of faceless suits rushing past; to and from any number of destinations.

INT. AIRPLANE - MOMENTS LATER

Shelby finds her seat. She buckles her seat belt and unzips her backpack. She reaches inside and pulls out the monologue book. Sticky pads marking numerous pages.

After a moment, she reaches back inside the bag and pulls out the Dale Earnhardt race car from Adam's lock box. She grips it in her hand and leans back in the seat.

INT. ADAM'S CAR - MEANWHILE

ADAM'S EYES

stare stoically out the windshield. The TURN SIGNAL still CLICKING.

Adam flicks the turn signal off. Grips the wheel and pulls straight ahead through the stop sign and away from Shelby's house.

As he pulls away, HIS EYES drift slowly up to the-

REARVIEW MIRROR

at Shelby's car receding in the distance. Smaller and smaller until it remains only a speck on the horizon.

Adam turns back to the windshield and drives.

EXT. INTERSECTION - STOP LIGHT - DAY

Adam's car rolls to a stop. He looks out the window at the car beside him.

A YOUNG BOY

stares back. The two of them with similar features. In the front seat of the car, a YOUNG MOTHER and FATHER argue. Both of them similar to Adam's own parents.

Adam locks eyes with the young boy. Sharing that same expressionless gaze.

The light turns green and the car pulls through the intersection.

Adam watches the car drive away. After a second, he pulls through the intersection as well. Towards the gray sky up ahead. The sun just breaking from behind the clouds.

FADE OUT.