

FOSTER

Screenplay by
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25 March, 2010

Shooting Script v6.2

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1.

1 **INT. FOSTER HOME, BEDROOM - DAY** 1

A 7 year old boy lays in bed. This is ELI.

 ELI
 (to camera)
 This is my bed. It's not very
 comfortable but it will do for now.

He smiles to camera.

2 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY** 2

ZOOEY & ALEC MORRISON, a middle aged married couple, are in bed. An alarm goes off and Alec switches it off.

3 **INT. FOSTER HOME, BATHROOM - DAY** 3

Eli stands in front of the mirror with a towel wrapped around his head and a toothbrush in his hand.

 ELI
 (to camera)
 To reduce the risk of tooth decay
 and cavities, it's important to
 brush two to three times a day,
 especially after eating.

4 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY** 4

Zooey stands in front of the mirror brushing her teeth.

Alec approaches from the bedroom and stands behind her. He puts his arm on her shoulders.

5 **INT. FOSTER HOME, BATHROOM - DAY** 5

Eli's hair is slicked back and he holds a comb.

 ELI
 (to camera)
 There are several commercial
 products on the market for haircare
 today: gel, wax, mousse and pomade.
 I'm lucky. I don't need anything
 in my hair.

6 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BATHROOM - DAY** 6

Zooey brushes her hair.

2.

7 **INT. FOSTER HOME, BEDROOM - DAY** 7

Eli is dressed in a shirt and trousers. He holds a clip-on tie.

 ELI
 (to camera)
 Every man should have one nice
 outfit.
 (he puts on the tie)
 Not everyone knows how to tie one
 of these properly. It all comes
 with experience, really.

8 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY** 8

Alec ties his tie. In the background, Zooey gets dressed.

9 **INT. FOSTER HOME, BEDROOM - DAY** 9

Eli puts on his blazer.

 ELI
 (to camera)
 It's important, when trying to look
 one's best, to wear a blazer that
 compliments one's shirt. For
 instance, a stripey blazer wouldn't
 look good with a stripey shirt.
 Best to stick to solid colours.

10 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY** 10

Alec puts on a blazer.

11 **INT. FOSTER HOME, KITCHEN - DAY** 11

Eli sits at the kitchen table, surrounded by other foster children.

 ELI
 (to camera)
 Breakfast is generally considered
 one of the most important meals of
 the day. This cereal is packed with
 essential vitamins and minerals,
 and has added calcium for healthy
 development of bones and teeth.

4.

17 **INT. IV CLINIC - DAY**

17

Alec and Zooey sit in the waiting room of an IV clinic. A
STAFF MEMBER (dressed in white lab coat) walks past and fills
up some empty cardboard flyer dispensers. Zooey picks up one
of the flyers. It is a flyer for "Lange Foster Home".

The DOCTOR appears.

 DOCTOR
 Mr & Mrs Morrison?

They get up and follow the doctor. Zooey pockets the flyer. *

18 **EXT. FOSTER HOME, PLAYGROUND - DAY**

18

Eli stands in the middle of the playground while the other
kids play around him.

 ELI
 Families are important things. So
 are mums and dads. Everyone should
 have one.

19 **INT. IV CLINIC, CONSULTATION ROOM - DAY**

19

Zooey and Alec follow the doctor in.

The doctor inadvertently bumps into his plastic statue of the
human body, knocking the internal organs to the ground. He
picks them up and hastily shoves the pieces into the body. He
is left holding the appendix.

 DOCTOR
 Blast, sorry about that.
 (looks at appendix)
 The appendix. You don't really
 need it anyway.

He places the appendix on his desk.

 DOCTOR (CONT'D)
 How are you two getting on?

Alec puts a hand on Zooey's back.

 ALEC
 We're good. Thanks.

 DOCTOR
 Excellent. Well, I'll get straight
 to it. Your results have come
 back, and it's good news... there's
 nothing wrong with either of you.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

5.

19

CONTINUED:

19

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

There is really no reason, from a medical standpoint, why you can't have children.

ZOOEY

Really? Are you sure?

DOCTOR

There could always be something we haven't spotted, Mrs Morrison, but then again, it could also be psychosomatic. Often, when one has experienced trauma, one can't underestimate the influence of the mind on the human body.

ZOOEY

What about IVF, Doctor?

DOCTOR

Ooh, well, it's always an option if you wanted to go that route but treatment can be expensive.

ALEC

Like how expensive? Few hundred?

DOCTOR

Try a few thousand. And that is per treatment cycle. Crikey, the cost of eggs today? Imagine if you went organic?

He chuckles at his own joke. Alec and Zoey shoot each other a look.

ALEC

So what do you advise?

DOCTOR

What do I advise? A week in the country, couple of spa treatments and a facial.

(looks at Alec)

Gets rid of dead skin.

20

INT. CAR - DAY

20

Alec drives. Zoey sits in the passenger seat.

ALEC

So that was good, right?

ZOOEY

Was it?

(CONTINUED)

6.

20

CONTINUED:

20

ALEC

Sure, hon. At least we know
there's nothing wrong with us.

ZOOEY

You mean, you? It's been two years
now.

ALEC

Look, maybe the doctor is right.
Maybe what we need is a break.

Alec pulls into the side and stops the car outside ZOOEY'S
BOOKSTORE.

ZOOEY

What if... just saying, we used a
couple of thousand for the
treatment?

ALEC

(reluctant)

You know things are tight right
now.

ZOOEY

I'm just saying...

ALEC

(beat)

Let me see what I can do.

*

21

INT. BOOK STORE - DAY

21

Zooey's eccentric mother, DIANE, dressed somewhat like Mary
Poppins, is reading a story to 10 or so children in a corner
of the book store. Taking her job quite seriously, she is
living the story as she reads it - and the children watch and
listen with awe.

DIANE

The rest I have thrown and flushed
down the loo, to that big bedbug
place that is known as the zoo. And
there they will stay, they're out
of my way. They'll never come back,
not even to play. The bedbugs I've
seen, they're out of my sight. And
now I can sleep. Good night and
sleep tight...

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

The kids clap. A mother approaches Diane.

*

(CONTINUED)

7.

21

CONTINUED:

21

MOTHER

That was beautiful. Who wrote it?

DIANE

You can tell her yourself.

Zoey appears behind Diane.

DIANE (CONT'D)

As well as the owner of this
beautiful store, my lovely daughter
also wrote that story.

ZOOEY

My mother AND my manager.

MOTHER

Lovely job, really.

ZOOEY

Thank you. Honestly.

The woman moves away.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

My god, I'm so embarrassed.

DIANE

You should write more. You haven't
done anything in the past two
years.

*
*
*

ZOOEY

(loaded)

Yes well...

*
*
*

DIANE

And I'm loving this storytime.
It's great for your business. Look
at all the children!

*

*

ZOOEY

Well, if they didn't come for the
stories, they definitely came for
the outfit. You look like Mary
Poppins!

*

DIANE

Might as well get into character,
you know... for the children.

(beat)

Speaking of which, how'd it go?

ZOOEY

Really well.

(CONTINUED)

8.

21

CONTINUED:

21

DIANE

Really?

ZOOEY

Yes, there's nothing wrong with me at all. I'm fine!

DIANE

You don't look fine.

ZOOEY

(beat)

We're thinking of trying IVF?

DIANE

Really? It's expensive. Is Alec going to pay for that?

ZOOEY

(getting defensive)

Yes, really. Alec said he'll put some money aside.

22

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

22

Alec is working on a SHIP IN A BOTTLE.

A knock on his door. His secretary, JUNE, enters.

ALEC

Yes, June.

JUNE

Mr Morrison, John Burns from Burns Toys is here to see you. Oh, and I've had three calls this morning from the machine suppliers about some unpaid invoices.

ALEC

Tell them we have the invoices on file and we'll get to them when we can.

JUNE

And Mr Burns?

ALEC

Yes, yes, send him in.

Alec looks frazzled.

She opens the door and MR JOHN BURNS enters. They shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

9.

22

CONTINUED:

22

ALEC (CONT'D)

John, nice to see you again.

JOHN

And you Alec.

ALEC

Have a seat. Fruit jelly?

He holds out some sweets.

ALEC (CONT'D)

They're shaped in the form of US presidents.

JOHN

No thank you.

Alec eats one himself.

ALEC

Sure? President Bush is particularly scrumptious. Not much in the way of politics, but on the plus side, when you squeeze his head it explodes in a cacophony of mixed berries. It's really quite delic-

JOHN

No. Actually, I've come to talk about your line.

ALEC

(sitting)

Ok. What's up?

JOHN

Well, no point beating around the bush I suppose. You see, the thing is, with this recession, margins are getting tighter and we just can't afford to stock the smaller lines.

ALEC

Well that's ok, we can look at the margins and see if we can make it work for you.

JOHN

It's not just the margins, Alec. You just can't match the products and prices that the Americans and Chinese have offered.

(CONTINUED)

10.

22

CONTINUED:

22

ALEC

We can make it work - we can match their prices.

JOHN

In the last two years things have gone downhill. Of course, I understand your situation, and I'm dreadfully sorry for you. You just need to come up with some new ideas.

ALEC

(trying desperately)

John, how long have I known you? For god's sake, I was at your wedding. I was at Alice's christening.

JOHN

I know, and we'll always be friends. That's why I wanted to come in and tell you face to face. Please understand, it's business.

ALEC

To you yes. To me it's my livelihood.

JOHN

There is, of course, one other option. If you wanted to sell this place... I might be inclined to make you an offer.

ALEC

It's not for sale, John.

JOHN

Everyone has a price, Alec.

ALEC

My father built this company from scratch.

JOHN

And a good man he was too.

(beat)

You just looked like you might need the money, that's all.

(beat)

Oh well. You know where to find me.

He gets up and exits.

11.

23 **INT. BANK - DAY**

23

Alec sits at the desk of the bank manager.

BANK MANAGER

If I can just have your autograph
here and here, that should do it.

He passes the document over to Alec to sign.

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)

Marvelous. Now, you do realise
after this withdrawal your balance
is quite low.

ALEC

Yes.

BANK MANAGER

I'm just saying because there is an
automatic charge for negative
balances.

ALEC

I see. Thanks.

BANK MANAGER

How would you like your bills?

24 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE - EVENING**

24

Zooey and Alec sit around the dinner table with their friends
JIM & SARAH. *

Audrey, Jim & Sarah's 3 year old daughter, is reading books
on the floor.

SARAH

That was delicious, thank you very
much Zooey.

ZOOEY

My pleasure, Sarah. Lovely to have
you guys over. It's been ages. I
can't believe how much Audrey has
grown!

JIM

I can't imagine not seeing her
everyday of my life.

With that, Zooey gets up.

(CONTINUED)

12.

24

CONTINUED:

24

ZOOEY
Coffee, anyone?

SARAH
I'll give you a hand.

Sarah shoots Jim a 'why are you so insensitive look' and then gets up and follows Zooey. Alec pours Jim a glass of DEWAR'S MALT WHISKY. *
*

ALEC
So.

JIM
So.

ALEC
Work good.

JIM
Yeah. You?

ALEC
Yeah.
(beat)
TV?

*

JIM
(liking the idea)
Yeah.

They get up and go the sofa.

25

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

25

Zooey prepares coffee using her NESPRESSO machine.

SARAH
Sorry about Jim. He can be a little insensitive sometimes.

ZOOEY
Don't worry.

SARAH
You know, there are other ways. There are plenty of children who need a home.

ZOOEY
You mean adoption?

(CONTINUED)

13.

25

CONTINUED:

25

SARAH
Adoption, fostering...

ZOOEY
Sure. We could just fly to Africa.

SARAH
Hey, seems to be the thing to do
these days.

Zooey gives Sarah a hug.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Or, I have a better idea... do you
have any ice cream?

ZOOEY
Now you're talking my language.

26

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - EVENING

26

Jim carries Audrey, who is fast asleep in his arms. He kisses
her.

They all hug as they see their friends out.

Zooey watches on longingly.

ZOOEY
What a precious little girl.

27

INT. MORRISON HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

27

Zooey gets out of the bathroom and walks down the hall,
passing a closed DOOR. She stops outside the door for a
moment, putting her hand on the doorknob, before having
second thoughts and walking on.

*

CUT TO

*

Zooey is in bed looking at the flyer from the LANGE FOSTER
HOME. She puts it on the bedside table.

*

*

Alec walks in.

*

ZOOEY
So, I've been thinking... I think
we should go through with it.

ALEC
With what?

(CONTINUED)

14.

27

CONTINUED:

27

ZOOEY

IVF. I've been looking into it and we need £3,500 for the first cycle.

ALEC

But there's no guarantee it will work right? And then we're back to square one.

ZOOEY

At least we will have tried.

ALEC

It's just, what if it doesn't, and we end up spending thousands on-

ZOOEY

Don't you want to try, Alec? You sound like you don't want to try?

ALEC

I want to try. It's just I'm trying to think logically. We're both over-extended. You with the store, and me with work-

ZOOEY

You said you'd put something aside.

ALEC

Yeah, well, about that. It's not gonna happen.

ZOOEY

I thought we had some savings?

ALEC

We did.

ZOOEY

What do you mean, did?

ALEC

(takes a deep breath)
I used it.

ZOOEY

What?!

ALEC

To pay some debts. I had to.

She looks defeated.

(CONTINUED)

15.

27

CONTINUED:

27

ALEC (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. It was that or go bust.

I'm sorry.

(beat)

Maybe it's not meant to be, Zooey.

ZOOEY

There is one other way.

*

She reaches over and grabs the FLYER, showing it to Alec.

*

ALEC

You want to foster?

*

ZOOEY

Sarah and I were speaking before
and-

ALEC

Oh, I see, a crazy idea from Sarah?

ZOOEY

Just hear me out. There are so
many kids in this world that need a
home. And there are people like us
who have so much love to give.

ALEC

I don't know.

ZOOEY

What's not to know?

*

ALEC

Well, just having a kid that's not
mine-

*

*

*

ZOOEY

What do you mean?

*

*

ALEC

That came out wrong.

*

*

Zooey turns over, pissed off.

*

ALEC (CONT'D)

Zooey...

*

*

28

INT. PUB - NIGHT

28

Alec and Jim are playing pool.

*

(CONTINUED)

16.

28

CONTINUED:

28

ALEC

Maybe it's selfish, but I just
can't get my head around a child
that's not mine. Does that sound
awful?

JIM

Yes it does. But I understand.
However, Zooey, would not. Strike
that - any woman would not. Just
keep that kind of voodoo talk to
yourself, ok? Otherwise it'll be
the end for you.

*

He takes a shot and the balls goes into the pocket.

*

JIM (CONT'D)

Hah! You are snookered, my friend,
or whatever you say in pool. By the
way, why you Brits had to take a
perfectly good game and complicate
it is beyond me.

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

29

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

29

Zooey watches TV. The door opens and Alec enters.

ALEC

Hey. How was your day?

ZOOEY

Good.

*

Alec sits on the sofa next to her.

A bouquet of flowers appears from behind his back.

ALEC

Ta-dah!

ZOOEY

(delighted)

What's the occasion?

ALEC

The occasion, is just to say, I'm
sorry.

He kisses her.

He undoes his tie, kicks his shoes off and puts his feet up
on the table.

(CONTINUED)

17.

29

CONTINUED:

29

ALEC (CONT'D)

Look, about last night. I think I overreacted. Just took me by surprise.

ZOOEY

So you'll consider it.

ALEC

I won't close the door.

ZOOEY

Great... because we have an appointment this weekend.

*

*

She pulls out a piece of paper.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

It's a foster home a few miles outside of London. No commitment. All we do is go and have a chat.

ALEC

(laughs at her tenacity)
No commitment.

ZOOEY

No commitment.

ALEC

Just a chat.

ZOOEY

Just a chat.

30

INT. CAR - DAY

30

Alec drives, following his satnav. Zoey in the passenger seat

He pulls into a country road.

They see a sign for "LANGE FOSTER HOME" as they drive into the gravelled entrance.

31

EXT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

31

Alec and Zoey ring the doorbell of the foster home.

A young lady [JANE] opens the door.

ZOOEY

Hi. We're here to see Mrs Lange.

32 **INT. FOSTER HOME, OFFICE - DAY**

32

Zooey and Alec sit on a sofa.

Mrs Lange pours them some tea.

 MRS LANGE
How do you take your tea, Mrs
Morrison?

 ZOOEY
Zooey, please. Milk and just one
sugar, thanks.

 MRS LANGE
And you-

 ALEC
Alec. Just milk thanks.

She settles down onto a chair.

 MRS LANGE
So, what should I know that's not
on your form?

A moment while Alec and Zooey look at each other.

 ZOOEY
We can provide a good home for a
child.

 MRS LANGE
So can a lot of people.

 ZOOEY
We love children.

 MRS LANGE
Who doesn't?
 (beat)
Do you have any children of your
own?

A silence. Alec and Zooey look at each other.

 MRS LANGE (CONT'D)
I ask, just because on your form
you left that question blank.

 ALEC
Look, the truth is, well... the
truth is...

(CONTINUED)

19.

32

CONTINUED:

32

ZOOEY

The truth is, I've been unable to
conceive since...

MRS LANGE

Yes.

ZOOEY

Since the accident.

Zooey begins to tear up.

ALEC

The doctors think it's psycho-
somatic.

MRS LANGE

I see. I'm sorry.

An awkward silence before she starts again.

MRS LANGE (CONT'D)

My mother started this foster home
in 1946, just after the war. There
were so many children, you see,
without homes at the time, and she
took them in - all of them. I
simply thought I had loads of
brothers and sisters to play with.
It was awfully fun.

(beat)

Our children are....

(she takes a moment)

Special. As such, we go to great
lengths to ensure they go to
'special' homes. There's a
process, I'm sure you understand. A
vetting process. These things can
take some time. The paperwork can
often take time.

ZOOEY

Yes, of course.

MRS LANGE

But, what's meant to be, will be.

*
*

33

INT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

33

Mrs Lange accompanies Alec and Zooey as they walk around the
foster home.

MRS LANGE

The days are quite structured. We
run a tight ship.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

20.

33

CONTINUED:

33

MRS LANGE (CONT'D)

In fact, it's closer to a school than anything else. This is the play area.

(beat)

We have children from all ages and all backgrounds. Some we've had since they were babies. Unwanted at birth for whatever reason. We are the closest thing they have to family.

*
*

Zooey trails behind a little. She notices, out of the corner of her eye, ELI, sitting on a bench dressed in a suit and a little fedora hat. He WAVES to her.

She smiles and waves back.

MRS LANGE (CONT'D)

On your form it said you own a toy manufacturing company, is that right, Mr Morrison?

ALEC

Yes that's right.

MRS LANGE

How terribly exciting that must be?

ALEC

It is. It's great. I mean, we've been hit a little by the recession, but who hasn't?

MRS LANGE

Quite right. Quite right. What's your favorite toy?

ALEC

Easy question. Hands down, lego. Just because of the infinite possibilities. You can make a house or a ship, or a plane - you name it.

MRS LANGE

I like Mr Potato Head. In my days we used to use a real potato. Do you remember that one?

ALEC

Sure. Mr Potato Head is a classic. Still going strong today. He's a real spud.

He laughs at his own joke.

(CONTINUED)

21.

33

CONTINUED:

33

ALEC (CONT'D)
Because spud sounds like stud.

MRS LANGE
Yes we get it.
(beat)
And how about you, Mrs Morrison?

Zoey catches up.

ZOOEY
Huh?

MRS LANGE
How about you? A book store,
right?

ZOOEY
Yes. Children's books. My mother
helps me run it.

MRS LANGE
I see. Marvelous.

34

EXT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

34

Mrs Lange stands by the door and shakes their hands as they
get into their car.

MRS LANGE
We'll be in touch.

ALEC
Thank you.

ZOOEY
Thank you Mrs Lange.

Zoey looks up towards the second floor of the building and
sees Eli looking out at her again. She smiles up at him.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
See, that wasn't so bad now, was
it?

ALEC
No, it wasn't so bad.

35

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

35

Zoey rings up some books for a customer.

She goes to the door and turns the OPEN sign to CLOSED.

(CONTINUED)

22.

35

CONTINUED:

35

36

EXT. STREET - DAY

36

Zooey walks down the street carrying some bags of shopping.
She approaches her house and enters with the shopping.

37

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY

37

Zooey puts the bags of shopping on the counter.

*

A moment later, the doorbell rings.

Not sure if she heard right, she turns the music down. The
bell rings again.

Clearly, not expecting anyone, she goes to the front door and
opens it.

Standing there, with a small old leather suitcase, is Eli,
wearing his suit and fedora hat. Zooey looks taken aback.

ELI

Hello, Zooey.

ZOOEY

Hi.

ELI

You know who I am, right?

ZOOEY

Aren't you-

Eli walks in, handing Zooey some papers.

ELI

Eli.

(beat)

Mrs Lange sent me.

ZOOEY

She did? But, no one, I mean, this
is very, no one called-

ELI

They fast tracked your application.
You clearly must have made an
impression.

Eli looks around.

(CONTINUED)

23.

37

CONTINUED:

37

ELI (CONT'D)

Nice house. Where should I put my stuff?

Zooey looks at the paperwork, baffled. She looks outside on the street. No sign of a car that may have dropped him off.

ZOOEY

How'd you get here?

ELI

Black taxi. The traffic was appalling. But their knowledge of back streets is second to none.

(beat)

Do you have anything to drink, by any chance. I'm parched.

ZOOEY

Sure. Juice, milk?

ELI

I couldn't trouble you for a cup of tea, could I? Did you know, that after water, tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world? People in the Han dynasty used tea as medicine. Apparently the antioxidants have a healing power. Crazy, huh?

ZOOEY

Crazy. But aren't you a little young for tea?

She wanders into the kitchen, slightly taken aback.

ELI

Yes, ok, fine. Milk?

38

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - LATER

38

Eli is sat on the couch sipping a cup of hot milk. Zooey puts on some cartoons.

ELI

Do you have CNN?

ZOOEY

Sorry?

ELI

CNN. The news channel.

(CONTINUED)

24.

38

CONTINUED:

38

ZOOEY

Um. Yes, I think so.

ELI

Do you mind if we watch it?

ZOOEY

(perplexed)

I guess not.

ELI

I used to watch the World News Channel but I just found the reportage to be a little left wing, ya know?

ZOOEY

(lost on her)

Uh-huh.

39

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - LATER

39

Zooey is on the phone. Eli is in the background watching the news.

INTERCUT WITH ALEC AT THE OFFICE.

ZOOEY

Hi, it's me. Can you talk?

ALEC

Sure, what's up?

ZOOEY

That little boy, from the foster home - you know the funny cute little one wearing a suit and hat.

ALEC

Not sure I do, but go on.

ZOOEY

Well he's here.

ALEC

What do you mean he's here?

ZOOEY

Here, in our living room.

ALEC

What's he doing there?

(CONTINUED)

25.

39

CONTINUED:

39

ZOOEY

Watching the news and sipping a cup
of milk.

ALEC

No, I mean, what? I don't get it.

ZOOEY

Look, perhaps you better come home.

40

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - LATER

40

The door opens and Alec comes in. Eli is taking a nap on the
couch.

ZOOEY

His name is Eli.

ALEC

What's he doing?

ZOOEY

Taking a nap. He said he was
tired.

She shows Alec the papers.

ALEC

It's just kind of odd, isn't it? I
mean, he just shows up on our
doorstep, no call, no warning. Mrs
Lange said there's a process.

ZOOEY

What should we do?

ALEC

Have you called the agency?

ZOOEY

I left a message for Mrs Lange.
She hasn't called back yet.

ALEC

We should go down there. Just try
to get to the bottom of things.

41

INT. CAR - DAY

41

Alec is driving with Zooey by his side and Eli in the back
seat.

(CONTINUED)

26.

41

CONTINUED:

41

ELI

So, Alec, I understand you own a
toy company, is that right?

ALEC

That is correct, Eli, yes.

ELI

How's business these days?

ALEC

So, so. Could be better.

ELI

Been hit by the recession? The
economy has taken a bit of a
tumble.

ALEC

How old did you say you were?

ELI

Seven.

ALEC

How do you know about the
recession?

ELI

Doesn't everyone? I mean, it's
only in the news every second of
the day. You'd have to have your
head in the sand not to know about
the recession. I blame the sub
prime mortgage lenders - they
allowed people to borrow far more
than their annual income.

ALEC

(taken aback)

What?

ELI

The banks. I blame the banks. The
meltdown of the financial
institutions has essentially caused
prices in the \$6.5 trillion
mortgage backed securities market
to collapse.

Alec and Zoey share a look of incredulity.

ZOEY

He's cute. Can we keep him?

(CONTINUED)

27.

41 CONTINUED:

41

ALEC
He's not a stray dog!
(beat)
Let's just check with Mrs Lange.
These things normally require a lot
of paperwork.

ELI
It's always about paperwork.

42 EXT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

42

They drive up to the foster home amidst a scene of chaos. An ambulance is parked outside with flashing lights.

They get out of the car.

ALEC
What the... what's going on?

Zooey pulls aside a young girl.

ZOOEY
Hi. We're looking for Mrs Lange.

The young girl looks in the direction of the ambulance. From her expression, it is clear that Mrs Lange is inside.

43 INT. FOSTER HOME - DAY

43

Zooey and Alec are in Mrs Lange's office. Jane is seeing to them, but is clearly frazzled and stressed by the day's events.

JANE
She had a bit of a fall. Broke her
leg and hit her head.

ZOOEY
Gosh, we are sorry. Will she be ok?

JANE
Well, she's quite dazed - didn't
recognise anyone - not even me.
They're taking her to the hospital.

ALEC
Look, sorry to be insensitive - I
know it's an awkward time, it's
just that, one of your boys showed
up on our doorstep with these
papers. We just wanted to check
everything was in order.

(CONTINUED)

28.

43

CONTINUED:

43

He hands her the papers. She looks at the papers and the picture of Eli on the front.

JANE

You'll have to excuse me, I don't normally deal with the children - I work in accounts. And today's really thrown everyone out of joint.

ELI

(to Zooey/Alec)

Mrs Lange rushed the application through.

JANE

Well, the application does seem in order from as far as I can tell.

ZOOEY

(hopefully)

Well there you go then.

She looks at Alec.

JANE

And this is her signature on the form.

A young girl pops her head in the office.

YOUNG GIRL

Jane, the paramedics want to have a word with you.

JANE

Look, it all seems fine. Mrs Lange would never ever let a child go without first vetting the parents. She must have expedited your application.

(beat)

If you're happy-

Zooey looks at Alec for reassurance.

ELI

I'm happy.

Eli looks up at Zooey, who smiles.

ZOOEY

Yes. We're happy.

ALEC

But-

(CONTINUED)

29.

43

CONTINUED:

43

And with that, Jane exits.

JANE

Tell you what, I'll run this past
her as soon as she comes to.

44

INT. CAR - DAY

44

Alec, Zooey and Eli drive home.

Frank Sinatra's I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN is playing on the
radio. Eli is singing along with the music loudly.

Alec stares straight ahead. Zooey smiles.

ALEC

This is insane.

ZOOEY

(reminding him that Eli is
in the back seat)
Look, let's not talk about this
here.

ELI

Is everything ok?

ALEC

(tersely)
It's fine.

It's clearly not fine for Alec.

ELI

Really? Did I do something wrong?

ZOOEY

No, honey. You didn't do anything.
We just have some adjusting to do,
that's all.

ELI

I see. Then would you mind turning
the music back up.

Zooey turns the music back up. He resumes singing.

ELI (CONT'D)

Sing, guys.

Zooey starts singing.

ELI (CONT'D)

Alec?

(CONTINUED)

30.

44

CONTINUED:

44

ALEC
I'm good. Thanks.

45

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

45

Eli is in the bathroom wearing pyjamas. He is brushing his teeth.

Zoey is in a spare room next. She opens his suitcase to find several identical white shirts, suits etc... *

Eli appears at the doorway.

ELI
You know all of those teeth
whitening products? Apparently
it's nothing more than hydrogen
peroxide. Can you believe it?
Just household bleach! How funny is
that?

Zoey laughs.

46

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

46

Zoey gets into bed next to Alec.

ZOOEY
He's a funny one. Where does he
get all those big words from? And
that suit.

*
*

Alec has his back to her. She touches his back.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
Hey. You awake.

ALEC
Um-hm.

ZOOEY
Everything ok?

ALEC
Um-hm,

Clearly, things are not ok. She gets up and goes downstairs.

Alec opens an eye as he sees her leave the room.

31.

47 **INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT**

47

Eli sits on the stairs. Below him in the lounge he can see Zooey, who is drinking a cup of tea.

He goes down the stairs, walks past Zooey and picks out a book [WAR AND PEACE] from the shelf.

He holds it up for her and smiles.

ELI

I heard this is a particularly good book.

ZOOEY

'War and Peace?' Perhaps we can find something a little more child friendly.

She ruffles his hair.

48 **INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT**

48

Eli is tucked away in bed. Zooey sits on the edge of the bed with the storybook.

Their dog wanders in and jumps on Eli's bed.

Zooey starts reading the book.

ZOOEY

(reading)

There's a hole in the floor near the bed by the door. I'm certain I've never seen it before. I'm sure it wasn't there on Saturday night, when I climbed into bed and switched off the light. On Sunday I woke up and fell out of bed, bumping into the floor and bruising my head...

ELI

Zooey?

ZOOEY

Yes, honey.

ELI

Will you sleep in here, with me, tonight?

ZOOEY

Of course I will.

32.

49 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY**

49

Zooey is asleep on the floor by Eli's bed.

She suddenly wakes up with a fright. Eli is standing beside her looking at her.

 ELI
Morning, mom.

 ZOOEY
 (with a jump)
Gee-sus! You startled me! What
time is it?

 ELI
 (he looks at his watch)
7.04. How'd you sleep?

 ZOOEY
Me? Could be better. And you?

 ELI
Great. Breakfast?

 ZOOEY
Sure. Where's Alec?

 ELI
He's gone to work.

 ZOOEY
So early?

50 **INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY**

50

Alec enters his office. He looks mournfully over the empty floor of his factory.

He sits at his desk and looks at his SHIP IN THE BOTTLE.

He pulls out an EMPTY GLASS BOTTLE and gets to work making another one.

FADE TO BLACK.

51 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY**

51

Montage: Eli gets out eggs from the fridge and mixes them in a bowl.

Chops fruit and vegetables.

Lays the table.

(CONTINUED)

33.

51

CONTINUED:

51

Zooey watches on in admiration.

Eli finishes cooking and puts two plates of finished breakfast on the table.

Zooey shakes her head in amazement.

They tuck in to their breakfast.

ZOOEY

Where'd you learn to cook?

ELI

Delia Smith.

She nods.

ZOOEY

Hey, you don't have to call me
'mom' you know?

ELI

I know. Does it bother you?

ZOOEY

It takes a bit of getting used to.

ELI

I can call you Zooey if you like?

ZOOEY

Whatever you feel comfortable with.

ELI

Ok....

(after a moment)

Mom.

She smiles.

ZOOEY

So I was thinking, maybe we should
go shopping. Get you some new
clothes. You don't have to dress up
every day.

ELI

I don't dress up because I have to.
A man should look his best at all
times.

ZOOEY

Quite right. Well, just in case
you want to dress more casually-

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

(CONTINUED)

34.

51 CONTINUED: 51

ELI
I appreciate the gesture.

*
*

52 INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY 52

A knock on Alec's door.

Alec opens the door to TOM JENKINS, a man in his 60s,
employed by Alec.

ALEC
Tom. Come in, come in.

TOM
You alright, Mr Morrison?

ALEC
Yeah, fine, fine.

He sits behind the desk. Tom stands.

ALEC (CONT'D)
What's up?

TOM
Well, sir. Sorry to disturb and
all, it's just that... well, me and
the boys were just wondering what
the situation was?

ALEC
What situation?

TOM
With, well, paychecks and the like?

ALEC
Oh I see, paychecks. You and the
boys?

TOM
Yeah. Me and the boys.

ALEC
Tom, in all the years you been
working here, have we ever let you
down?

TOM
Well that's just it. I been working
here since your father started the
company. 45 years I been here.

(CONTINUED)

35.

52

CONTINUED:

52

ALEC

We're... I'm just going through a
bit of a rough patch at the moment.
You know, with the recession.

TOM

I understand sir. It's just, I got
a family to feed.

ALEC

The truth is, Tom... well, the
truth is, I've had to use the last
of our money to pay the debts -
otherwise, there is no factory.

(beat)

Look, if you could - if all you
guys could just bear with me, with
us. It will all get sorted.

TOM

I know you're good for it, sir.
Lemme have a word with the boys.

He exits.

From the window of his office, Alec looks down on the factory
floor as Tom speaks to the other workers, explaining the
situation. It's clear they are not too happy. They glance up
at Alec.

53

EXT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY

53

Eli and Zooey exit the house.

Opposite the house is CHELSEA GARDENS, a beautiful gated
square comprised of exotic flowers.

Eli spots the gate to the garden. Zooey clocks this.

ZOOEY

It's Chelsea Gardens. Do you want
to go inside?

He nods.

54

EXT. CHELSEA GARDENS - DAY

54

They enter the large square, which is like paradise, with
flowers, running water, a bridge. Someone has gone to an
awful lot of trouble to make the gardens so beautiful.

ZOOEY

I used to come here a lot.

(CONTINUED)

36.

54

CONTINUED:

54

ELI
It's beautiful.

ZOOEY
Isn't it?

Zooey spots a homeless man [MR POTTS] sat on a bench. They walk past him.

POTTS
Morning to you both.

ELI
Morning.

They walk along the path and stand on the bridge overlooking the small river beneath them.

Potts appears behind them. Zooey jumps with a fright.

POTTS
Lovely gardens they are. I could
sit here for days.
(beat)
Potts is the name.

ELI
That's a funny name.

POTTS
I'm a funny man, once you get to
know me.

ELI
I'm Eli. This is Zooey.

Zooey is clearly not comfortable talking to a homeless man.

ZOOEY
Nice to meet you Mr Potts. We
should probably be on our way.

They start to walk. Potts follows.

POTTS
They spend hours working on the
flowers. After dark, when the
gates are closed and no one is
allowed in. I've seen em with my
own eyes. It's like a little party.
Crafty little things they are too.

ZOOEY
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

37.

54

CONTINUED:

54

POTTS

He knows. Tell em, young man.

ELI

Do you mean... the fairies?

POTTS

See. The fairies. You do believe,
don't you?

Zooey laughs.

ZOOEY

(playing along)

In Peter Pan, yes.

POTTS

I've seen you around.

ZOOEY

Yes, we live just there.

POTTS

That's it. You couldn't spare an
old man a few bob now could you?

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a few coins.

POTTS (CONT'D)

15 May, 2007.

ZOOEY

That's when -

POTTS

Yes, I know.

ZOOEY

How... how did you know that?

POTTS

Lots of comings and goings. Seen
you around.

(he smiles)

Well, suppose I'll leave you both
to it. Enjoy your day.

They walk on.

ZOOEY

Strange man...

CUT TO:

38.

55 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY**

55

Eli stands outside the closed door in the hallway.

Zooey walks past.

 ELI
What's in here?

 ZOOEY
There? That's a room we don't go
into.

 ELI
Why not?

 ZOOEY
One day I'll tell you everything.
How about we go get some ice cream,

CUT TO:

56 **INT. BOOK STORE - DAY**

56

Eli and Zooey enter the book store. Diane, wearing another
very kooky outfit, stands behind the counter.

 DIANE
What an unexpected surprise!

 ZOOEY
Mom... there's someone I'd like you
to meet...

 ZOOEY (CONT'D)
This is Eli.

 DIANE
Well hello there young man.

 ELI
Hello.

 DIANE
Zooey told me all about you.

 ELI
Did she tell you that my favorite
artist is Chagall?

 DIANE
That she failed to mention.

(CONTINUED)

39.

56

CONTINUED:

56

ELI

Did she tell you that I prefer a
MAC to a PC?

DIANE

No, not that either.

ELI

So... I guess she didn't tell you
everything, then.

DIANE

No, not everything!

Zooey's phone rings. She answers it.

ZOOEY

It's Alec...

She goes to one side.

ELI

Nice dress.

DIANE

Finally, a man of distinguished
taste.

ELI

The stitching is superb.

DIANE

That's because I did it myself.

ELI

Impressive.

Zooey returns.

DIANE

Everything alright?

ZOOEY

No. Problem down at the factory.

*

Diane sneers.

*

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

*

(picking up on Diane's
reaction)

*

Thanks for your support... as
usual.

*

*

*

DIANE

*

I didn't say anything.

*

(CONTINUED)

40.

56

CONTINUED:

56

ZOOEY
You didn't have to.
(beat)
Come on Eli.

*
*
*
*

Eli waves.

*

57

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

57

Alec is on the factory floor. Most of the employees have walked out.

Alec looks desperate.

ALEC
Please, chaps, just a little more
faith. All I ask is that you stick
with me.

Tom, his faithful old employee, is the last to go.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Tom... please...

Tom looks sheepish.

TOM
Sorry, Sir. I tried to speak to
'em, I did.

ALEC
And what about you? You'll stay,
won't you?

TOM
I'll stay, Sir. I'll stay a bit
longer.

Tom exits.

Zooey and Eli walk in as the men are leaving.

ZOOEY
What's going on?

ALEC
They're gone?

ZOOEY
Who's gone?

ALEC
Apart from Tom... everyone. My
father would roll in his grave if
he could see me now.

(CONTINUED)

41.

57

CONTINUED:

57

ZOOEY
Don't say that.

ALEC
Why? It's true. The business he
started 50 years ago has taken me
just two years to burn to the
ground. I can't compete with the
big boys. We are in debt up to our
eyeballs.

*
*
*
*

Eli has wondered off and is playing with a remote helicopter.

ZOOEY
We can borrow some more money. We
could take equity out of the house.

ALEC
There is no more equity in the
house, Zooey.

ZOOEY
You can speak to the bank. They'll
understand.

ALEC
Banks don't just lend money if you
don't have security.

Eli appears.

ELI
This helicopter sucks. It only goes
up and down.

ZOOEY
Not now, Eli.

ELI
I'm just saying, helicopters are
supposed to go up, down and
sideways.

ALEC
Basically it's over.

ELI
I'll just wait over here, shall I?

ALEC
There is one other option.

ZOOEY
What?

(CONTINUED)

42.

57

CONTINUED:

57

ALEC

We sell the business. I've had an offer from John Burns.

ZOOEY

You can't do that. You've worked too hard.

ALEC

What else can we do?

(beat)

Go home. I'll catch up with you later.

58

EXT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

58

Zooey and Eli walk out.

ELI

Who needs a hug?

She smiles through her tears and they hug.

ELI (CONT'D)

Do you know what I say?

ZOOEY

What?

ELI

Better out than in.

59

INT. TOY COMPANY - CONTINUOUS

59

Alec looks over the empty floor of his warehouse.

He goes over to Tom, who is stacking shelves.

ALEC

Why don't you go home to your family, Tom.

TOM

Are you sure, sir? I don't mind staying.

ALEC

It's fine, Tom. Hey, why don't you take a little time off.

TOM

Like how long?

(CONTINUED)

43.

59

CONTINUED:

59

ALEC
I wish I could say, Tom.

TOM
You call me if you need anything.

ALEC
I will. Thanks.

Tom exits.

Alec is left by himself.

60

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

60

Zooey and Eli sit on the sofa watching THE NEWS in their pyjamas. They are eating popcorn.

ELI
(referring to TV)
Tragic what's happening in the world today.

She smiles and lowers the volume on the TV.

ZOOEY
So tomorrow you're gonna start school, ok?

ELI
Can I ask you a question?

ZOOEY
Sure.

ELI
Do you still love him?

ZOOEY
Who?

ELI
Alec?

ZOOEY
Do I still love Alec? Yeah, I guess so. He's my soulmate. We've been together since school.

ELI
So what's the problem?

ZOOEY
What? Are you a psychiatrist now?

(CONTINUED)

44.

60

CONTINUED:

60

ELI
Sometimes it helps to talk to a
stranger.

ZOOEY
You're not a stranger.

ELI
You know what I mean.

Beat.

ZOOEY
I guess... I guess, we've forgotten
how to have fun. Our relationship
functions, at least on the surface,
but there are so many things that
have been broken since-

ELI
Since what?

ZOOEY
Are you sure you're only 7? Ok,
young man. Time for bed. We have
an early start tomorrow. First day
of school.

He gives her a hug.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)
I want you to know. You're a very
special little man.

She looks at him fondly.

ELI
You too.

61

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

61

Zooey gets out of her car and walks Eli to the school
entrance.

62

INT. SCHOOLROOM - DAY

62

Eli walks into a schoolroom full of children. They all turn
and look at him. He goes to an empty seat.

Zooey waves goodbye. The HEADMISTRESS stands with her.

HEADMISTRESS
Don't worry. He'll be fine.

45.

63 **EXT. SCHOOL - DAY**

63

Eli is sat with some children having lunch.

An Indian man approaches from an ESTATE car.

INDIAN MAN

Did someone order a taxi?

ELI

Ah, yes. That would be me. Excuse me gentlemen.

He gets up and walks to the taxi.

64 **EXT. TOY COMPANY - DAY**

64

Eli gives the taxi some money.

ELI

Ta.

He waves goodbye and stares up at the big toy factory.

He heads towards it.

65 **INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY**

65

Alec, asleep at his desk, wakes with a fright. A toy HELICOPTER has landed on his nose.

Eli is sitting at his desk controlling the toy.

ALEC

Holy cow! Eli, what are you doing?

ELI

Hi Dad. Playing with the helicopter. It really is good fun. But as I said before, with a little modification could be really cool.

ALEC

Great, thanks, but what are you doing here?

ELI

I thought you might need a hand.

ALEC

With what?

ELI

With work.

(CONTINUED)

46.

65

CONTINUED:

65

ALEC
No, I'm fine, thanks.

ELI
You don't look fine.

ALEC
I am, really.

ELI
If you call an empty factory fine,
then who am I to argue!

ALEC
Shouldn't you be at school or
something?

ELI
Or something... yes.

ALEC
Ok, come on. I'll drop you back.
And Eli... please call me Alec.

ELI
Yes sir.

ALEC
Just Alec will be fine.

66

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

66

Eli and Alec walk through the factory floor.

ELI
You do stock some great products.

ALEC
Thanks. I think so too. Check this
out - it's our best seller.

He grabs hold of a little mouse which he puts on the ground
and it starts to scuttle off by itself, hitting walls and
turning around.

ELI
Cool!

ALEC
I know!

ELI
So what's the problem?

(CONTINUED)

47.

66

CONTINUED:

66

ALEC

The problem, my little friend, is money, as it always is.

ELI

It's the root of all evil.

ALEC

You're telling me.

(beat)

I better call Zooney and let her know you're here.

67

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - EVENING

67

The door opens. Alec stands looking at her expectantly with Eli.

ZOOEY

(she is mad)

Eli. What the hell? You can't just order a taxi and leave school when you want?

ELI

Well how do you expect me to get around? Have you been on a London bus recently? Taxi is really the quickest and most efficient way.

ZOOEY

You know what I mean.

ELI

Sorry.

ZOOEY

Look. Just come in. Both of you.

ELI

You hungry Alec?

ALEC

Sure I guess.

ZOOEY

I haven't prepared anything.

The doorbell rings. They open it to a DELIVERY MAN.

DELIVERY MAN

Hi. Someone order Chinese?

They turn and look at Eli.

(CONTINUED)

48.

67

CONTINUED:

67

ELI

What? Haven't you ever had a
craving for crispy duck?

CUT TO:

68

INT. MORRISON HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

68

Zooey, Alec and Eli are sat around the table eating CRISPY
DUCK rolled in pancakes.

ELI

Who would have thought your common
duck, of all things, could taste so
good? Stick it in a pancake, add
some spring onion and Hoi Sin
sauce, and Bob's your Uncle!

ZOOEY

Eli, next time, please ask me...

ELI

Yes, ok. Sorry. But now that
you're here, you gotta admit, how
good is this crispy duck?

ALEC

It is pretty good.

She gives him a look.

ALEC (CONT'D)

I'm just saying... he's got a
point. As far as crispy duck
goes... it's pretty good, no?

He looks at her. She finally relaxes a bit.

ZOOEY

It is pretty good, yes.

(beat)

How's it going? You didn't do
anything stupid, did you?

ALEC

No. Look, can we talk about this
later?

ELI

Exactly, you can talk your hearts
out later.

(beat)

Now pass me some of that crispy
shredded beef.

(CONTINUED)

49.

68

CONTINUED:

68

Alec passes the beef.

CUT TO:

69

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

69

Eli is asleep on the sofa with the TV on.

Zooey puts a blanket on top of him.

Alec is washing up.

ALEC

The kid knows how to order a good
Chinese, I'll give him that.
Perhaps I can spend more time with
him...

(beat)

Look, I'll find a way to get out of
this hole... I will.

ZOOEY

We can't live on the bookstore.

ALEC

I know.

ZOOEY

We've both had some unexpected
turns of events, here. We've been
through worse. We can make it
through this.

ALEC

I know.

(beat)

I'm gonna take the dog out for some
air.

70

EXT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

70

Alec walks the dog down the road. POTTS can be seen watching
him from the gardens.

DISSOLVE TO:

71

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

71

All is quiet. Eli appears at the bottom of the stairs in his
dressing gown and quietly opens the door.

Eli walks into the garden.

Mr Potts lays on a bench, sleeping. Eli taps him on the shoulder.

ELI

Wake up.

POTTS

(waking with a fright)

Phwah! You scared the bejesus out of me!

ELI

Sorry. Mind if I sit down?

POTTS

Be my guest.

ELI

How are you this evening, Mr Potts?

POTTS

I've been better. I was asleep, until you woke me.

ELI

Sorry. Hey, look on the bright side, at least you don't have to go to school everyday. I mean, what's up with that?

POTTS

You might learn a thing or two.

(beat)

How are you settling in to your new home?

ELI

They're a lovely couple. He's a little hard work, but I am sure he'll soften eventually.

POTTS

These things take time.

ELI

I don't have forever, Mr Potts.

POTTS

You can't rush these things. Everyone's different, you know.

51.

72

CONTINUED:

72

ELI

I guess.

CUT TO:

73

INT. BANK - DAY

73

Alec sits behind a desk speaking to a bank manager.

BANK MANAGER

I'm sorry. You're already highly over-extended. Without any more security, there's not much more we can do, Mr Morrison.

Alec looks dejected. He sees the pictures of the children on the Bank Manager's desk.

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)

My kids.

The manager looks momentarily sympathetic.

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)

Love em to bits but they drive you to distraction, huh?

(beat)

Now it appears you have another payment coming up shortly. You are going to be able to meet your financial commitments, isn't that right Mr Morrison?

(beat)

Because the bank is coming down quite hard these days on customers that can't meet their monthly commitments. I hate to remind you that your property can be repossessed if you can't keep up on-

ALEC

It'll be fine.

BANK MANAGER

Oh yes? Because a moment ago you were applying for another loan-

ALEC

It'll be fine.

He gets up exits.

(CONTINUED)

52.

73

CONTINUED:

73

BANK MANAGER

Ooh... can I have that pen back,
please?

Alec throws the pen back onto the desk.

74

INT. HOUSEMART OFFICE - DAY

74

*

Alec is seated in the lobby of HOUSEMART. The receptionist
notices him.

*
*

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

*

ALEC

I'm supposed to be meeting someone
here.

*
*
*

She nods. Her phone rings.

*

RECEPTIONIST

Housemart, how may I direct your
call?

*
*
*

An office worker emerges from the glass door. Alec takes
this opportunity to sneak into the offices while the
receptionist is distracted.

*
*
*

75

INT. MR CARTER'S OFFICE - DAY

75

Alec finds Mr Carter on the move and desperately tries to
keep up with him.

*
*

ALEC

Oh, hi, Mr Carter-

*
*

MR CARTER

Who are you?

*
*

ALEC

Alec Morrison? Morrison Toys?

*
*

MR CARTER

See my secretary. She'll book you
in.

*
*
*

ALEC

Yes, see, thing is, I couldn't get
an appointment-

*
*
*

MR CARTER

That's because I'm very busy.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

53.

75

CONTINUED:

75

ALEC

-and I just wanted to speak to you
about stocking some of my toys.

*
*
*

MR CARTER

Listen I have a conference
momentarily so you'll have to make
it quick.

*

ALEC

I know you used to stock my
father's line, back in the day-

*
*

MR CARTER

That's when that sort of thing was
popular... times have changed young
man...

*
*
*
*

MR CARTER (CONT'D)

Now we ship everything in from
abroad. The prices are lower and we
get everything we need. Besides,
our toy section is small. We can
only afford to stock the major
brands.

*
*

ALEC

I'm just asking if you could take a
look at our catalogue.

Mr Carter gets up and gathers some files.

MR CARTER

Listen, old chum. I've had to fire
20% of our workforce. It comes
down to bottom line and to product.
Give us something the consumers
want, at the right price, that'll
make money, and people like me will
stock it for you.

ALEC

But-

Mr Carter begins walking down the hall, leaving Alec to
follow.

MR CARTER

Product and price! I really must
go.

ALEC

But-

And with that, he is gone.

Alec is at the gravestone of his father. After some time, he speaks to the gravestone.

ALEC

Hi dad. It's been a while since I've come to see you. The truth is... I've messed up. If you were here, I know exactly what you'd say.

POTTS

What would he say?

Alec turns, startled, to see Mr Potts standing behind him, clearing some dead flowers from some headstones.

ALEC

Gosh, you startled me.

POTTS

Sorry.

ALEC

Who are you?

POTTS

Potts is the name. I just tend to some of the headstones is all. Make sure they're nice and tidy.

ALEC

I see.

POTTS

So?

ALEC

So?

POTTS

What would he say?

ALEC

I'm sorry. I thought I was alone.

POTTS

I can go if you like-

Potts turns to go. Alec has second thoughts.

55.

76

CONTINUED:

76

ALEC

He'd say, "Alec, I built this company from scratch, with not a penny to my name. Don't let me down, boy."

POTTS

And... you let him down?

Alec nods.

POTTS (CONT'D)

You know, graves do funny things to people. You'd think people are a bunch of nutters, talking to the dead.

(beat)

See this rose bush? You wouldn't think something this beautiful could grow from a grave.

ALEC

I don't follow.

POTTS

There's an old expression. What is it? Oh yes, "up from the ashes, grow the roses of success."

(beat)

Mind how you go now.

Potts walks on, leaving Alec with his thoughts.

77

INT. SQUASH COURT - DAY

77

Alec plays squash with his friend JIM.

ALEC

So when I came round, he had also ordered Chinese food. And not just any Chinese food. I mean, the crispy duck was really really good. Probably the best I ever tasted-

JIM

Sounds like someone I'd like to hang out with.

ALEC

The point is, I can't get used to this whole 'instant family' thing.

JIM

And how are things with you and Zooey?

(CONTINUED)

56.

77

CONTINUED:

77

ALEC

We have some other big problems
right now.

JIM

Like what?

78

INT. CAFE - DAY

78

Zooey is having coffee with Sarah, Jim's other half.

ZOOEY

Money. We're barely skating by.
Amazing how much friction it
causes.

SARAH

Money and sex. The two most common
arguments in marriage.

(beat)

You guys used to be all over each
other.

ZOOEY

Yes, in school maybe. You wouldn't
know it by looking at him, but he
was striker on the football team.
All the girls were in love with
him. But we just clicked. On our
first date he took me
rollerskating.

*

79

INT. SQUASH COURT - DAY

79

Alec and Jim have finished their game, and are walking out of
the court.

ALEC

That was back in the days when
rollerskates had 4 wheels. I
remember she spent most of the time
on the ground.

80

INT. CAFE - DAY

80

As before.

ZOOEY

He spent most of the time on the
ground. Couldn't skate to save his
life.

(beat)

But wow was he-

57.

81 **INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

81

Alec and Jim are getting dressed.

ALEC

-gorgeous. We were so in love.

JIM

Lucky for you. Sounds like you two
used to have a lot of fun together.

ALEC

Yeah, we did.

82 **INT. CAFE - DAY**

82

As before.

ZOOEY

We did.

She thinks back fondly.

83 **INT. BOOK STORE - DAY**

83

Alec enters. Zooey is seeing to a customer.

She looks up.

ALEC

Hey.

ZOOEY

Hey. What are you doing here?

ALEC

I was just thinking... maybe Eli
can come hang out with me a little
bit?

She smiles.

ZOOEY

I'm sure he'd like that.

84 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT**

84

Eli gets into bed. He holds a stuffed dinosaur.

Zooey walks in. She spots the dinosaur and looks troubled.

(CONTINUED)

58.

84

CONTINUED:

84

ZOOEY

Eli, where did you get that?

ELI

From the room next door.

She grabs if from him and holds him firmly by the shoulders.

ZOOEY

(tersely)

You must NEVER go in that room.

ELI

But I just thought-

ZOOEY

NEVER. Do you understand?

85

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

85

Alec is sitting behind the desk looking at some books.

Eli sits on the floor - he has taken apart the helicopter and is in the midst of putting it back together.

He screws in the last piece.

ELI

There. That should do it.

He starts up the helicopter. It is now modified to fly in ALL DIRECTIONS.

ALEC

How'd you do that?

ELI

Wasn't hard. It actually had the capacity to fly in all directions but the switch on the circuit board had been disabled. Must be a European modification.

ALEC

(baffled)

Right.

ELI

Whatdya doing?

ALEC

Trying to figure a way out of this mess.

Eli is looking at a FRAMED MAP of legoland on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

59.

85

CONTINUED:

85

ELI
What's this?

ALEC
Legoland.

ELI
You mean, there's a whole land made
of lego?

ALEC
Yup. Never found time to go there.
But one day.
(beat)
Hey, do you want to pick out a toy
from the warehouse?

*

ELI
Really?

ALEC
Sure. Anything you want.

86

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

86

Alec and Eli are walking down the aisles of the warehouse
looking at toys.

ALEC
These are old fashioned wooden
toys. They used to be really
popular at one time. Now I'd have
to pay someone to take them off my
hands.

ELI
The craftsmanship is beautiful.

ALEC
Yes, I agree, exactly! Kids want
electronic shit- I mean stuff.
Sure I can supply that - but so can
everyone. I can't buy in the
quantities from abroad that
everyone else can.

ELI
Yeah that rubbish just breaks so
quickly.

ALEC
I know!

(CONTINUED)

60.

86

CONTINUED:

86

ELI

Hey, Alec, we should all go out
sometime. That's what families do,
right? They go out... together.

ALEC

Look, right now I'm in kind of a
funny head space.

ELI

I understand.

Eli stops at box with RUSSIAN NESTED DOLLS.

ELI (CONT'D)

Wow. That's beautiful.

ALEC

The Russian dolls?

Alec takes one off the shelf and opens it up.

ALEC (CONT'D)

And there's 5 more inside.

He hands him the RUSSIAN DOLLS.

ALEC (CONT'D)

All yours.

Eli smiles.

87

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY

87

Eli walks into the kitchen with a backpack.

ZOOEY

Hey, where are you going?

ELI

Didn't Alec tell you? We have to
go pick him up from work. We have
a busy day ahead.

88

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

88

Alec has fallen asleep at his desk. Eli is standing beside
him staring into his face.

ALEC

(jumping with a fright)
Wah!

(CONTINUED)

61.

88

CONTINUED:

88

ELI

Hey, Alec.

ALEC

Hey.

(beat)

How long have you been there?

ELI

Just a couple of minutes. You should wash up. We have a very busy day ahead of us, a very busy day indeed?

ALEC

We do? But I'm at work.

ELI

Yes, I can see that. You look very busy.

ALEC

Very funny.

ZOOEY

Ah... clearly you know nothing about this?

ALEC

About what?

ELI

Now we should really get going if we want to beat the traffic.

ZOOEY

Eli... what's going on?!

CUT TO:

89

INT. CAR - DAY

89

Eli rides in the back of the car holding a GPS. Zooley and Alec in front.

ZOOEY

Sorry, Alec. Eli said you had arranged this.

ALEC

Hey look. It's fine.

ELI

Think of it as inspiration.

(CONTINUED)

62.

89

CONTINUED:

89

ALEC

For what?

ELI

For work? Think of this as field research. You're in the kid business. You need to know about kids. What we like.

(beat)

ALEC

Eli, my inspiration dried up years ago. I am nothing but an empty well.

ELI

Nonsense. Your well has just hit a drought. Eventually it will rain again. Hey, we're almost there.

ZOOEY

Where are we going?

They enter the main road to LEGOLAND.

ALEC

You cannot be serious?

ELI

Oh I am. Deadly.

90

EXT. LEGOLAND - DAY

90

A very small train ride for toddlers.

ELI

We'll start off with something gentle.

ALEC

This is crazy. Can't you go on it by yourself?

ELI

In case you hadn't noticed... I'm 7. It would behoove you to accompany me.

ALEC

We're too big for this ride.

ELI

In your mind, maybe. But not in here -

(CONTINUED)

63.

90

CONTINUED:

90

He taps his heart.

They board the toddler train. A 5 year old girl looks at Alec.

LITTLE GIRL

You're too big for this train.

ALEC

That's what I said. But he wouldn't listen.

They go round and round in a circle. Clearly, Zooey and Alec are the biggest people on the ride and look quite ridiculous.

Eli holds his arms in the air.

ELI

Put your arms in the air.

They are only going about 5 miles an hour.

Zooey raises her hands.

ELI (CONT'D)

Come on. Where's your sense of fun?

ZOOEY

Yeah, where's your sense of fun?

Reluctantly, Alec raises his arms as if on a big rollercoaster. A small smile creeps across his face.

91

EXT. LEGOLAND - LATER

91

The LEGO CARS.

They are each sat in a VERY SMALL lego car. Again, Alec and Zooey look ridiculous and far too large for the vehicles.

ELI

Any ideas yet?

ALEC

Ideas? How can I come up with ideas. I'm about to throw up from going around in a circle 300 times.

ELI

Well, this ride should fix that. Ready... steady... go!

The cars set off at the amazing pace of 5 mph.

(CONTINUED)

64.

91

CONTINUED:

91

Alec begins to really enjoy himself but is frustrated by the speed of the car.

Eli gets to the end of the track first.

ELI (CONT'D)

Woo-hoo! Victorious.

ALEC

That's not fair. You had a much faster car than me.

ZOOEY

Don't be a sore loser, Alec.

ALEC

What? It's true.

They walk out. A worker hands Eli a 'faux' driving license.

WORKER

Congratulations young man. Here is your driving license.

ELI

Woah. Thanks.

ZOOEY

Look at that! It's got your picture and everything!

ALEC

What about me?

WORKER

(reluctantly)

Here you are sir.

ALEC

And my wife.

WORKER

It's really meant for toddlers.

ZOOEY

Really, it's not necessary.

ALEC

No you deserve it. You passed your test too.

ZOOEY

I suppose so.

Again, reluctantly she hands Zoey a driving license.

(CONTINUED)

65.

91 CONTINUED:

91

ELI
(aside to Alec)
She's really great.

ALEC
(looks at Zooey fondly)
Yeah... she is, isn't she?

CUT TO:

92 MONTAGE OF ALEC, ZOOEY, ELI

92

On the water ride sliding down a slide.
Dressed as pirates having a sword fight.
Various kiddie rides. Smiles plastered on their faces.

93 INT. ICE CREAM PARLOUR - NIGHT

93

It is a DIY ice cream parlour where ANYTHING GOES!

Eli, Alec and Zooey are at the counter filling their bowls
with ice cream.

Zooey puts in one small scoop.

ELI
More than that, come on.

She gets a little more.

ELI (CONT'D)
What? Are you on a diet? Go crazy!
Like this.

He grabs the scooper and OVERLOADS her bowl.

ELI (CONT'D)
Alec, show this woman how it's
done. Give her some whipped cream.

Alec takes the pressurized can and gives her a little whipped
cream.

ELI (CONT'D)
What do you call that?

ALEC
What?

(CONTINUED)

66.

93

CONTINUED:

93

ELI
I said what do you call that?! You
can never have enough whipped
cream!

Alec goes crazy with the whipped cream.

ELI (CONT'D)
That's more like it!

They all begin to smile.

ZOOEY
This is fun.

ALEC
This *is* fun.

A moment between them.

ZOOEY
You know... for a while there I
forgot all about-

ALEC
I know.

CUT TO:

94

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOUR - LATER

94

They are all sat at the table with the most ENORMOUS bowls of
ice cream, covered with every possible assortment of
chocolate, sprinkles, marshmallows, cherries, syrup etc.

Mouths covered with chocolate, and noses dirtied with whipped
cream. Most importantly, they are having FUN.

ELI
If you're not too tired, there's
one more place I think we should
go.

95

INT. ICE RINK - NIGHT

95

They are at a large indoor ice rink.

Zooey and Alec fit their skates.

ZOOEY
I haven't skated for years.

ALEC
How hard can it be?

(CONTINUED)

67.

95

CONTINUED:

95

Alec gets on the ice and immediately slips and falls. Zooey cracks up laughing.

She goes out on the ice and helps to pick him up but he falls again.

Eli races off. Zooey takes to the ice like a pro.

ZOOEY

It's like riding a bicycle. Still got it!

"WHITE CHRISTMAS" starts playing over the speakers.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

I love this song.

She helps him up. They look in each other's eyes. A spark of what used to be - the spark of two people who were very much in love at one time, but perhaps just lost their way.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

Here, follow my lead.

She skates backwards leading Alec.

It starts snowing. It's magical.

They gaze in each other's eyes.

96

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

96

Alec walks past the CLOSED ROOM.

Eli appears at the door holding a book.

ELI

I hear this book is particularly good.

97

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

97

Alec reads from the book and finishes.

ELI

That WAS a good book.

ALEC

Sure was. Haven't read that for, well, for a couple of years.

Eli looks out the window.

(CONTINUED)

68.

97

CONTINUED:

97

ELI
Would you look at that?

ALEC
What is it?

ELI
A full moon. Whatdya know?
Beautiful, isn't it?

ALEC
I had fun tonight. Thank you.

ELI
Having fun's not so hard, is it?

ALEC
You can say that again.
(beat)
You're not a bad kid.

ELI
Not once you get to know me.
You're not such a bad father.

ALEC
Yeah, about that. You see, Zooey
and I-

ELI
- are soul mates. You've been
together since school.

ALEC
Yes, that's right. We met when we
were 16. Isn't that crazy? Not
many people I know have been
together that long. God, I was so
in love with her.

ELI
She still loves you very much.

ALEC
Did she say that?

ELI
She didn't have to.

98

INT. MORRISON HOUSE, LOUNGE - NIGHT

98

Zooey is looking at the full moon. Alec appears behind her.

(CONTINUED)

69.

98

CONTINUED:

98

ZOOEY
Have you seen that?

ALEC
The moon?

ZOOEY
Yeah. Beautiful.

ALEC
Look, I'm sorry about-
She puts a finger to his lips.

ZOOEY
Shhh. Not tonight.
(beat)
Not tonight.

She kisses him gently.

From the staircase, ELI appears and watches over them. He smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

99

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - MORNING

99

A knock on the door. Too late, Eli has walked straight into Zooey's bedroom carrying a tray.

Alec is in bed with Zooey. He pulls up the sheets covering his bare chest.

ELI
Who's for coffee and croissants?

ALEC
Woah there. What time is it?

ELI
Time to wake up and smell the coffee. And in case you're wondering - it's Colombian Arabicas. Ummm, smells lovely, doesn't it? Why is it that coffee smells so much nicer than it tastes. It's like herbal tea. Smells great. Has no taste. What's that about?

ZOOEY
Eli... that's very, very sweet of you to prepare breakfast for us-

(CONTINUED)

70.

99

CONTINUED:

99

ELI
Croissant?

ZOOEY
(hesitantly)
Sure.
(beat)
I was saying, it's very sweet, but
you know... we just woke up-

ELI
Oh. Oh! Of course. How
indiscreet of me. I'm so sorry.
I'll just wait in my room.

He leaves the room.

100

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

100

Eli sits at the piano looking at the sheet music. He plays
Chopin's Prelude in E Minor.

Zooey and Alec comes downstairs. They stand and listen to Eli
play quite beautifully.

Zooey sits next to Eli on the bench.

ELI
It's Chopin. The preludes are
particularly melodic.

ZOOEY
Where did you learn to play like
that?

ELI
At the home.

ZOOEY
It's beautiful.
(she starts to tear up)
Alec was teaching our son to play.

ELI
What son?

101

INT. MORRISON HOUSE, LOUNGE - DAY

101

Zooey pulls a picture album from a shelf. She dusts it off.

(CONTINUED)

71.

101

CONTINUED:

101

She sits next to Eli on the sofa and puts the album on her lap. She opens the album to a big picture of SAMUEL MORRISON, a grinning 5 year old boy.

She takes a big breath.

ZOOEY

This was our son. His name was Samuel Christopher Morrison. He would have been about your age now.

She turns the pages.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

This is his first football game. Samuel loved football... Let's see... he also liked chocolate ice cream with coloured sprinkles. He loved sandpits and always took off his shoes whenever he saw sand. He was my shining light. My little angel. He was my whole world.

*

Alec watches from the kitchen counter.

ELI

What happened to him?

ALEC

Let's go for a drive.

Zooey looks up at Alec.

102

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

102

Alec, Zooey and Eli drive into the cemetery.

103

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

103

Zooey & Alec lead Eli by the hands through the graves. Eli holds a stuffed dinosaur.

They stop on a grave marked SAMUEL CHRISTOPHER MORRISON.

ZOOEY

We don't talk about him much. It's just too painful. He was 5 when it happened. Since then, things changed for us.

Alec comforts her.

He goes down to Eli's level and looks at the stuffed dinosaur.

(CONTINUED)

72.

103 CONTINUED:

103

ALEC

Samuel loved animals. He used to sleep with this dinosaur every night.

(beat)

I still wake up and think he's going to be there...

(he takes a deep inhale of breath)

The love you feel for a child is stronger than any other love you will ever experience in your life. He's gone. And there is a hole in my heart so big, it feels like it will never get healed.

Alec places the dinosaur on the gravestone. Mr Potts watches from a distance.

CUT TO:

104 INT. MORRISON HOUSE, HALLWAY - DAY

104

Zooey stands outside the ALWAYS CLOSED DOOR with Eli.

A moment of hesitation - should they enter or not.

Zooey opens the door and switches the light on.

CUT TO:

105 INT. MORRISON HOUSE, SAMUEL'S OLD ROOM - DAY

105

They walk inside the room.

It is exactly as it was a couple of years ago.

Toys, pictures of Samuel, the family, the bedspread, a football - all intact.

ELI

What happened?

ZOOEY

It was an accident. A couple of years ago.

Zooey looks outside the window.

From her point of view we SEE her memory:

A child [SAMUEL] in the road walking down the road with Zooey. He is bouncing a ball.

(CONTINUED)

73.

105

CONTINUED:

105

A CAR heading down the road.

The ball bounces into the road and the child runs after it.

The car and the child vanish as the images dissolve back into the empty street.

Back in the present day. Zooey turns back to face Eli.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

It just happened. And our lives
have never really been the same
since. You go to bed at night and
try to wake up normal, but there's
not a day that goes by that I don't
think about him.

Alec stands just outside the door watching. He has tears in his eyes.

106

EXT. CHELSEA GARDENS - NIGHT

106

Alec sits on a bench by himself. He spots some strange swirling lights glowing near the bushes. He heads towards them.

Mr Potts is sitting on a bench admiring the lights. They are fireflies.

POTTS

Beautiful aren't they?

ALEC

What are they?

POTTS

Fairies.

ALEC

You mean fireflies.

POTTS

Depends on your point of view.

ALEC

Hey, don't I know you?

MR POTTS

We met at the graveyard. Potts is the name.

ALEC

Gosh, you just seem to be everywhere. You're not following me, are you?

(CONTINUED)

74.

106

CONTINUED:

106

MR POTTS

I might be.

ALEC

Right...

(not sure how to respond)

Well, nice to formally meet you, I suppose, Mr Potts. I'm Alec.

MR POTTS

Nice to meet you, Alec. So what is it you do, sir?

ALEC

At the moment, not much of anything.

(beat)

Toys, mainly.

MR POTTS

Toys? I love toys.

ALEC

Yeah, me too. But it's tough times, Mr Potts.

MR POTTS

What seems to be the problem?

Alec is reluctant to open up.

MR POTTS (CONT'D)

Sometimes it helps to talk to a stranger, ya know?

Alec takes a moment, and then opens up.

ALEC

It just wasn't supposed to be this way.

MR POTTS

Are you a religious man, Mr Morrison?

ALEC

Perhaps once I was. But not anymore.

MR POTTS

Why not?

ALEC

How can I be? How can I believe in a God that destroys lives?

(CONTINUED)

75.

106

CONTINUED:

106

MR POTTS

Maybe it's like a test.

ALEC

Well, it's a cruel test.

MR POTTS

For what it's worth, here's what I know. We, and by we, I mean humans... for some reason we can't let go of the past. I'm not saying there's no place for memories. What I'm saying is that you can't live today in the past, because then your future will look like it did yesterday. You can't live in the future either, because then today will pass you by. The only way to be truly happy is to connect with the present. Connect with the moment.

Alec looks at the swirling lights of fireflies as they fly up into the sky above them.

107

INT. MORRISON HOUSE - EVENING

107

Alec, Zooey and Eli sit around the dinner table. Diane, Zooey's mother, sits with them. Eli is playing with the RUSSIAN DOLLS that Alec gave him.

ZOOEY

How was it mom?

DIANE

Delicious as usual, but the beef was a little overcooked.

Zooey rolls her eyes to Alec.

ZOOEY

Glad you approved.

ELI

(to Alec)

So you met Mr Potts then?

DIANE

Who's Mr Potts?

ELI

Potts. In the gardens.

(CONTINUED)

76.

107

CONTINUED:

107

ALEC

Oh, yes Potts. Second time
actually.

ZOOEY

What were you talking about?

ALEC

Life, I guess. He's a curious one,
he is. Can't figure him out.

Eli unstacks the RUSSIAN DOLLS.

ELI

He's a mystery. You never can tell
what's going on inside someone's
head.

ALEC

Exactly. And I'll bet what's in
his head is a few short of a box of
marbles. A mystery indeed.

Alec gets lost in thought for a second as he stares at the
RUSSIAN DOLLS.

ZOOEY

You ok?

A spark of inspiration.

ALEC

Oh my God.

ZOOEY

What is it?

ALEC

(surprised by himself)
Russian dolls. Eli... you're a
genius.

ELI

I always thought so, but thanks for
the validation.

ALEC

I have an idea!

Alec jumps up from the table.

108

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

108

Zooey and Diane are doing the dishes.

(CONTINUED)

77.

108

CONTINUED:

108

DIANE

You know, you can't survive on just the bookstore.

ZOOEY

He's trying, ok, mom? He works hard.

DIANE

I'm just saying, what will you do when your savings run out? He should find a decent job.

ZOOEY

Alec's job is decent. He built that company up to what it is today. It's not his fault that the world's economy has collapsed.

She throws the dish towel down in annoyance.

ZOOEY (CONT'D)

And the beef was not overcooked.

109

INT. LOUNGE - EVENING

109

Alec opens the front door for his mother-in-law.

ALEC

Goodnight Diane.

DIANE

(frosty)

Goodnight.

Zooey sits in the other room, annoyed, as her mother leaves.

110

INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY

110

Alec sits at his desk drawing some sketches. Eli plays with some toys.

He crumbles the paper up and throws it behind him.

He starts over again.

He looks at the clock on the wall. Nearly 3.30.

He holds up another piece of paper to ELI and seems satisfied.

Eli holds two thumbs up.

78.

111 **INT. TOY COMPANY - LATER** 111

Alec is busy in the factory floor putting things together.

He measures.

He saws some wood.

He sands.

He paints.

He looks at his drawings.

He cuts more wood.

He smiles, pleased with himself.

ALEC
(to Eli)
Put those toys in here.

Eli places 5 WOODEN TOYS in the box.

112 **INT. TOY COMPANY - LATER** 112

Alec is on the phone. Eli is on the sofa.

ALEC
Mr Burns please? Well could you
please tell him to check his email.
It's very important.

CUT TO:

On the phone later:

ALEC (CONT'D)
Mr Matsuhiko? Yes, I'm arranging a
presentation, I'd love for you to
come.

CUT TO:

On phone a third time:

ALEC (CONT'D)
Mr Bugazzi. How are the kids?
Good, great.

113 **INT. TOY COMPANY - LATER** 113

Alec and Eli are both dressed in suits.

(CONTINUED)

79.

113 CONTINUED:

113

ALEC

Ok, now you sure you've got it all down?

ELI

Got it. Everything. Don't worry.

ALEC

You look good, little man. Let's do this.

114 **EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY**

114

Eli and Alec look up at the sky scraper leaning before them. A man approaches them. It is TOM, the employee from Alec's company.

He shakes hands with them both.

ALEC

Hi Tom. Thanks for helping us.
Let me fill you in...

They walk towards the building.

115 **INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY**

115

A group of 12 suited men sit around a conference table.

Eli walks in. Tom and Alec are waiting outside the room.

ELI

Gentlemen, good morning.

JOHN BURNS

Who are you? Where's Alec?

ELI

Mr Morrison sends his apologies. He is unable to attend. I am his proxy.

JOHN BURNS

His proxy?

ELI

We met not long ago? Yes, I can speak freely on his behalf and on behalf of the company.

JOHN BURNS

How old are you son?

(CONTINUED)

80.

115

CONTINUED:

115

ELI

Seven.

JOHN BURNS

Christ, I have underwear older than that.

ELI

Slightly more information than we all care to know, Mr Burns, but thank you. Are there any more questions?

All 12 of them raise their hands.

ELI (CONT'D)

-of a professional nature?

They lower their hands.

ELI (CONT'D)

Good, then let's get started.

Eli is holding court in front of the 12 suited strangers.

ELI (CONT'D)

First a thank you to Mr Burns for hosting this meeting in his office. It's great to see all the major buyers in one room at the same time. You all have a history. WE... all have a history. In fact, many of you have stocked our products for over 40 years.

(beat)

Now I recognise that we haven't always had the lowest wholesale prices. We can't compete with the Americans or any of the other big boys. We just don't have the margins.

(beat)

And we may not get all of the latest electronic rubbish from China. But what we do have is good old fashioned toys. Made on good old fashioned values.

MR BURNS

Good old fashioned prices would be better.

(beat)

Listen young man, we are all very busy. Do you, or do you not have a new product you wanted to show us?

(CONTINUED)

81.

115

CONTINUED:

115

ELI

I do.

Alec, just outside the door, nods to Tom, who walks in carrying a BOX covered in a cloth.

Tom places the covered object on the table.

ELI (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, we can't
reinvent the wheel. But we can
repackage it. I introduce to you...

He whips off the cloth.

ELI (CONT'D)

The 'mystery box'.

It is a large wooden box with a big black question mark painted on the front.

Silence.

MR BURNS

What's inside?

ELI

5 great toys. For the price of 3.

MR BURNS

Which ones?

ELI

It's a mystery.

MR BURNS

Yes, but I want to know which toys.

ELI

You can't.

MR BURNS

Why not?

ELI

Because it's a mystery.

MR BURNS

But then how would anyone know what
they were buying?

One of the other suits chimes in.

(CONTINUED)

82.

115 CONTINUED:

115

MAN IN SUIT

They wouldn't John. They're buying a mystery. Everyone likes a good mystery.

MR BURNS

I don't get it. It's just a wooden box with a large question mark on the front.

MAN IN SUIT

It's a bloody mystery, John. That's the whole point. Doesn't really matter what's inside. And that's half the fun - not knowing, and then finding out! Bloody genius. Genius!

116 INT. OFFICE BUILDING, OFFICE

116

Eli, as before.

The Japanese man says something in Japanese.

His translator translates,

TRANSLATOR

He say, well done. Nothing like this in Japan. He would like to place an order.

ELI

Certainly, but you know there's a minimum order-

TRANSLATOR

-for 20,000 units, initially.

ELI

-and that really exceeds it so that would be quite delightful.

MAN IN SUIT

You certainly have my order, young man. I'll match it.

More orders come in from around the table.

Finally, John Burns is left - the only one who hasn't ordered. The man in the suit looks at him.

MAN IN SUIT (CONT'D)

It's a mystery, John. A mystery.

He is wavering, and then...

(CONTINUED)

83.

116

CONTINUED:

116

MR BURNS

Oh very well. We'll match it.

Applause from around the table.

Tom and Eli share a smile.

Alec enters the boardroom.

MAN IN SUIT

And there's the man himself, right
on cue.

Alec takes a little bow.

MAN IN SUIT (CONT'D)

Well done, Alec, well done. And
sending in the kid - stroke of
genius. Genius!

They all file out and shake his hand one by one.

TOM

Thank you, sir... for securing our
future.

ALEC

Thanks, Tom.

Tom exits.

117

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

117

Alec and Eli stand in the lift going down.

ALEC

You got to admit it's pretty cool,
huh? Who would think you could get
so excited over just a box?

ELI

I know.

ALEC

And to think it's got all the same
toys inside! Well done. Thanks for
your help.

(beat)

I think this calls for a
celebration.

118

EXT. PARK - DAY

118

A BOUNCY CASTLE.

(CONTINUED)

84.

118 CONTINUED: 118

Shoes are placed on the ground.

Alec, Zooey and Eli jump on the bouncy castle. Higher and higher - almost in slow motion.

119 **EXT. FOUNTAINS - DAY** 119

Their shoes are off. They stare at the water gushing up from the pavement in short bursts.

They run barefoot through the bursts of water, laughing and giggling like children.

120 **EXT. PARK - DAY** 120

The sun is setting.

Alec, Zooey and Eli sit on a bench overlooking the sunset.

FADE TO BLACK.

121 **INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY** 121

Alec stands at the entrance welcoming back his employees with a hand shake. Eli stands next to him, shaking hands as well.

Happy faces all around.

CUT TO:

122 **INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY** 122

Production on the MYSTERY BOX as the workers get ahead assembling boxes.

Others are stencilling large QUESTION MARKS on the front panels of the boxes.

Others are filling boxes with toys.

123 **INT. TOY COMPANY, OFFICE - DAY** 123

Alec sits at his desk with the ACCOUNTS file open.

124 **INT. BANK - DAY** 124

Eli sits opposite the bank manager.

He pulls out a cheque and hands it to him. They shake hands.

(CONTINUED)

85.

124 CONTINUED: 124

Eli rejoins a laughing Alec by the door, leaving the baffled bank manager to puzzle over the cheque.

125 **EXT. CHELSEA GARDENS - NIGHT** 125

Eli has slipped out again in his robe and finds Mr Potts. He taps him on his shoulder. He wakes with a fright.

POTTS
(startled)
Always when I'm bleedin' well
sleeping!

ELI
Sorry. Mind if I join you?

Eli sits next to him.

POTTS
How's it going?

ELI
Really well. Alec has come round.
He has a good heart. And his
business seems to have picked up.

POTTS
Glad to hear it. There's one last
thing I think you should do...

126 **INT. TOY COMPANY - DAY** 126

Tom knocks on the door.

ALEC
Come in.

Tom enters.

ALEC (CONT'D)
Tom, what can I do for you?

TOM
Well, sir. Me and the boys just
got together and got you a little
something. Just to say thank you.

He hands Alec a bottle of DEWAR'S SINGLE MALT WHISKY.

ALEC
Dewar's single malt. My favorite.

(CONTINUED)

86.

126

CONTINUED:

126

TOM

Yes, sir. I know. Was your father's favorite too.

ALEC

Indeed. All about the-

TOM

Ageing, right?

ALEC

Right! Good oak barrels. Of course you can't always control the evaporation. You'll always lose about 2% of the angel's share-

*

The door opens and June enters.

JUNE

Mr Morrison - I have your wife on the phone. Something about your mother in law...

CUT TO:

127

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

127

Alec walks into the room.

Zoey is already there standing over her mother, who is attached to a drip. Her eyes are closed.

ALEC

I got here as fast as we could.

Zoey is in a state. A doctor stands nearby looking at a clipboard.

ZOOEY

It happened earlier this morning.

ALEC

Do we know what it is?

DOCTOR

We've done an MRI scan, and it appears to be what's called an intra-axial brain hemorrhage.

(beat)

She's gone into a coma, which is often the body's way of coping with this kind of trauma.

Alec pulls the Doctor aside.

(CONTINUED)

87.

127 CONTINUED:

127

ALEC
What does that mean?

DOCTOR
(he takes a deep breath)
Right now... it's 50/50.

He turns and goes.

128 INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN - DAY

128

Alec, Zooey and Eli sit at the hospital canteen in silence.

ZOOEY
Last time I saw her was at dinner.
We got in a stupid fight. I lost my
temper.

ALEC
If you could turn back the clock,
what would you do differently?

ZOOEY
I'd tell her, 'I'm sorry'. And I
love you.

ELI
It's not too late.

129 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

129

Zooey sits by her mother's side.

ZOOEY
(to her mother)
Eli has been really great. He's
the most grown up little boy I've
ever met. I wish you were out so
you could get to know him a little
better. You'd love him.
(beat)
About the other night. Perhaps I
overreacted. I wanted to say,
sorry.

Diane seems to smile - perhaps a moment of subconscious
lucidity?

130 INT. HOSPITAL CANTEEN - NIGHT

130

Zooey sits next to Eli in an empty canteen room.

A full cup of undrunk coffee on the table in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

88.

130 CONTINUED: 130
Eli gets up.

131 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT 131

Eli walks into the hospital room.
He sits next to her and looks at her lifeless face.
He grabs her hand and holds it.

ELI
I don't know if you can hear me or
not. But on the off chance you
can, I'd thought I'd come and say
hello.
(beat)
Sometimes we all need someone to
tell us, 'hey, your life's been
ok.' It's not been a waste. There's
been good times and bad, but you
left behind a daughter that loves
you very much. Zooey has a good
heart.

Zooey stands by the door and looks in.

ELI (CONT'D) *
And also don't be scared of the
unknown. It's a place of trees,
and rivers, and sunshine, and all
the ice cream you can eat. And all
the people you knew and loved will
be there waiting for you with open
arms.

The life support machine FLATLINES...

DISSOLVE TO:

132 OMITTED 132 *

133 INT. MORRISON HOUSE, KITCHEN/BEDROOM - DAY 133

Alec is washing dishes.
He hears the sounds of distant crying.
He goes up the stairs, where he sees Samuel's door open wide.
Crouched on the floor is Zooey.
Alec walks inside and sits next to her.

(CONTINUED)

89.

133 CONTINUED: 133

He holds her in his arms.

Eli watches from the hallway.

134 **EXT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY** 134

Alec sits on the step drinking a coffee.

Zooey comes outside and sits next to him.

ZOOEY

I was thinking, perhaps we should
think about clearing out the room.

(beat)

What do you think?

He nods. He takes her hand.

135 **EXT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY** 135

Alec and Eli are in the garden kicking around the football.

Zooey watches on fondly from the window as she prepares
dinner.

Eli kicks the ball and Alec catches it, like a goalie.

ELI

Nice save, Alec.

Alec stops for a second.

ALEC

Hey, ya know, I was thinking, if
you want... you can call me Dad. I
mean, if you want.

Eli smiles.

136 **EXT. A LARGE TOY STORE - DAY** 136

The MYSTERY BOX is stacked in the WINDOW DISPLAY of the large
department store.

Children and adults are picking up the box and taking it to
the counter.

From the window, Eli, Alec and Zooey watch as the product
flies off the shelf.

A child comes out of the store, walking past Eli, holding a
mystery box.

(CONTINUED)

90.

136 CONTINUED: 136

Eli smiles up at Alec.

137 **EXT. CHELSEA GARDENS - DAY** 137

Zooey, Alec and Eli are strolling through Chelsea Gardens.

ELI

Why don't we say hello to Mr Potts?

Mr Potts sits on a bench.

MR POTTS

Hello there you three.

ZOOEY

Oh. It's you!

(beat)

Alec, you met, I believe?

ALEC

Yes.

ZOOEY

How's the square?

MR POTTS

Same old, same old.

He smiles.

ALEC

Say... what are you doing for
Christmas?

138 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT** 138

Mr Potts sits around the fire drinking mulled wine and
laughing along with Eli, Alec and Zooey.

ALEC

When was the last time you had a
bath?

138a **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT** 138a

Potts hands his stinky clothes through the crack in the door
to Zooey.

She throws them in a plastic bag.

She places a clean set of clothes on the bed.

91.

139 **INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT**

139

Zooey vomits into the toilet.

She looks at herself in the mirror. She looks pale.

She washes her face before returning out.

140 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT**

140

Zooey returns back into the lounge.

ALEC

You alright?

ZOOEY

Yeah - not used to mulled wine.

CUT TO:

OMITTED(MOVED TO 138A)

142 **INT. MORRISON HOUSE, LOUNGE - NIGHT**

142

Christmas Eve.

Potts comes down the stairs clean shaven and wearing clean clothes. He looks like a different man, and the look of gratitude on his face says it all.

Zooey and Eli smile.

Zooey pulls out a huge turkey from the oven.

They all take their seats at the dinner table.

Wine is poured.

Glasses clinked.

Turkey carved.

Food eaten.

ELI

What do you say we play one of my favorite games?

ZOOEY

Oh yes, and which game is that, sir?

(CONTINUED)

92.

142

CONTINUED:

142

ELI

It's called 'guess the presents!'

ALEC

Oooh! LOVE that game.

Alec jumps up and goes to the tree.

ALEC (CONT'D)

Hmmm, this must be a shirt. I know
you got me a shirt.

ZOOEY

You'll have to wait til tomorrow.

He picks up a small box with his name on it.

ALEC

And what's this. Let me guess -
Rolex? About the right size. Is
it a Rolex. Oh come on!

ZOOEY

I couldn't possibly say! Patience
young man. Patience!

ALEC

I love presents! Don't you love
presents!

ELI

What's not to love? This has to be
a puzzle, right?

Angle on ZOOEY & POTTS

POTTS

This is nice. Lovely to see a
family celebrating Christmas
together. That's just how it should
be.

ZOOEY

Do you have family, Mr Potts?

POTTS

Oh yes. Everyone has a family
somewhere, right? And if they
don't... they should.

143

EXT. MORRISON HOUSE - NIGHT

143

Zooey thrusts some money into Potts's hand.

(CONTINUED)

93.

143

CONTINUED:

143

POTTS
I can't take this.

ZOOEY
Sure you can.

POTTS
Why?

ZOOEY
Because I look at you, and I think,
you were a child once, with a
mother and father and a home. What
happened along the way? Where did
it go wrong? You could have been my
child that I loved and cared for
and cherished. My child that is now
living on the street. You are every
child of every parent that lost his
way.

A tear in his eye.

POTTS
Happy Christmas to you. You watch
that little one. He's special he
is.

He turns and goes.

144

INT. LOUNGE - NIGHT

144

Eli plays CHOPIN on the piano.

Alec and Zooey sit listening to him.

ALEC
I want to say... I'm sorry. Sorry
for the past two years, sorry for
not loving you like I should.
(beat)

Zooey puts her arms on his shoulders.

ZOOEY
I know. I know. You don't need to
say another thing.

145

INT. ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

145

Eli is in bed, reading.

Zooey is closing the shutters and cleaning up the toys.

(CONTINUED)

94.

145

CONTINUED:

145

ELI
"God has heard"

ZOOEY
What's that?

ELI
It's a book on the etymology of
names. That's what Samuel's name
means... "God has heard".

ZOOEY
That's right. I forgot. God has
heard.
(beat)
Right, time for bed. Happy
Christmas, my little angel.

ELI
Do you believe?

ZOOEY
In what, honey?

Eli sits up.

ELI
In angels?

ZOOEY
I don't know. I've never really
thought about it. Do you?

ELI
It would be nice to think that
someone's watching over us, taking
care of us.

ZOOEY
Yes, I suppose it would.
(beat)
Now get a good night's sleep - and
tomorrow you can open all your
presents.

ELI
Night

ZOOEY
Good night.

She switches off the light and exits.

97.

149

CONTINUED:

149

JANE (O.S.)

I'm so sorry to call on Christmas day. I hope I'm not disturbing you.

ZOOEY

No, not at all.

JANE (O.S.)

It's just that, well, Mrs Lange is out of hospital. She's feeling a lot better now.

ZOOEY

Oh, I am pleased to hear it. That's good.

Still not sure why Jane is calling her.

JANE (O.S.)

See, it was a bit of a rush that day - that day you came.

ZOOEY

Ok.

JANE (O.S.)

And that paperwork you gave me - well, I ran it by Mrs Lange, see, and the thing is... well, how should I put this. The thing is, see, there's never been a boy here called Eli. There never has been.

Zooey DROPS her cup of coffee.

It falls to the floor and SMASHES in pieces.

She barely hears Jane's voice as it trails off in the background.

JANE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

As for the paperwork - well, the picture that was with it - it's blank. Nothing on it. Hello?
Hello? Mrs Morrison?

Zooey drops the phone.

She is in shock.

She runs to the kitchen looking frantically for something.

She finds what she is looking for - the souvenirs from LEGOLAND.

More specifically - the driving licenses from the car ride.

(CONTINUED)

98.

149

CONTINUED:

149

She goes through each license one by one - hers, Alec's and then she stops on Eli's.

A BLANK PICTURE where his face was.

She can't quite believe it.

FLASHBACK TO THE MOMENT LAST NIGHT

ELI

Do you believe?

*

FLASHBACK TO C/O POTTS IN THE IV CLINIC (Clean shaven) - he places the flyers for "LANGE FOSTER HOME" in the cardboard dispenser and smiles down at Zooey.

*

*

*

FLASHBACK TO AMBULANCE IN FRONT OF FOSTER HOME

The moment when Mrs Lange was whisked away in the ambulance. The driver of the ambulance, lifting Mrs Lange into the back of the car turns. We see for the first time that it is MR POTTS.

Back to Zooey in the present.

Alec comes out of Eli's room holding an ENVELOPE.

ALEC

Zooey-

She turns to see Alec.

CUT TO:

150

INT. ELI'S ROOM - DAY

150

Zooey is standing there looking at an empty bed.

A made up bed.

She looks in the closet. No clothes. Empty.

Eli... is GONE.

Alec hands her the envelope. It has their names on it.

She pulls out the letter, sits on the bed and begins to read. As she does, we hear Eli's voice reading the contents out.

ELI (V.O.)

Dear Zooey. By the time you read this, I will be gone. Don't worry. I know where I'm going. I always know. It's where I've been that's more important.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

99.

150

CONTINUED:

150

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And you guys have been really good
to me.
(beat)
I know how hard it was for you
dealing with Samuel's death. The
pain you must have felt.
(beat)
I want you to know it wasn't your
fault.

Zooey breaks down.

151

INT. SAMUEL'S ROOM - DAY

151

Zooey and Alec are in Samuel's bedroom. There are boxes
around them. Zooey is in the process of packing things up
and putting them in boxes.

ELI (V.O.)
It was an accident. The universe
works in funny ways. There's no
reason why things happen. They just
do. Just as the sun comes up in
the morning and the moon at night.
Things just are the way they are.
Bad things sometimes happen to good
people.

Alec places a football in the box, looking at it fondly.
Zooey looks at a framed picture of Samuel. She puts it to one
side. She puts away some lego toys in the box.

The room gradually empties, until finally we DISSOLVE to a
clean and empty room.

A made bed. Light shining through the windows. Flowers in a
vase.

It could be any room in any house.

152

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

152

FLASHBACK to the moment of Zooey at the scene of the accident
2 years ago. She sits on a step. An ambulance drives past
her.

ELI (V.O.)
Lives are taken from this world
with seemingly no reason. It's all
part of the mysteries of a box we
wish we could see inside, but
cannot.

(CONTINUED)

100.

152 CONTINUED: 152

Samuel watches his mother as she cries on the step. He puts his hand on her shoulder.

153 INT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY 153

Alec, Zooey and Samuel are having a pillow fight and laughing their heads off. Feathers fly everywhere in slow motion - like a blizzard.

CUT TO:

154 INT. MORRISON HOUSE - DAY 154

Zooey places the FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of Samuel on the mantelpiece of her fireplace.

ELI (V.O.)

The pain goes, and in time will get replaced with memories of the past. You'll forget the hurt, and begin to remember the joy he brought to your life.

She sits on the couch. Close-up of Samuel's mouth whispering into Zooey's ear.

SAMUEL

(whispering)

I love you mommy.

She brushes her ear and looks to the side to see... only Alec sat on the other end of the couch. He smiles.

155 INT. SAMUEL'S OLD ROOM - DAY 155

What was once Samuel's old room, now DISSOLVES into a room that is ready for a new born baby - crib, painted walls, etc...

ELI (V.O.)

And as one life goes, another is about to come. And so continues the cycle of life...

156 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY 156

9 months later.

Zooey is cradling a NEW BORN BABY. Alec is by her side.

(CONTINUED)

101.

156 CONTINUED:

156

ELI (V.O.)
I hear it'll be a girl. Cherish and
love her as I know you will. Only
a parent can know the love for a
child, and how much joy they bring
into your life.

Zooey looks up and sees ELI standing in the doorway to the
room, dressed in his suit and holding his little fedora hat.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
And as for me... don't worry. I'll
see you again... one day. But I
will always be with you in spirit.
Right now, I have a place I need to
be.

Zooey looks around but he is gone.

Eli walks down the corridor, puts on his hat and DISAPPEARS.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Love... your little Angel... Eli.

157 **EXT. A STREET - DAY**

157

Eli walks down the street in his suit, fedora hat... holding
his little leather suitcase.

He rings the bell of a terraced house.

A woman answers the door.

ELI
Hi. The agency sent me.

He turns and tips his hat to MR POTTS, who is standing on the
other side of the road. We pull back to reveal he is standing
next to MRS Lange and her assistant, JANE.

Eli looks directly into camera and smiles.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END