

AMERICAN IDOL

Written by

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Short sounds are ringing, guitars, laughs, until they speed up into short buzzes.

FADE IN:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

A hand smacks down on a clock. STEPHEN, 18, gets out of bed. He's drowsy and walks into his bathroom. He sits on his toilet with his phone, swiping through Tinder. Then he starts playing music, has a shower, brushes his teeth, gets dressed, and heads out to his car. His music plays throughout.

CUT TO:

INT. STREETS - STEPHEN'S CAR - DAY

The same music is blaring through the car speakers, Bob Dylan, From a Buick 6. STEPHEN is driving through a suburb in Connecticut, heading to school. His uniform is tucked in, his tie's tied, and his window's down.

STEPHEN
(singing and yelling)
Well if I go down dying you know
she's bound to put a blanket on my
bed!

He's dancing at the wheel. At a red light, he closes his window because there's a smoker next to him.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

He stops for coffee at a drive thru. He pulls up to the window.

CASHIER
That'll be 2.79 hun.

She hands him the coffee. Stephen goes to hand her cash and drops it all on the road.

Silence, music cut.

STEPHEN
That was my last dollar.

CASHIER
Uhhh...

Stephen drives away, music back on as he shouts out the window.

STEPHEN

Sorry!

Cashier stares off, shakes her head, and talks to the next customer.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - SCHOOL HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Stephen drives to his school, HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL, parks, and enters.

Stephen pulls out his schedule from his pocket. He's wandering beside people and lockers.

He goes to his locker and finds a talent show flyer, sitting alone. He buries it with books and walks to Psych.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

All the seats except for two in the back are taken. Stephen walks over to one while PROF. DAVIS writes on the board.

PROF. DAVIS

Alright class my name is Professor
Davis. Welcome to AP Psychology.
Hope you had a good break, we'll be-

As he talks, BELLA, 19, shuffles into the classroom and sits next to Stephen. She takes out her notebook and some crumpled papers, pens, a planner. She taps Stephen's shoulder.

BELLA

Pssst Stephen what class is this?

STEPHEN

AP Psych

PROF. DAVIS

...any questions?

BELLA

Fuck.

Silence.

Bella grabs her stuff and runs out of the room while the class stares.

PROF. DAVIS

Ok we're gonna start with some names. You in the front, who are you?

HANNAH

Um, ok hi. I'm Hannah.

PROF. DAVIS

Why'd you take this class?

HANNAH

Well I just love people! I love helping people like I volunteer and I go to science fairs to meet cool people and, I just want to learn more about people!

Stephen notices that Bella's notebook is on the floor. He picks it up and flips through the pages. Sketches of fox characters in suits, flowers, scattered words everywhere.

PROF. DAVIS

...you in the back, next to that runaway, who are you and what's your deal?

STEPHEN

Uh, me?

PROF. DAVIS

Yeah, who are you?

STEPHEN

I'm Stephen.

PROF. DAVIS

Why'd you take this class Stephen?

STEPHEN

I don't know, it seemed interesting?

PROF. DAVIS

Huh, interesting. Well, I think it is. But this class is hard work, mostly readings. Still, if you keep up, I think you'll learn something.

Stephen stares off at the board, "Who are you?" until the bell rings

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Stephen is walking when he sees Bella by her locker. As he starts walking up, a group of 5 or 6 girls walks over and the group starts heading to the cafeteria. He follows them. Stephen's a few people behind them in line for tacos.

BELLA

It's noon on the first day and I already want the world to end.

JESSICA

Bells shut up.

There's a pause, but then they both break out into laughter

BELLA

I'm serious! I've already got homework in three classes.

They move up to the front of the line

JESSICA

On what? The professor's name?

BELLA

Like online things about the syllabus...

JESSICA

The what?

BELLA

What's the plural of syllabus?

JESSICA

Syllabuses

They get take their tacos and move to the register.

BELLA

Why isn't it syllabus-bees?

JESSICA

Why isn't it.. what? bees?

BELLA

No just-

Bella checks her pockets.

BELLA (CONT'D)
I forgot my id.

JESSICA
So what's your plan

BELLA
I'm gonna make a run for it

JESSICA
Yeah?

BELLA
No you're paying thanks.

JESSICA
Fuck you

The two laugh as they pay and leave, while Stephen follows. He's too nervous to approach, so he sits and eats alone, watching the cafeteria and Bella's group. When the group gets up, he keeps following.

INT. SCHOOL HALLS - CONTINUOUS

BELLA
Syllabi!

JESSICA
(mimicking)
Syllabi!

BELLA
That's the plural!

Bella and Jessica break away from the group as they exit, and with Stephen in pursuit, they walk down hallways and staircases around the school.

JESSICA
It's not syllabi that sounds stupid

BELLA
You think sylla-billies is less stupid?

JESSICA
I never said sylla-billies I said... uh,

BELLA
Ha you forgot it's syllabi eat my
ass!

JESSICA
Suck my dick!

BELLA
Kiss my buttohole!

JESSICA
Hey quiet class is in session ma'am

BELLA
(whispering)
Lick my clitoris

JESSICA
What?

BELLA
(Almost yelling)
LICK MY-

A teacher walks past the duo, they make eye contact, smile.

BELLA (CONT'D)
(Yelling)
CLI-TOWAR-IS

Silence.

JESSICA
IT'S CLITORIS YOU FUCK

They laugh. When Stephen hears this, he starts laughing too.
The two keep walking until they reach Catholicism class.

BELLA
Smoke break after next period?

JESSICA
Bet

Bella walks away from the class and finds a massive Talent Show poster on the wall. She stares, then takes a picture of it with her phone. She looks down the hall and makes eye contact with Stephen, briefly. Then she keeps walking, Stephen keeps following her.

INT. LOCKERS - CONTINUOUS

Bella walks to her locker. She starts dialing in the combo.

STEPHEN

Hi!

BELLA

What do you want Stephen Gibbs?

STEPHEN

Hey you know my last name

BELLA

I know lots of things. I know your name, I know you're in AP Psych, and I know you've got my notebook.

Bella opens her locker. Inside is a vape, a tiny backpack, a talent show flyer, and a ukulele. The uke falls out onto the floor.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Shit!

Stephen grabs the uke and fumbles to put it back into Bella's locker

STEPHEN

So uh... you play the ukulele

BELLA

No I just carry one in my locker

STEPHEN

Oh uh, right

BELLA

That was a joke

STEPHEN

What?

BELLA

It was a joke, you didn't laugh

STEPHEN

Oh

Slight pause, then Stephen laughs awkwardly

Awkward silence

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Uh, you performing in that talent show thing?

BELLA
Are you gonna give me my journal?

STEPHEN
Oh right-

Stephen shuffles through his backpack for the notebook

BELLA
And yeah, I am

STEPHEN
What?

BELLA
I'm performing in the-

STEPHEN
Oh right, the talent show right uh,
what are you performing?

BELLA
I don't know yet. I want to do
something different, I do a lot of
music things and it gets boring.
Maybe guitar? But I don't know how.

STEPHEN
I mean, guitar's not that hard to
play you know? Like, it's just some
chords and some finger things it's
all just-

Stephen awkwardly air guitars using the notebook, sounds and
all

BELLA
Sounds like you know your stuff man

Stephen hands over the notebook

STEPHEN
I know lots of things

Slight pause, slight smile

BELLA
Right, well hey thanks for the
notebook. I'll see you around
Stephen Gibbs.

Bella closes her locker and starts leaving

STEPHEN
You too Bella, uh, something

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

The school day carries on as normal. After the bell rings, Stephen walks to his car, chucks his backpack in the back, and gets in. As he's pulling out, he sees Bella waving and running after his car.

BELLA
HEY!

Stephen lowers his window.

BELLA (CONT'D)
(Out of breath, panting)
Hey uh, what's up?

Bella's pretty stoned

STEPHEN
Uh, not much just-

BELLA
(Still panting)
Can you teach me guitar?

STEPHEN
What?

BELLA
Can you teach me guitar like you
know how and I want to know how can
you teach me guitar?

STEPHEN
Uh

Bella's staring right at him, red eyed. He listens to the song on his radio, I Feel a Change by Charles Bradley, giving him that sudden idea of love, courage, and "fuck it" energy

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Yeah

Bella walks away, Stephen drives off

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Stephen's on his computer in his room, on Bella's Facebook profile. After some hesitation, he hits the add friend button. A couple minutes later, there's a ding sound

STEPHEN

Damn that was fast

He's on Discord, talking to people through voice

MATT (O.S.)

You're in there man

RYAN (O.S.)

Ya dick's gonna get sucked by next week

STEPHEN

I dunno like she just wants guitar lessons

MATT

She wants that steaming Stevey surprise that's what she wants

STEPHEN

Jesus Christ Matt

Another ding, it's a message from Bella

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Dude she just messaged me

RYAN

That's too fast she's fake dude she's a man

MATT

But he's seen her

RYAN

Still a man did she look like a man?

STEPHEN

No she's... she wants to practice this Friday

MATT

Bring condoms dude

Stephen messages Bella back on Facebook, "Sounds good! Looking forward to it! :)"

RYAN
Nah she'll bring condoms since
she's the man

MATT
Dude that doesn't make sense

RYAN
What?

STEPHEN
Guys I gotta go

MATT
Like you should always bring
condoms

RYAN
Not if you're not the guy

MATT
My ex carried condoms around

STEPHEN
I'll see you guys later

MATT
What hey where are you going?

STEPHEN
I gotta learn how to play guitar

RYAN
Dude.

MATT
What?

RYAN
Your ex was a man dude

Stephen closes Discord and closes his laptop. His message to Bella was read with no response. He goes downstairs to the living room, where DAD is drinking and watching a movie.

INT. STEPHEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

STEPHEN
Hey dad, can I borrow one of your
guitars?

DAD
Shhh shh shh, this is the best part

There's a pause while the movie plays. After the scene ends, dad starts clapping and cheering, sipping his drink

DAD (CONT'D)
Yes! Yes! Kill him! Ahhhh Stephen
get over here watch this with me

STEPHEN
I can't I'm busy can I-

DAD
You're always busy come on

STEPHEN
I need a guitar

DAD
Huh?

STEPHEN
I want to play guitar can I borrow
one?

DAD
You want to play guitar?

STEPHEN
Yeah

Dad pauses the movie

DAD
Stephen, of course you can borrow a
guitar

Dad gets out of his seat and leads the way to the basement.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

There's a row of guitars on the back wall, neat with some dust. A couple electrics, mostly acoustics.

DAD
Back when I taught you, Roxy was
your favorite

Dad picks up a maple acoustic, caressing the body

STEPHEN
Can I just borrow one-

DAD

Or maybe now you're feeling Stacy

Dad swaps to an auburn electric, feeling the neck, strangely getting into it

STEPHEN

Dad

DAD

But now Sheniqua-

Dad reaches over to a full black acoustic

STEPHEN

Dad! I just want an acoustic,
anything works

DAD

Alright. Here, your grandpa bought
me this when I graduated high
school

Dad hands Stephen a light wood acoustic, a little beat up

STEPHEN

Thanks dad

DAD

His name's Drake

STEPHEN

Drake?

DAD

Yeah

STEPHEN

Why do I get a guy guitar?

DAD

Because you're a guy

STEPHEN

But you play girls

DAD

Stephen. I don't just "play girls,"
I treat them right. You're not
ready yet

STEPHEN

Alright, thanks dad

DAD
You can keep it

STEPHEN
No dad, don't make this like a, a
thing. I'm just borrowing it

DAD
Keep it

STEPHEN
I'll give it back in like-

DAD
Stephen. Let me do this for you

STEPHEN
Alright

DAD
Good. I love you kid

STEPHEN
I love you too dad

DAD
Don't break it or I'll disown you

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

Stephen goes back to his room with the guitar and starts
googling how to play a c chord

INT. BELLA'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Bella is lighting a bong in her room, skipping school with a
few friends, NICK, GIANNA, SHAUN, and SARAH. They're in a
circle on the floor, Bella's room is clean but her walls are
cluttered with posters and sketches and random trinkets,
movie tickets, receipts, etc.

NICK
Oh shit you were at that party too?

GIANNA
Yeah! I showed up at like... 1?

NICK
Shit I was way out by then that
thing fucking sucked

Nick starts giggling, then laughing full on

BELLA
The fuck's so funny?

NICK
(still laughing)
No it's just-

He breaks out again, laughing

SHAUN
Dude what is it?

NICK
(laughing through)
Ok ok ok so, G remember at the
party, they made people take their
shoes off at the door?

GIANNA
Yeah

NICK
That's fucking weird!

SHAUN
That's what's so funny?

NICK
No no it's just, ok so my friends
and I, we went in and walked around
doing our usual thing, and they had
all these bottles in the kitchen
right?

Nick grabs the bong and starts hitting it

BELLA
I bet you took them

NICK
(Exhaling smoke)
Fuck right we took them I grabbed
Henney Mike grabbed like six beers
into his jacket and we bailed and
we got out to the inner like, place
where the shoes are and, and,

Nick breaks out into laughter, SARAH punches him

SARAH
What happened?

NICK

I dropped the bottle! It shattered like full glass on the ground all over these shoes like fucking everywhere! And I was just there in my socks like, fuck and Mike was just staring and I put my shoes on and we booked it!

GIANNA

Those were my shoes!

NICK

I thought you didn't get there til 1?

GIANNA

I didn't but my shoes were fucked up! You had to be there I had to uber home barefoot you shithead!

NICK

Shit man you shouldn't have taken your shoes off that's fuckin weird!

Nick starts laughing again, the others start laughing too.
Shaun goes to light a cigarette

BELLA

Shaun you know the deal, cigs outside

SHAUN

Cigs inside?

BELLA

Outside

SHAUN

Ahhhhh Bells you're killing me

BELLA

(Pointing at the cig)
Not as much as those

SHAUN

Actually cigarettes are known to cure AIDS and epilepsy and-

BELLA

Do you have AIDS or epilepsy?

SHAUN

Nope

BELLA
Get the fuck out

Shaun leaves. Sarah is walking around Bella's room. She finds Bella's ukulele and starts strumming on it

SARAH
(To Bella)
Talent show's coming up, what are
you doing?

NICK
I'm gonna do some improv dance

Nick gets up and starts waving his arms and body

BELLA
I don't know yet, but I'm doing a
music thing. I'm trying to learn
guitar

GIANNA
Ooooooh Bells you're so talented

BELLA
Not yet, I don't know guitar

NICK
Guitar's easy

BELLA
Hey that's what Stephen said

SARAH
Stephen who?

Gibbs

BELLA

NICK Hey I know that kid

SARAH That kid's weird

BELLA
What?

NICK
He was in my stats class, yeah he's
kinda weird

SARAH
That dude used to watch anime porn
in class in middle school

GIANNA

Woah what?

SARAH

Yeah! Swear to god he'd just be in the back like just watching anime porn!

BELLA

How do you know?

SARAH

Because one day the teacher caught him and he was sent to the principal's office and everything!

BELLA

Jesus

NICK

Fuck. That dude was my partner for a project and he did the whole thing

BELLA

He's giving me guitar lessons

SARAH

He knows guitar?

BELLA

Yeah

NICK

Well, you're not a cartoon so you're good, probably

BELLA

Pack another bowl?

GIANNA

Nah I gotta bail, I'll see you guys

NICK

I'm gonna bail too

SARAH

Same

BELLA

Well, party's over, see you guys

The group leaves. Bella flops on her bed and hits her vape.

INT. SCHOOL HALLS - DAY

Stephen is at his locker, grabbing books. When he closes it, Bella is standing next to him

BELLA
Ready to go?

STEPHEN
(Startled)
Jesus!

BELLA
Well?

STEPHEN
Uh, yeah. Where are we going?

BELLA
I forgot my guitar did you bring
your guitar?

STEPHEN
No it's at my place but I can grab-

BELLA
Your place it is shotgun!

Bella takes off and Stephen chases after her. They walk to the parking lot and get in Stephen's car. Music starts playing as they drive to Stephen's house. Bella opens the window, arm out. She messes with the radio and connects her phone.

BELLA (CONT'D)
This is what I want to do for the
show by the way

Summer Clouds by Iron & Wine starts playing as they drive. They head into Stephen's house

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Bella sits on Stephen's bed as Stephen grabs his guitar, he's sitting on his desk chair

STEPHEN
Alright, so um, how do we start?

BELLA
I don't know, you're the teacher

STEPHEN

What do you know about guitar?

BELLA

Hmmm, I know it's like a uke but with more strings. The tuning's E A D G B A, usually. That's about it.

STEPHEN

Alright well uh, here take it

Stephen hands over the guitar

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

What's that song called?

BELLA

Summer Clouds

Stephen looks up the chords, C, G, D#, Em, Am. He knows all except the D#.

STEPHEN

So a C chord is played like uhhhh

Stephen moves close and moves Bella's fingers onto the strings. She strums, it sounds weird

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Nope um, that?

Bella strums again, it's good

BELLA

Hey that sounds right

STEPHEN

Mhmm that's a C chord. Congratulations, there's your first chord

BELLA

C, E, G. Looks like, each fret moves the string a half step so...

Bella moves her fingers around, and finds a G chord

STEPHEN

Woah hey how'd you do that?

BELLA

I've been playing piano for uh, 10-ish years?

(MORE)

BELLA (CONT'D)
And taken music theory classes. And
been classically trained in voice.

STEPHEN
Oh. Shit.

Bella toys around again and finds the Em chord

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
That's E minor

BELLA
Is that right?

STEPHEN
Well the way I play it is like uh

Stephen moves her fingers

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
No with the middle finger right
under, like, more squished

Bella fumbles with it

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Yeah there it is

Bella begins shaking swapping between the chords, strumming
and slightly finger picking

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
That doesn't sound half bad

Stephen's mom opens the door

MOM
Stephen I brought you- Oh hello

STEPHEN
Mom this is Bella, she's from
school

BELLA
Hi

MOM
Hello! Here Stevey, some chips

STEPHEN
Thanks mom

MOM (CONT'D)
We have to leave for church
soon

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

What?

MOM

Your father's working tomorrow so
we have to go today, I told you
this morning

STEPHEN

Mom I can't

MOM

Your friend can come too if she
wants

STEPHEN

Mom I don't-

BELLA

Church sounds cool let's go to
church

STEPHEN

No you don't have-

MOM

Come on Stephen she said yes! I'll
go get changed

Mom leaves

STEPHEN

You don't have to go to church you
know

BELLA

I've never been, and I'll try
anything once

STEPHEN

Well, church it is

Stephen and Bella and Mom and Dad drive over to church.

INT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Mom leads the group down the aisle. Bella's behind everybody.
Everybody genuflects as they enter the pew, Bella tries to
mimic the gesture but awkwardly fumbles it. They sit down.

Bella follows Stephen as they all stand and sit and sing,
flipping through the hymn books along with the chorus.

She takes her phone out and gets a "look" from Mom, so she puts it away quickly.

FATHER JOHN

The other day I was in the grocery store, and I found Bishop Lundy by the chips aisle...

MOM

Oooh Bishop Lundy, he's nice

FATHER JOHN

...and I said "Bishop, you eat chips?" And he said "Of course I eat chips!"

The whole church laughs, except Stephen and Bella. Bella is focused more on the stained glass and pictures and statues around. Then she looks at the people, elders in wheelchairs, kids drawing on the pew bench, teens folding their arms, looking down.

FATHER JOHN (CONT'D)

In today's reading, Jesus was baptized by an ordinary man, John. Much like you and I, Jesus chose this normal man to abolish original sin. But why? Why John, of all people? Because John was humble, and kind. John knew he was tiny compared to the lord...

Bella is fixated on a kid, kneeling down, closing his eyes and praying. There's no family around, the pew is empty except for this elementary school boy, alone. Bella stares.

FATHER JOHN (CONT'D)

...Jesus showed us that regular human beings can do extraordinary things, just by having faith in Him. The Lord. If you want to find humility, strength, kindness, joy, and eternal happiness, all you must do is follow the Lord. Because He loves you, now and always.

Once the homily is done, everybody rises and the mass moves on. During the greeting, Bella turns around and shakes hand with a baby, sitting on a man's shoulder. The baby starts crying.

BELLA

Oh, my god I'm sorry

RANDOM MAN

Hey, don't say the lord's name in
vain, commandment four

BELLA

Oh, sorry

Bella turns around and looks at Stephen, he smiles and
whispers that it's ok.

The ushers walk through the aisles, holding out baskets on
rods to collect offerings. The basket passes Bella and she
shuffles through her pockets, grabbing some dimes and
nickels, tossing them in. The usher gives her a weird look,
she smiles. Stephen's mom tosses in a fifty, widely smiling.

It's communion time and people start getting up to go

STEPHEN

So this is communion, we all go up
and eat the body of Christ

BELLA

We eat his body?

STEPHEN

No, well yes but not really, it's
just bread but, like, it's his body

BELLA

Is it bread or is it god's, uh,
skin?

STEPHEN

It's not even really bread it's
like a cracker look just cross your
arms as you go up, the priest will
bless you

BELLA

Like after you sneeze? Is it gonna
make me sneeze? What if I don't
sneeze?

STEPHEN

No, just, ok follow me

The group joins the line. Bella is crossing her arms, not
like the "non-catholic" X, but a normal crossing arms
gesture. She's staring at the crucifix as she gets nearer.

FATHER JOHN

The body of Christ

STEPHEN

Amen

Stephen takes the bread, eats it, and makes a sign of the cross

FATHER JOHN

The body of Christ

BELLA

Uhhh, thanks?

Bella takes the bread and puts it in her mouth as she catches up to Stephen

BELLA (CONT'D)

God tastes weird

STEPHEN

You ate it?

BELLA

Yeah man free food

STEPHEN

You weren't supposed to eat it

BELLA

What?

STEPHEN

You're not Catholic, you weren't supposed to eat it

Bella spits it out on the floor. A few families and adults stare in disgust.

The mass starts coming to an end

FATHER JOHN

As always you can donate to the revival of our church in the back. Go forth in peace to love and to serve the lord

CONGREGATION

Thanks be to God!

The group exits the pew and leaves the church, entering their car

INT. CAR - AFTERNOON

DAD

That homily was pretty bad

MOM

I thought it was great! Bishop Lundy likes chips, who would have thought! What about you Bella, was this your first time at mass?

BELLA

Yeah

MOM

What'd you think?

BELLA

Uhhh, it was alright

STEPHEN

I thought the homily was pretty bad too

DAD

Thank you Stevey

MOM

What do you mean alright? I saw you reading some of those books too

BELLA

Yeah, those um, hymns? They seem cool, I like their voicings

MOM

They are cool!

BELLA

I didn't like the homily that much though

DAD

Thank you! Hun, you're outvoted

BELLA

God sounds cool, but he seems kinda mean

MOM

Mean? God is the most loving being in the universe!

BELLA

He sounds like my ex boyfriend.
Always telling me how great I am
and giving me gifts and everything

MOM

That doesn't sound mean

BELLA

I don't know, he just always wanted
more you know? Kept just, wanting
more

DAD

I'm hungry can we stop for food?

MOM

God's not an ex boyfriend

BELLA

Then what is he supposed to be?

STEPHEN

I'm hungry too let's stop for food

MOM

He is you. And me. And everybody
else in the world. He's everything!

BELLA

I'm not hungry I want to go home

DAD

I want to go home too

MOM

I thought you said you were hungry

DAD

Yeah and now I'm not

STEPHEN

So we're going home?

DAD

Yep

The group drives back. Bella and Stephen exit the car and get
into Stephen's car.

STEPHEN

Sorry about that

BELLA

No, it's fine. It was kinda weird,
but it was fine.

STEPHEN

Sorry about my mom too she can be
uh, a lot, sometimes

BELLA

No she seems nice I like her, but I
don't think I like God. Or maybe
God doesn't like me.

STEPHEN

What?

BELLA

Yeah, like if he created me and
everybody, and people worship him
and love him, why do I still get
sad? Why is my dad a buddhist? Why
are there like accidents and deaths
and things

STEPHEN

I don't know.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

My mom always says "God has (a
plan)"-

BELLA

(Talking over)

I feel like he's just another
person I'm letting down

STEPHEN

Hey, you're not letting anybody
down

BELLA

Guitar lesson next Friday?

STEPHEN

Let's do it

INT. MALL - AFTERNOON

Placeholder for now, this scene might be too lame

INT. CATHOLICISM CLASSROOM - DAY

Bella is taking a quiz in her Catholicism class. She's in the back of the room, twirling her pen and glossing over the questions. Questions include:

"List 5 of the ten plagues; where does the term 'Passover' come from?"

"How did God test Abraham's faith?"

"What happened to the stone tablets of the ten commandments?"

"What did Ezekiel warn his people about?"

Bella's answers to each question involves doodles and sarcasm. She's stuck on the last bonus question:

"Relate these stories to the modern world"

The bell rings.

CATHOLICISM TEACHER

OK that's the bell, hand in your tests on your way out. If you need extra time, you may keep working.

Kids leave, new ones move in. Bella's just staring, focused intently on this question. Eventually, she looks up and sees an entirely new class. She quickly scribbles on the page and leaves, her answer is "God is good."

Bella grabs her stuff, drops her quiz off, and frantically exits.

INT. SCHOOL HALLS - CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

Bella walks through the halls to the cafeteria. She swiftly goes through, coming out the other side of the food court with a hamburger and fries. She finds Shaun, Sarah, and Gianna at a table.

GIANNA

You need to eat more

BELLA

You need to eat more

SARAH

I need to eat more give me your food

Sarah starts stealing fries

BELLA
I just bombed a Catholicism quiz

SHAUN
Miss. P? Yep, we all failed that one

GIANNA
I didn't, I study I'm smart

SARAH
I think I've fallen asleep in every one of those classes this year

SHAUN
Dude the year like just started

SARAH
Yep

Sarah keeps gobbling fries

SARAH (CONT'D)
(With a full mouth)
Hey look who it is

Sarah nods in the food court's direction, Stephen is walking out with his tray. He looks around and finds their table. Bella motions him over. Stephen is nervous to join, after a slight panic, he sits down

STEPHEN
Hi

SARAH
Hey Stephen want a fry?

BELLA
No because they're my fries

STEPHEN
It's ok I don't want a fry

GIANNA
Hey Stephen I didn't know you played guitar

SHAUN
You play guitar?

STEPHEN
Huh? Oh, yeah my dad taught me

BELLA
Was your dad a rockstar?

STEPHEN
Something like that

BELLA
Can I have his autograph?

SARAH
Bella that's weird

BELLA
What if he's like a secret
superstar? There was this one dude
who went viral in South Africa like
through bootleg cassettes but he
never took off in the states so
he's like uh... like-

SHAUN
-like a backwards Michael Jackson!

BELLA
What?

SHAUN
Yeah like a backwards Michael
Jackson! A secret white superstar
for black people!

GIANNA
Shaun, South Africans are white.
And Michael Jackson wasn't for like
a, a race he was just a superstar

SHAUN
Ahhh but was he known in South
Africa?

GIANNA
Probably

SHAUN
Ahhh but was he really black
though?

GIANNA
What's that got to do with
anything?

SARAH
Yeah he had that black or white
song with the-

SARAH (CONT'D)
 (singing to the tune of
 black or white by MJ)
 He's black, he's white, he's two
 different colors

SHAUN
 Exactly!

STEPHEN
 That's not how the song goes

SHAUN
 How would you know you're not from
 South Africa!

GIANNA
 Shaun that doesn't make any sense

SHAUN
 Gonna be real with you I took an
 edible before lunch and I'm not
 sure what's happening anymore I'll
 see you guys later

Shaun gets up, bumbling and giggling, and leaves

SARAH
 I'm gonna go do some work, see you
 guys

Sarah leaves

BELLA
 I think I'm gonna skip my next
 class, this catholicism quiz killed
 me

GIANNA
 You'll be fine, trust. Miss. P
 curves grades all the time

STEPHEN
 Oh shit I have that quiz later
 today, is it bad?

Nope
 GIANNA

Yep
 BELLA

STEPHEN
 Fuck

GIANNA
 Study up Hendrix

STEPHEN
(Awkwardly chuckling)
I'm not that good

Gianna gets up to leave, dabbing Bella up, then Stephen. He makes it weird, fumbles it with his palm.

BELLA
Hey I've been practicing and I want
to show you

STEPHEN
Friday right?

BELLA
No now come on

Bella gets up and starts heading for the parking lot. Stephen shoves food into his mouth and follows, running after her

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Bella walks to her car, Stephen catching up. She grabs an acoustic out of her trunk and climbs onto the hood of the car, criss cross apple sauce. They're parked right in front of the school soccer field, kids are coming out in shorts and t shirts for gym class. A teacher is blowing a whistle.

BELLA
You never told me it was capo two

STEPHEN
Huh?

BELLA
The tabs said capo two you never
told me

STEPHEN
Oh right, whoops I uh, I thought I
did

Bella starts strumming. Stephen climbs onto the hood and sits next to her. It's a beautiful, clear, sunny day.

BELLA
Nick let me borrow his old guitar.
Do you know Nick?

She starts strumming, tuning.

STEPHEN

Uh, which Nick?

BELLA

Nick Garafano you know, short hair,
kinda tall, kinda weird, has a like
punchable face

STEPHEN

Punchable face?

Bella laughs and starts playing a slow, but steady cover of Summer Clouds by Iron & Wine. Her voice is soft, she's finger picking the chords. The kids on the field are breaking up into teams and playing capture the flag. Stephen's watching her hands, then her eyes, but she's not looking at him. She messes up as she goes along, laughing and yelling in frustration in between chord shifts. Stephen laughs too.

BELLA

What'd you think?

STEPHEN

That was perfect

She punches him

BELLA

No it wasn't! It was bad the chords
weren't right and I was shaking and
it's just not right

Stephen rubs his arm

STEPHEN

I thought it was great ok? You
looked like you liked it too,
that's what matters

BELLA

Ok

Bella gets off the car. Stephen follows. She puts the guitar back in the trunk and walks back to Stephen

BELLA (CONT'D)

Thanks

STEPHEN

Sure thing

Bella walks back towards the school. She holds a peace sign up, rips her vape with the other hand, blowing a cloud into the sky.

BELLA
(While walking away)
See ya dude!

Stephen watches her leave. Then he leans back against the car and watches the field a little more.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

Sounds of car horns, old movies, jazz music, tv news anchors, bong rips, and other fluff all build up into a school bell chime

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - LOCKERS - AFTERNOON

The doors of the school open up and kids start walking out in jackets and beanies. It's the end of the day, and everybody's walking to their cars. Inside, kids are putting on scarves, checking their makeup in locker mirrors, taking group selfies, usual high school things. Stephen is at his locker, grabbing some books. He gets a text on his phone, and after reading it, slams his locker shut on his hand by mistake. Wincing, he turns and runs out of the room into the parking lot.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Stephen barges into the house with his guitar, taking off his jacket and gloves. He's in his school uniform.

STEPHEN
(Calling out)
Mom!

MOM (O.S.)
(Yelling back)
I'm in the kitchen!

Stephen's mom is cooking. Chopping vegetables, stove on. They're yelling back and forth throughout the house.

STEPHEN
Did you do the laundry?!

MOM
I always do the laundry!

STEPHEN
Yeah but remember that shirt I
stained?!

Stephen runs upstairs, still yelling back and forth

MOM
(Mishearing)
The shirt you made?!

STEPHEN
No mom! The shirt I stained! With
the ket-

MOM
-Oh right the shirt you stained!
With the ketchup!

STEPHEN
Where is it?!

MOM
Should be in-

STEPHEN
Found it!

MOM
What?!

Stephen comes back downstairs, wearing an elephant shirt and
jeans

STEPHEN
I found it!

MOM
(Yelling)
Oh good!-

Stephen enters the kitchen and mom is a little startled

MOM (CONT'D)
(Speaking normally)
-Oh good, hey stain's all gone. Why
are you in such a rush Stevey?

STEPHEN
Bella asked to go bowling tonight

MOM
Tonight?

STEPHEN
Mmhmm at six

MOM
Are you picking her up or-

STEPHEN
No she's gonna meet me-

MOM
Wait are you wearing THAT?

STEPHEN
What? Yeah I'm wearing this

MOM
No no no Stephen...

Mom quickly turns off the stove and walks off.

STEPHEN
It's got an elephant! I like
elephants!

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mom walks in, Stephen's right behind. Mom starts going through Stephen's closet, tossing pants and shirts on the bed.

MOM
My son's first date and he's going
dressed as Dumbo no no no...

Mom starts flinging clothes faster, getting sweatshirts and chinos and ties on the floor and Stephen's chair and everything.

STEPHEN
Mom what are you doing?

MOM
Here

Mom hands Stephen a shirt

MOM (CONT'D)
Try this on with ummm...

Mom hands Stephen pants

MOM (CONT'D)
This!

STEPHEN
Mom I can wear-

MOM
Try it on! Now!

Stephen steps into the bathroom and tries on the clothes. He comes back out.

MOM (CONT'D)
Hmmm... nope. Here.

Mom hands Stephen more clothes, and they repeat through a few outfits. Until finally-

MOM (CONT'D)
There!

Stephen's wearing a different colored elephant shirt

STEPHEN
Mom this is what we started with!

MOM
I thought you said you liked elephants!

STEPHEN
Oh my god

Stephen flops onto his clothes-covered bed. His mom sits down next to him.

Dad pokes his head in the room.

DAD
What's going on?

MOM
Stevey's got a date! Go grab my purse!

Dad heads off down the hall

DAD
(laughing to himself)
"Stevey's got a date"

STEPHEN
Mom it's not a date, it's just bowling we're just going bowling

MOM
That's what they always say, next
thing you know it's 3 kids and a
mortgage and-

STEPHEN
Mom!

MOM
I'm just kidding I'm just kidding!
I want you to have fun! On your,
whatever it is

Dad comes back with Mom's purse, then leaves again. Mom grabs
a couple twenties.

MOM (CONT'D)
Here's some cash, pay for her ok?

STEPHEN
Ok

MOM
And did you finish your homework?

STEPHEN
Not yet but I will

MOM
Ok. I trust you Stevey

Mom hugs Stephen

STEPHEN
Mom it's-

MOM
Oh my boy's growing up my boy's
growing up

They hug for a bit

MOM (CONT'D)
Don't come home too late now. Drop
her off early. And be there early.
And be nice. And tell jokes. And
pay for her-

STEPHEN
Mom! It'll be alright.

MOM
I know. I love you Stevey

STEPHEN
I love you too mom

Slight awkward pause

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
The thing's not til tonight so I'm
gonna get some work done

MOM
Oh right, ok dinner will be ready
soon

Mom gets up and leaves. Stephen sits and stares at his room.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Stephen parks his car. It's raining, he's got a jacket over his head as he runs inside.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

Stephen enters the building; bowling alleys on the left and right, arcade games, people at the counter trading shoes.

Bella is sitting at a far table; she spots Stephen and waves for him to come over.

BELLA
You're early

STEPHEN
You're early-

Bella sneezes, a high pitched thing

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Bless you

BELLA
Ah man, I'm getting sick

STEPHEN
Well, please don't get me sick

BELLA
No promises

Nick and CELESTE walk over to the table.

NICK
Whattuuuuuup

BELLA
Nicholas how you doing?

NICK
I'm ready to bowl my balls off if
that's what you're asking

Stephen is surprised at the random extra players

CELESTE
Me too! Well, not to bowl my balls
off, I don't have balls. Unless you
mean bowling balls. But I don't
have those either.

Celeste awkwardly laughs, then notices Stephen

NICK
Hey Stephen! Remember me? It's been
a little bit.

STEPHEN
Hey yeah we did that stats project
a while back... Zach?

BELLA
This is Nick stupid

STEPHEN
Oh, right

NICK
It's alright I'm terrible with
names too. This is Celeste by the
way.

CELESTE
Hi

STEPHEN
Hi

BELLA
Alright, let's throw balls at pins!

The group heads to the table, Nick and Celeste walk ahead
while Bella and Stephen follow.

STEPHEN
Hey uh, I didn't know other people
were coming

BELLA
You didn't think I'd come alone,
did you?

The group grabs shoes, slap them on, and find their alley. They take turns bowling, cheering on one another, laughing. Nick and Celeste do couple-y things like bowl the same ball together and wrap arms around each other and kiss. Stephen and Bella stay together, but Bella's more concerned with the game than anything.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Fuck it, I'm grabbing the slide

NICK
Cheater cheater pumpkin eater

Bella makes a face, then grabs the slide-thing. She gets a strike.

NICK (CONT'D)
Uh uh nope I won't allow that

BELLA
I did it! Fuck you!

NICK
That doesn't count I'm deleting it

BELLA
No!

Nick dashes for the bowling console and starts pushing buttons. Bella wrestles with him, and the end game button is accidentally pushed.

CELESTE
Way to go Nick

NICK
It wasn't my fault!

BELLA
You're a sore loser

NICK
You're a sore, uh, cheater

CELESTE
Hey I'm hungry, you guys want to
get food?

BELLA

The game's not over, Stephen still
has to go

STEPHEN

The score's gone, it's ok

BELLA

No, we ended on your turn

NICK

Tell you what, you get a strike,
and you win. I'll buy you fries or
something

Stephen gets up, grabs a ball, and breathes. He looks at the
pins. Then he turns back, smiles, grabs the slide, and uses
it to get a gutter ball.

BELLA

Ya fucked it up

NICK

Cheaters never win dude

BELLA

Nope, I won let's go to Chili's!

The group leaves the alley into the parking lot. Bella rides
shotgun with Stephen, they follow Nick and Celeste.

EXT. CHILI'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Stephen and Bella park and sit in the car. Music is playing,
Frank Ocean. They're parked right behind Nick and Celeste.

STEPHEN

Let's go

BELLA

(Checking her phone)
Wait, Nick and Celeste are waiting

STEPHEN

Waiting?

BELLA

Like in their car, some fight or
something

The silhouettes in the car of Nick and Celeste start making
out.

STEPHEN
That doesn't look like a fight

BELLA
Maybe they're wrestling?

Celeste's silhouette's head goes down and across to Nick's lap.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Never mind

STEPHEN
Oh. Huh.

Awkward silence.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
So uh, how are-

Stephen sneezes.

BELLA
Bless you

Stephen sneezes again. And again. And again.

BELLA (CONT'D)
Bless you bless you bless you

STEPHEN
Ugh. Shit.

BELLA
Damn that's a bummer.

STEPHEN
What?

BELLA
I was thinking about kissing you.

Slight pause

BELLA (CONT'D)
But I don't wanna get sick

Bella exits the car. Stephen waits for a sec, then hurriedly follows her. The two walk into Chili's.

INT. CHILI'S - NIGHT

Bella and Stephen ask for a table when Celeste and Nick walk in.

NICK
Hey sorry-

BELLA
Forget it

The group sits down and orders. They laugh, talk, and eat.

STEPHEN
So far I've applied to Baylor, UVM,
and Stanford

CELESTE
Jesus christ Stanford? Good luck

STEPHEN
My parents made me apply

NICK
That place is filled with stuck up
nerds

STEPHEN
Yeah but it's the best school in
the country

BELLA
Do you actually want to go there?

STEPHEN
I mean, why wouldn't I? It's got
the best programs, the best
teachers, it's basically a
guaranteed job after graduation

BELLA
Yeah but, do you want to go there?

STEPHEN
Of course I do

CELESTE
College scares me sometimes, like I
barely know what I want to study

NICK
I'm gonna be a lawyer. Like Atticus
Finch

BELLA

That was a reference wow

NICK

What can I say Harper Lee's dope

BELLA

I don't know if I want to go to college

STEPHEN

What?

BELLA

What?

STEPHEN

Oh come on, you have to go. How else are you gonna find a job?

BELLA

There are ways. My grandma didn't go to college.

STEPHEN

Yeah but that was like the sixties, now you can't do anything without a degree

BELLA

I could be an actress. Or a model. Or a pornstar!

CELESTE

Pornstars make a lot of money

NICK

True

STEPHEN

You don't have to be a pornstar! You could be an engineer, or a doctor, or like, something that's not a pornstar!

BELLA

I dunno, it all just seems like so much. I mean, you spend hundreds of thousands of dollars just to take 4 years of bullshit. Cutting classes, memorizing shitty formulas that you'll just google later anyways.

(MORE)

BELLA (CONT'D)

Then, you pay it all off month by month, working 9-5, arguing with your husband, waiting in lines at Universal so you can find that tiny, expensive roller coaster happiness moment during your tiny lunch break like, how is that good? How is that what you want to do?

STEPHEN

It's not like that

BELLA

You're right, most people drop out or kill themselves or do too many drugs before that happens anyways

NICK

Yep, that's why I'm going to college. Drugs.

STEPHEN

I'm going to go be successful. To do something. To get money and buy a house and be smart and, and, just-

The check gets dropped off at the table.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

...yeah.

BELLA

Have fun with that dude

Stephen looks at his bill. He realizes he can't afford it.

STEPHEN

Um, Bella?

BELLA

Mmmhmm

STEPHEN

Can you uh, can I borrow five bucks?

BELLA

I don't have any cash

STEPHEN

Celeste?

Celeste shakes her head

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Nick?

NICK

Sorry bud

Stephen looks at the check. Bella grabs it from him and puts it with hers. She takes his cash too.

STEPHEN

Um-

BELLA

You're welcome.

Stephen looks off at the walls.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Stephen drives into the lot and parks next to Bella's car. It's the only one there.

Bella gets out of the car. While the door's open-

STEPHEN

Hey

BELLA

What?

STEPHEN

Um-

Stephen sneezes. Bella laughs.

BELLA

Bless-

Bella sneezes. Stephen laughs.

STEPHEN

Bless you.

BELLA

See ya Stephen. Thanks for bowling with me.

Bella closes the door and goes to her car. Stephen sits, waiting, looking, thinking.

INT. PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

Stephen's taking notes in the back of the class.

PROF. DAVIS

Sex is everywhere in this world.
TV, music, social media. Why?
Because it sells, and the brain is
constantly attracted to it. And
that's dangerous, it gives you guys
the wrong messages about protection
and intimacy and love. And then it
causes issues with relationships
and people.

MARKUS

But, why is the brain so attracted
to it?

PROF. DAVIS

Well, because sex feels good.
Emotionally and physically. It
gives people that fulfillment and
that connection. Believe it or not,
the brain is the most sexual organ
in your body.

MICHELLE

But what about asexual people?

The intercom goes off

INTERCOM VOICE

All classes, please be dismissed to
the gymnasium for the talent show.

PROF. DAVIS

We'll pick that up later. Get going
guys.

The students shuffle out of the classroom.

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - AFTERNOON

Stephen walks along with other students and finds a seat next
to Jessica.

JESSICA

Hey Stephen

STEPHEN
What's up Jess?

JESSICA
The usual. Kinda baked, kinda bored

STEPHEN
Do you see Bella anywhere?

JESSICA
(Looking around)
Uhhhh... no. She might be
backstage?

STEPHEN
Probably

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Bella is lighting a bowl with her friends Gianna, Sarah,
Nick.

GIANNA
You better go soon Bells.

BELLA
Yeah yeah just, I dunno. I'm
nervous.

SARAH
You're gonna do great. You've been
practicing so much.

Bella takes another hit and passes it along.

BELLA
I mean, yeah. But I'm still
nervous.

NICK
I'm gonna start a standing ovation.

BELLA
Don't.

GIANNA
Do it fuck yeah.

NICK
And I'm gonna be dancing like-

Nick starts dancing.

SARAH
Nick's feeling himself alright!

Sarah starts dancing.

BELLA
I love you guys.

Bella turns and walks away while Gianna starts dancing with the group too.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLS - CONTINUOUS

Bella is walking to the gymnasium when she starts feeling light headed. She grabs the nearby wall, she's very baked.

The talent show has begun and the M.C. is talking.

M.C.
(Voice only, echoing)
Alright! Welcome Holy Cross to our
Talent Show! We've got so many
talented performers today...

Bella's world is spinning, she can't walk. She crawls along the wall to her locker while the M.C. keeps talking-

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

M.C.
Our first act is Jacob Bloomberg
performing some taekwondo for us
all!

A scrawny kid in a karate uniform comes out and starts kicking and punching, screaming and yelling. The crowd's basically silent.

Stephen gets a text from Bella - "Come 2 lockers" He gets up and leaves the gym.

CUT TO:

INT. LOCKERS - CONTINUOUS

Stephen finds Bella, sitting with her guitar, eyes red as roses.

STEPHEN
What are you doing? You're
performing like now!

BELLA
(laughing, slurring)
Ahhhh Stephen... I'm, like, I uhh

STEPHEN
Are you stoned?

BELLA
I fucked up hahaha ah man I don't
even want to perform anymore

STEPHEN
Oh come on-

BELLA
Wanna hear a new song I'm working
on?

Bella starts strumming, messing up a lot.

STEPHEN
You're gonna miss your performance

BELLA
That's ok

STEPHEN
I thought this was what you wanted

BELLA
I don't know what I want hahaha

She still strumming, spaciouly, slowly. Stephen sits next to her.

STEPHEN
Hey I know this song

It's a cover of Gregory Alan Isakov's "All There Is..."
Stephen starts softly singing along to Bella's slow, spacey,
slightly messy playing.

The crowd from the talent show is cheering.

M.C. (O.S.)
Well, next we have a singer, but we
can't find her. Would Bella Hopkins
please come backstage?

Bella and Stephen are still singing.

M.C. (CONT'D)
Well, guess we're moving on to Ben
Harris who'll be performing some
magic for us all!

They finish the song. Stephen looks at Bella, Bella looks at
Stephen.

BELLA
Thanks Stephen

STEPHEN
Yeah...

Stephen tries going in for a kiss, but Bella plops her head
on his shoulder, closing her eyes.

BEN HARRIS (O.S.)
Is this your card?

RANDOM GIRL (O.S.)
Yeah!

The audience starts cheering as Bella rests on Stephen.

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephen runs downstairs.

STEPHEN
Mom! Mooom!

DAD (O.S.)
Mom's not here.

Stephen finds Dad watching TV.

STEPHEN
Where is she?

DAD
Grocery shopping.

STEPHEN
When's she coming back?

DAD
I don't know.

STEPHEN
Then, can you help me?

DAD
What do you need Stevey?

STEPHEN
There's a Halloween party tomorrow
night, I need a costume.

DAD
Is this with Bella?

STEPHEN
Yeah.

DAD
Stephen, sit down for a second.

Stephen sits next to Dad. Dad turns the TV off.

STEPHEN
What's up?

DAD
It's time for the sex talk Stevey.

STEPHEN
Dad, no-

DAD
No, this is important.

Awkward pause.

STEPHEN
Well?

DAD
Uh. I don't know what to talk
about.

STEPHEN
Then let's just not-

DAD
No no, um. Stephen, sex is uh, an
act. And you do it with a girl,
unless you're gay which is fine but-

STEPHEN

Dad-

DAD

Always use protection son. Here.

Dad pulls out a condom from his pocket.

STEPHEN

Why do you just have a condom?

DAD

You should always carry a condom, always.

STEPHEN

Look I don't want this anymore can you just help me with my costume?

DAD

What do you need?

STEPHEN

Uhhhh...

CUT TO:

INT. HALLOWEEN STORE - DAY

Stephen and Dad walk through the aisles. Kids are trying on masks, cashiers are working tirelessly.

The two walk past a goblin statue and set it off, it lights up and blasts an evil laugh.

DAD

Ah!

STEPHEN

Dad

DAD

Jesus I hate Halloween. All this scary shit. Who likes being scared?

STEPHEN

Is that why Mom would always take me trick or treating alone?

DAD

Absolutely

Dad walks over to a nearby wall.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Stevey come here!

Stephen walks over. Dad points at some dog ears and a tail.

DAD (CONT'D)
 Look!

STEPHEN
 What is this?

DAD
 Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

STEPHEN DAD (CONT'D)
 No Scooby-doo!

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 I don't want to be scooby-doo.

DAD
 But everybody loves scooby-doo.

STEPHEN
 No, what about some of these
 costumes like uh...

Stephen finds a wall of ready made, expensive costumes.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 Ooooh a pirate!

DAD
 You like pirates?

STEPHEN
 No...

Stephen points one by one at different costumes

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
 A cool robot!

DAD
 I'm not paying ninety dollars for a
 cool robot.

STEPHEN
 Who said that you were paying?

DAD
 The unemployed eighteen year old
 brought me to a Halloween store to
 NOT pay. Yeah, ok.

Stephen gets a text from Bella, it's a photo of her dressed up as Velma.

STEPHEN

Dad I changed my mind.

DAD

The pirate's a bad idea.

STEPHEN

No, scooby-doo's cool I'll be scooby-doo.

DAD

Then let's get out of here!

They grab the tail, ears, nose, collar, and some brown paint.

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHEN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Stephen and his Dad put together a scooby-doo costume. They paint over old pants and a shirt, cut out a SD logo, and set it all up. Dad even gives Stephen a beer.

Mom enters the house. Dad hides the beer.

MOM

What's all this?

STEPHEN

There's a costume party tomorrow at a friend's house. I'm gonna be scooby-doo.

MOM

Did you finish your homework?

STEPHEN

Yes mom

MOM

(To dad)

And did you talk with him about the thing?

DAD

Hm? Oh uh, yes yes I did.

MOM

Well, just to reiterate, Stevey,
sex is bad. Unless you're having
kids. The bible says so.

DAD

Right of course. That's what I told
him.

MOM

Yes, and I've seen this Bella girl
ok? I know how those girls are like

STEPHEN

Mom-

MOM

Just, be careful ok?

STEPHEN

Yeah.

MOM

Good.

Mom walks away. Dad brings the beers back out, smiles at
Stephen, and the two keep working.

INT. PARTY HOUSE 1 - NIGHT

Stephen's decked out as Scooby-Doo as he gets let into the
house. 30-40 kids in costumes are all over the place; ninjas,
Jesse and Walter White, Batman, Lil Peep. Beers and vapes are
everywhere.

Stephen walks around until he finds Bella by the fridge.

STEPHEN

(Mimicking scooby-doo)
Veeeelmaaa, veeeelllmaaa!

BELLA

Stephen!

She hugs him.

STEPHEN

Cool costume!

BELLA

Thanks scoob, that's a cool tail

STEPHEN

Thanks it's very long

Stephen starts wagging it about, Bella laughs.

A big group walks through the front door. One by one, the mystery gang shows up, minus a Velma. There's Fred, Daphne, Shaggy, and another Scooby-Doo, in the store bought costume.

BELLA

Oh my god check it out.

STEPHEN

Huh?

Stephen and the other Scooby-Doo make eye contact for a second

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Mother fucker

Other Scooby-Doo nudges his friends, and they all walk to Bella and Stephen.

FRED CHARACTER

Oh my god it's Velma! We found a Velma!

BELLA

Holy shit this is so fucking cool

DAPHNE CHARACTER

I love your costume!

BELLA

Thanks it's just some old clothes

SHAGGY CHARACTER

Lookie here Scoob it's your doppelganger!

STEPHEN

Hi

SHAGGY CHARACTER

Well, kinda

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

(Grinning dickishly)

Dude, uh, nice costume

STEPHEN

Thanks you too man

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
Wait... Stephen?

STEPHEN
Huh-

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
Oh fuck it's Stephen! The fucking
anime masturbator!

STEPHEN
Hey what-

SHAGGY CHARACTER
Holy shit yeah! I remember that!

STEPHEN
That's not what happened-

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
No I remember English class seventh
grade, you were jerking it in the
back and suddenly the sound came on
and these moans and things were
just going!

STEPHEN
No I-

FRED CHARACTER
Fuck that was you? Oh my god you're
a legend!

BELLA
I'm gonna walk around

Bella starts walking off

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
I'll come with you, if that's
alright-

BELLA
It's not

DAPHNE CHARACTER
I wanna dance come on guys!

The mystery gang walks to the living room and starts dancing.
Stephen is left on his own by the fridge. He sees a bottle of
bourbon on the table, and he pours it into his mouth,
shuddering afterwards.

Stephen keeps drinking, stumbling around the house. He tries to dance with some girls but they walk off. He asks to play beer pong but they tell him to fuck off.

He spots Bella across the room, sitting with Scooby-Doo Character. She's laughing. He's got his arm around her, hitting her vape. Stephen's drunk. He grabs a couple beers from the fridge and he walks over.

STEPHEN

Hey Bella what's good?

BELLA

Hey St-

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Look who it is!

STEPHEN

(To Bella, ignoring SD)

Hey, I got you a drink

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

She's already got a drink mister masturbator

STEPHEN

Dude who are you?

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

I'm scooby-fuckin-doo that's who!
What the fuck are you doing here anyways? Who let you in?

BELLA

He's my guitar teacher.

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Oh a guitar te-

STEPHEN

(Getting agitated)

Wait, I'm just "your guitar teacher?"

BELLA

No Stephen like-

STEPHEN

(More agitated)

So I'm just here to teach you guitar? You hang out with me just to learn guitar?

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Hey man-

STEPHEN

So you invite me to shit and spend
time just to use me?

BELLA

That's not what I-

Scooby-Doo Character stands up from the couch

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Chill man

STEPHEN

(Starting to yell)
Who the fuck are you? Huh?! Who the
fuck are you?!

BELLA

Stephen chill

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Bella, let's get out of here

STEPHEN

Fuck you!

Stephen shoves Scooby-Doo Character, he stumbles into the
couch.

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Don't do that man

STEPHEN

(Yelling)
You're full of shit with your
costume and your, your,

BELLA

Stephen stop

STEPHEN

(Screaming)
Fuck you too Bella!

Scooby-Doo Character punches Stephen in the face. Stephen
gets knocked back, stumbling grabbing the floor.

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER

Jesus you're a fucking loser dude.
Take a hint. Leave this fucking
house now.

Stephen charges at Scooby-Doo Character and tackles him into the ground. The crowd starts yelling, girls walk away. The music is cut off as the two beat each other, Bella's screaming on the side.

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER (CONT'D)
 Who the fuck do you think you are
 huh?! You're a fucking nobody
 you're a bitch who's being used by
 a slut

STEPHEN
 (Screaming)
 Fuck you!

The two fight around the living room until Stephen shoves Scooby-Doo Character into the big flatscreen TV; it falls and shatters.

Markus comes downstairs.

MARKUS
 (To the crowd)
 Hey! Who the fuck broke my TV?!

Scooby-Doo Character gets up from the floor, right next to the shattered glass.

MARKUS (CONT'D)
 Jack get-

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
 It wasn't me! Stephen pushed me!

MARKUS
 Who the fuck is Stephen?

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
 He's Scooby-Doo!

MARKUS
 Then what the fuck are you?!

SCOOBY-DOO CHARACTER
 No like-

MARKUS
 (To the crowd)
 EVERYBODY GET THE FUCK OUT NOW!

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Stephen is bruised and a little bloody. He walks down the street to his car when he spots Bella walking to hers.

STEPHEN
(Calling out)
Bella!

Bella turns around, looks, then keeps walking. Stephen runs up to her.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
Hey Bel-

BELLA
Go away Stephen Gibbs.

STEPHEN
Are you alright to drive?

Bella turns to look at Stephen directly

BELLA
Stop

STEPHEN
What the fuck did I do Bella?

BELLA
You fought a kid for one thing.

STEPHEN
No, just. I thought we were
friends, you know?

BELLA
We are

STEPHEN
Are we?

BELLA
Stephen what do you want?

STEPHEN
I don't know

Pause

BELLA
I'll see you-

STEPHEN
I like you Bella.

BELLA
I like you too Stephen Gibbs

STEPHEN
You know what I mean fucker

BELLA
Yeah, I do.

Bella gets in her car, door open

BELLA (CONT'D)
That kid asked me to suck his dick
in the bathroom. I hate sucking
dick.

STEPHEN
We cool?

BELLA
Yeah. I'll see you later.

Bella closes the door and drives off. Stephen watches her go.