

# GRAVITY

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**INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - DAY**

BEN lies flat on his back, tossing a rubber ball into the air as a ceiling fan spins above him. He's 18, on the skinny side. While he's throwing the ball there are flashbacks from earlier in the day with shots of graduation and his grad party. He throws the ball higher and higher, the intensity increasing, until it hits the fan, launching it across the room.

QUICK CUTS:

- Walks at Graduation
- Back to him throwing the ball
- Receives Diploma
- Throws the ball again
- Congratulated by parents in cap and gown
- Different angle, the ball goes higher
- Is at his grad party
- The ball goes higher again
- QUINN and BEN talk excitedly
- We see the fan now, the ball getting closer
- QUINN leaves the party
- The ball nearly touches the fan
- BEN puts on a fake smile greeting those attending his party
- The ball hits the fan and launches across the room

END MONTAGE

BEN's phone buzzes and he picks it up to see that his friend QUINN texted him, asking if he was on his way to QUINN's grad party. BEN replies that he's about to leave and gets up and out of the room.

**EXT. QUINN'S BACKYARD - NIGHT**

Outside is the scene of QUINN's grad party, later in the evening. QUINN has a build similar to BEN and has more of a subdued sense of humor. Funny, not in the class clown sense. The party's outdoors in a suburban neighborhood, and it appears as though most people have left. QUINN and BEN are sitting by a fire roasting s'mores. Around them are discarded Hershey's chocolate wrappers and a half-eaten bag of marshmallows. BEN is putting his marshmallow onto the roasting stick.

QUINN  
(staring at the fire)  
I'd say I'm gonna miss the place,  
but I'd be lying.

BEN  
You wouldn't be the only one.

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QUINN  
Funny how people have this  
reverence about high school, like  
it's a place where amazing things  
happen.

BEN  
(putting his marshmallow near  
the fire)  
Right? People act like it's some  
glorious rite of passage.

QUINN pulls his marshmallow from the fire, ready to make a  
s'more, as BEN looks in discouragement at the fire.

QUINN  
(putting together his s'more,  
looking over at BEN)  
At least we're done, man. That's  
something to be excited about. On  
to the next, right?

BEN  
I don't know QUINN, I mean I guess  
I just don't understand the hype.  
I don't really know what's next on  
my end. It's not like I've been  
waiting to be done so I can  
actually do something I want.

QUINN  
Hey, look at the silver lining  
man! At least you get a reset. Do  
whatever, be whatever, you know?

BEN  
(smirking)  
Doesn't seem that simple.

BEN pulls out his marshmallow, perfectly toasted.

BEN (CONT'D)  
But I swear, I feel like I'm going  
to loose my mind. Twiddling my  
thumbs until my time's up, you  
know? Keep waiting for something  
to make the wait worth it and at  
this point I don't even know what  
that would be.

BEN tosses the marshmallow into the fire, where it shrivels up.

BEN (CONT'D)  
I don't know what it is.  
(MORE)

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BEN (CONT'D)

I did what I wanted to do in high school. By your standards, yes, lame, but it's what I wanted. And I walked out of high school with the same looming feeling that I am never going to find... (BEN sighs) I don't know. Something's gotta give.

QUINN

Damn, BEN. Kinda freaking me out here.

BEN

Nah, I'm fine. It's just... I can't keep doing whatever this is, I guess.

QUINN

You know, you could do what fellow members of the stick up our asses club like yourself do freshman year of college when they face an existential crisis.

BEN

What's that?

QUINN

(conspiratorially)  
Go. Fucking. Nuts.

BEN

(laughs)  
That's not really my mojo, QUINN.

QUINN

(hands in the air)  
Hey, you're the one who complains about being strait-laced. This could be your way out of that dreaded existence. I don't know how you've made it this far.

BEN

You know, maybe you're right. Where to start though, that's the question.

QUINN

Haven't you ever watched a movie? Party like crazy.

(MORE)

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QUINN (CONT'D)

Don't treat dating like you're in a Rom Com trying to find that one and only. Let loose, you know? Do what whatever you want.

BEN

Yeah, I mean, there's definitely a bucket list of things I never really did over the past four years.

QUINN

Exactly. Do the list. Forget rules and expectations. A lesson one would hope you'd learn earlier, but better late than never, I guess.

BEN

Yeah, honestly sounds like fun. Better than any of my other options.

QUINN

See? Fun. (Gives a light punch to the shoulder) THAT'S what you're missing. Besides, your version of going crazy is taking a couple sips of beer and hitting on a girl.

BEN

Hey.

QUINN

You'll have to try pretty hard to stand out from the other newly independent teenagers with sudden access to copious amounts of alcohol.

BEN

True. Works for most people, I guess. I'll pick a date to quit, and if this doesn't work out, no harm done. If I like it, I keep it up.

QUINN

Exactly. See, completely normal. Crisis averted. You really had me worried there for a sec.

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BEN

Sorry. Don't worry, I'll be fine.  
(Pauses) Hey, you want to get this  
thing going tonight?

QUINN

Really? Tonight? Like hit up a  
party or something?

BEN

Nah, I think I wanna save that for  
college. I don't know.

There's a brief pause as they both think of something to do.

QUINN

Tell you what, follow my lead.

QUINN gets up and BEN follows suit as they quietly leave the  
party, hop in QUINN's car, and drive off, avoiding detection  
from any of the remaining partygoers.

#### **EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT**

QUINN is driving a late 1970's 450-Class Mercedes convertible  
as he and BEN leave the party.

BEN

Would you mind telling me what  
we're doing, exactly?

QUINN

Don't worry, it's nothing crazy.  
You'll see in a bit.

BEN

Whatever you say.

They continue to drive until they reach a back road with no  
traffic in the middle of nowhere. The moon is out, lighting the  
scenery. QUINN parks and stops the car in the middle of the  
road.

BEN

When I said I wanted to go nuts, I  
didn't mean like a serial killer.

QUINN

Relax. This will only take a  
second. Whatever I say, just I  
need you to repeat after me at the  
top of your lungs.

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BEN  
Ok, but what's-

QUINN  
What the hell.

BEN  
What the hell, what?

QUINN  
Repeat after me. Top of your  
lungs. What the hell.

BEN  
What the hell?

QUINN  
You suck at this. WHAT THE HELL?

BEN  
WHAT THE HELL?

QUINN  
There you go. Now, DAMMIT!

BEN  
DAMMIT!

QUINN  
PEICE OF SHIT!

BEN  
PEICE OF SHIT!

QUINN  
FUCK YOU, MOTHERFUCKER!

BEN  
FUCK YOU, MOTHERFUCKER!

QUINN  
FUUUUUUCK!

BEN  
FUUUUUUCK!

They both pause, smiling.

QUINN  
See, that wasn't so bad. Felt  
good, didn't it?

BEN  
Yeah, I guess it did.

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QUINN  
Your first step in quitting the  
golden child act is to drop the  
"Dang"s and "Craps"s. Let it rip.  
Fuck it.

BEN  
Yeah, fuck it.

QUINN starts the car, makes a U turn.

QUINN  
Good. We're heading back to my  
place. For the rest of the summer,  
I'm gonna to prepare you for  
entering the world of college  
life. Work our way up to partying.

BEN  
Sounds like a fucking plan.

QUINN  
(laughs)  
A fucking plan it is. Don't know  
how you've avoided picking up my  
potty mouth so far.

QUINN shakes his head in disbelief, smiling.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
So. You're good?

BEN  
Yeah, I'm good. Don't worry about  
me.

They continue driving back toward QUINN's grad party.

#### **INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT**

BEN sits in a desk in his room later that night. He flips through a calendar and marks the date March 20. He proceeds to pull out a lined piece of paper, and with a pen begins writing a suicide note, and the audience sees, "If you're reading this, then it means I've done something you may never forgive me for." BEN pauses, looking at his phone, then continues to write.



**EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY**

BEN and QUINN are walking with a group of students doing a tour of a large college campus, and fall is now approaching as the school year begins. They are accompanied by around thirty students and someone in front is walking backwards, giving a tour.

**COLLEGE TOUR GUIDE**

Now, here we're passing some different residence halls. You should know which one yours, 'cause if you don't, you're in real trouble. (He waits for laughter but none is forthcoming)  
Uh, BUT, do you know the HISTORY behind each hall? Super interesting stuff here...

The scene focuses on BEN and QUINN's discreet conversation.

**BEN**

(under his breath to QUINN)  
Why do people giving college campus tours always walk like that?

**QUINN**

(also under his breath)  
Walk like what?

**BEN**

Backwards. I swear it happens every fucking time. Same thing when I toured U-Dub. It makes sense, walking backwards, but also...

A group of a few guys joins the conversation.

**JERRY**

There's like a fifty percent chance you eat shit.

**ISAAC**

Or bulldoze an unsuspecting bystander.

**BEN**

Exactly.

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DERRICK  
(still out of earshot of the  
tour guide speaking in an  
odd cadence)  
Ten dollars says one of those  
things will happen before the tour  
is finished.

QUINN  
No way, they wouldn't be doing  
that if they kept watching that  
shit go down with other tour  
guides. I'll take you up on that.

DERRICK reaches out his hand, and QUINN shakes it.

DERRICK  
Deal.

BEN  
You guys know each other? (Motions  
to ISAAC, JERRY, and DERRICK)

JERRY has a personality similar to QUINN's, of average height  
and build. ISAAC is shorter and stockier, and is more of a  
follower than a leader, a sort of yes-man. DERRICK is slim, and  
the tallest of the three, with an interesting, more formal  
diction and quiet demeanor.

ISAAC  
Yep. I'm ISAAC.

JERRY  
I'm JERRY.

DERRICK  
And I am DERRICK.

ISAAC  
We went to the same high school.

BEN  
Gotcha.

JERRY  
You guys roommates or something?

QUINN  
Yeah, I've known this asshole  
since kindergarten.  
(MORE)

QUINN (CONT'D)

We were gonna have a couple more guys in our pod but they bailed last minute and I heard that because of low enrollment we may have the space to ourselves.

JERRY

Nice! Have any plans for the weekend?

QUINN

Plans? Not really.

ISAAC

Cool. Well I hear the first weekend of the school year here is crazy. People loose their fucking minds. Best of all, the amateurs end up super wasted and wake up with a new tattoo or in a dorm room covered in spaghetti sauce or some shit.

BEN

Sounds like fun. The spaghetti sauce thing seems specific.

JERRY

(laughs)

It is. Long story, though. Anyway, this week is usually pretty hectic with motherfuckers trying to build reputations. Already today there's this guy who broke into the Dean's car and stuck a bunch of shit in there.

BEN

What do you mean by shit?

JERRY

(grinning)

Like shit, shit. Feces. Manure, I think.

The group quietly chuckles at the thought.

QUINN

Gross. You guys have plans?

ISAAC

Yeah, actually. We do the Fillmore week.

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BEN  
Fillmore week?

JERRY  
It goes like this. We don't have so much as a sip of alcohol this week. That is, until Friday night. Friday night the shit hits the fan. The frat houses get packed, and the RA's can't keep it out of the dorms.

ISAAC  
Most people are smart enough to take it easy. Pace yourself, you know. But there are always a couple ones, usually amateurs, who get blackout drunk before everyone else.

DERRICK  
Take my advice, do not be one of those people.

QUINN  
Wasn't planning on it. You guys want to team up?

JERRY  
Hell yeah. We were going to hit up Sigma Phi first. Pretty standard setup. As soon as the sun goes down, they're open for business.

BEN  
Awesome. Sounds good.

As they are walking, the tour guide trips over a sidewalk and falls backwards.

QUINN  
(turns to DERRICK)  
I'm afraid I owe you ten bucks.

DERRICK  
I am afraid you do.

#### **INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY**

A large group of college students are watching a professor who is listing the rules for student behavior and academic policy in an auditorium. BEN and QUINN are sitting next to a group of girls in front of them, close to the edge of a row of seats.

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MRS. MARTIN

Now as far as make up policy, you will find most professors as far less lenient than your high school teachers. You will have plenty of time to finish whatever must be done. Now,

BEN

(whispering to a girl on the edge of the group)  
Well this is pretty enthralling.

SANDRA

(also in a whisper, not quite facing BEN)  
Mm-hmm. Super enthralling.

SANDRA is a fellow freshman and has a playful demeanor.

BEN

You know, I'd ask for your Snap, but if we ever hung out I don't know if I could match this level of excitement on my own.

SANDRA

(smiling, turning toward him)  
It's a high bar for sure.

BEN

That being said, I was wondering if--

The guy sitting next to SANDRA, on the edge of the row, turns around, hearing BEN and cutting him off.

JAYDEN

(in a gruff whisper)  
Hey! Is there a problem?

JAYDEN is a stereotypical jock-looking guy, seems callous and intimidating.

BEN

Not until recently.

JAYDEN

Back off. She's not on the table.

BEN

It's a free country.

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JAYDEN  
(a harsher tone, rises  
slightly as though to get  
up)  
Hey, shut the fuck up.

BEN  
(sarcastically)  
Oh my, I'm so scared.

JAYDEN  
(getting up)  
Well, maybe you should be.

JAYDEN gets up from his seat

MRS. MARTIN  
Young man, please sit--

BEN also gets up and they meet on the stairs lining the  
classroom.

JAYDEN  
If you beg for your life, I just  
might let--

BEN proceeds to cut JAYDEN off by punching him in the face.

MRS. MARTIN  
(to no avail)  
Oh, my, boys, stop! Stop at once!  
You must control yourself!

BEN and JAYDEN throw punches, and classmates begin to pull them  
apart.

#### **INT. DISCIPLINARY OFFICE - DAY**

BEN sits in a waiting area outside of an office holding an ice  
pack to his face. You can hear JAYDEN and the principle's  
muffled voices as they are talking behind a closed door, and  
another guy walks in, escorted by some sort of school guard.  
ADAM sits down, and looks at BEN. ADAM's handsome, blonde, and  
seems to have a constant smirk about him.

ADAM  
What are you here for?

BEN  
Got into a fight (gesturing with  
his ice pack). Some asshole was  
trying to be intimidating, so I  
punched him in the face.

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ADAM

Nice.

BEN

How about you?

ADAM

Well, let's just say it involved  
the Dean's car.

BEN

YOU did that?

ADAM nods.

BEN (CONT'D)

Damn. Nice job. I'm BEN by the  
way.

BEN reaches out to shakes ADAM's hand, who reciprocates.

ADAM

I'm ADAM. And you know, it really  
did seem like the perfect crime. I  
had noticed the Dean hardly ever  
locked her car on a previous  
stakeout from last year. Anyway, I  
was thinking, 'How can I  
capitalize on this car situation?'  
My family's got a place in the  
country with a ranch nearby. I  
snuck onto it and put some shit in  
a cooler the night before I left.  
Unsurprisingly, there's not a  
whole lot stopping you from  
stealing a pile of shit. So I  
brought it over, and that night  
poured it all into the car. The  
worst part is, it kind-of melted,  
so I basically poured liquid shit  
into a new beamer.

BEN

Thats... quite a plan.

ADAM

Why, thank you.

BEN

But wouldn't your car, you know...

ADAM

Smell like shit too? Of course,  
but it's totally worth it.

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ADAM (CONT'D)

I tried to use spray air freshener in there, but I realized it's just going to need to air out at some point.

BEN

(Amused)

Damn. How'd you get caught?

ADAM

Oh, some son of a bitch snitched on me. Don't know who.

BEN

Rough. Hey, this is random, but I'm going to be heading to the Sigma Phi party this Friday. Doing the Fillmore week.

ADAM

The what?

BEN

(apprehensively)

The Fillmore week? Like holding off until the weekend... no?

ADAM

I don't know what you're talking about but whoever told you that probably hasn't been here long. And that tradition is more of a mutual understanding than anything else. And anyway, when it comes to Sigma Pi, I've been there once or twice. Could show you around if you want. I'm guessing you're a freshman.

BEN

Yeah, how'd you know I was a freshman?

ADAM

Fillmore week?

BEN

Oh, yeah. Thanks, I'd love to take you up on your offer.

ADAM

No problem.

The office door opens and JAYDEN is led out by a staff member.

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MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Ok, your turn, Mr. WILLARD.

ADAM  
Good luck.

BEN nods and walks into the office, and we just get a glimpse of MRS. JOHANESSON, a woman who appears to be in her mid-forties.

**EXT. GREEK ROW - DUSK**

There are a group of college students walking around and into different frat houses on Greek Row. It's a vibrant scene of college students lining the streets streaming into various houses. Among them are JERRY, ISAAC, DERRICK, QUINN, BEN, with ADAM soon to join them.

BEN  
You weren't shitting me when you said everyone did this.

JERRY  
Hell no. These places are always packed, tonight more than ever. This isn't even it, most dorms have something going on, and off campus there are tons of hotspots.

ADAM cuts through a group of girls to join them.

ADAM  
Hey.

BEN  
Hi. Guys, this is ADAM. He's been doing this a couple years, so if we need anything, he's our man. He's actually the guy who loaded the Dean's car with shit.

JERRY  
Hell yeah!

JERRY high-fives ADAM. DERRICK reaches over to shake his hand.

DERRICK  
A pleasure to meet you. We should do business together sometime.

ADAM  
I'm always accepting proposals.

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QUINN  
Especially shitty ones.

JERRY  
(shaking his head in  
disappointment)  
Man you just gotta accept a sense  
of humor just isn't in the cards  
for you.

QUINN  
Bro. It wasn't even that bad.

The group laughs as they walk up to the entrance of the Sigma Pi house.

ADAM  
Alright, boys. Here we go.

#### **INT. SIGMA PI - NIGHT**

The group walks inside to see the scene of a typical frat party scene. Party music plays in the background, and the house is full of college age students drinking and chatting.

QUINN  
This doesn't seem too intense.

ADAM  
(laughs)  
No shit. The whole thing kicks off  
with a short speech by the host,  
then all hell breaks loose. They  
bring out the big guns. Whatever  
you want, they have.

ISAAC  
(in a wide-eyed manner)  
This place is fucking amazing.

ADAM  
Ok, looks like things are about to  
get started.

In the living room area, there is a small speaker system set up with a DJ. An older college student takes the mike.

CHAD  
Ok guys. It's time... to loose  
your FUCKING MINDS!

This is greeted by wild applause and cheers by the group as he walks off the stage.

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BEN  
(sarcastically, eyebrows  
raised)  
Well that was eloquent.

QUINN  
Very inspiring.

Cheers emerge as the volume begins to ramp up and the party kicks in. BEN walks up to the person pouring drinks in the kitchen.

BARTENDER  
What do you want?

BEN  
Uh... surprise me.

BARTENDER  
(looking exasperated)  
Whatever you say.

BARTENDER reaches past an assortment of beer cans and pulls out a jug, pouring the contents into a red plastic cup.

BEN  
Thanks.

The BARTENDER gives a gruff nod and BEN walks over to where QUINN is standing.

BEN  
Hey, I think tonight I'm going to  
take it easy for the first time.  
You know, warm up to this sort of  
thing.

QUINN  
Sure. But if you've never--

BEN takes a sip and the scene cuts a quick, flashing montage.

QUICK CUTS:

--BEN eagerly drinking out of the cup  
--BEN surrounded by other partiers who are chanting "chug"  
--BEN being cheered on by other members of the group/clapping  
them on the back  
--BEN opening the door to his dorm, beckoning a group in

END MONTAGE

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**INT. BEN AND QUINN'S DORM - MORNING**

The sounds of a shower going are heard as the scene fades in. BEN wakes up slowly, obviously hungover. He rubs his head, and looks around in a panic. He sees he's in his dorm room, and transitions to relief. He notices the scattered state of the room with trash and remnants of a crazy party. He sees that the door to QUINN's room is open and hears the shower cut out. BEN waits, and hears the shower curtain move. After a few seconds someone gets out of the bathroom in a bathrobe. But instead of being QUINN, it's a girl from the night before.

BEN  
Oh! Uh, ahh...

PARTY GIRL #1  
(chuckling)  
Remember me? (BEN doesn't say anything)

BEN  
(lying)  
Uh, yeah.

The girl shakes her head and chuckles, then walks into the room and gathers clothes BEN realizes were scattered around. BEN sheepishly looks around as she does so. As she walks into the bathroom BEN sees QUINN from the other room stumble to the door with a quizzical look on his face, raising an eyebrow very groggily. BEN raises his hands as looks as though to say, "I don't know". QUINN goes back into his room. The girl walks out of the bathroom again, fully clothed.

PARTY GIRL #1  
See ya, kid.

BEN  
(awkwardly)  
Uh, bye.

She closes the door and QUINN emerges from the room. Their conversation continues in a very dazed manner.

QUINN  
(groggy)  
She was... wearing MY bathrobe.

BEN  
(also groggy)  
The hell you have a bathrobe for?

QUINN  
Forget my bathrobe, why did she shower here? What the fuck happened last night?

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BEN  
I... Oh, shit. I think we brought  
people over here.

QUINN  
Fuck. This place is a disaster. I  
saw a few pieces of clothing I  
know aren't mine in this room.

BEN  
How the hell did we even fit  
anyone in here? I'm so confused.

QUINN  
You're not the only one.

**INT. OUTSIDE DORM - DAY - MOVING**

After getting ready for the day, BEN and QUINN leave their dorm  
building very sensitive to bright lights or quick movement.

BEN  
I just can't believe what happened  
last night.

QUINN  
You don't even know what happened  
last night.

BEN  
(smiling)  
Too true.

QUINN  
Hey, it was fun though, right?

BEN  
Probably. Again, can't really  
remember too much.

BEN and QUINN exit their dorm and reach an outdoor parking  
space where BEN sees his car. A late 2000's Honda Accord, now  
spray-painted pink on a black base coat. They stand for a  
moment in speechless silence.

QUINN  
Damn. BEN, I have to ask, what the  
hell were you thinking when you  
brought everyone here?

BEN  
I obviously wasn't thinking.  
(MORE)

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BEN (CONT'D)  
And besides, how do we know it  
wasn't you that started it?

QUINN  
True.

They walk over, right up next to the car.

BEN  
I can't even drive this thing.  
There's paint all over the fucking  
windows.

QUINN  
Good luck getting it cleaned up.  
What are you gonna do?

BEN  
No fucking clue.

BEN and QUINN walk away from the hot pink mess and walk to the cafeteria for breakfast.

#### **INT. BEN AND QUINN'S DORM - NIGHT**

QUINN is sitting in front of the TV watching something while BEN is sitting in his room, working on the suicide note unbeknownst to QUINN. The episode finishes, and QUINN gets up to look into BEN's room where he writing.

QUINN  
Oh, what's that?

BEN  
Nothing, just a project for Lit  
101. What's up?

QUINN  
Hey, I just wanted to check in,  
you know, with all of the chaotic  
shit going down last night.

BEN  
Yeah, it was fun man! I'm honestly  
doing everything I never thought I  
could, things I didn't know I even  
wanted to do until I did them.

QUINN  
(looking reassured)  
Ok. Cool. Just wanted to make  
sure.

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BEN

Yeah, thanks. And honestly, it is a little weird. Like I have a second skin, (pauses) like something a shower can't rinse off, you know?

QUINN

Not that surprised man, you're like a totally different person now. Glad you don't feel like shit, though.

BEN

Yeah, no need to worry.

QUINN

Ok. Well, I heard ISAAC has this dumbass plan he wants to propose tomorrow so brace yourself for breakfast tomorrow.

**EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT**

QUINN is driving a Subaru Hatchback down an isolated dirt road, DERRICK in the passenger seat and ISAAC, BEN, and JERRY all piled in the backseat.

JERRY

Just so we're all clear, me and BEN get out of the car to unscrew the sign, and DERRICK, you stay on lookout.

BEN

Yeah.

ISAAC

Wait, what about me? I thought I was gonna get out and help with the sign?

QUINN

Bro you need help replacing a lightbulb, you should stick with the mastermind role.

JERRY

It's true. Plus you planned our route so your work here is already finished.

ISAAC

I guess.

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QUINN rounds a corner and slows down as he pulls the car over next to a deer crossing sign.

JERRY  
Alright guys, it's go time.

BEN  
Here we go.

BEN and JERRY hop out of the car as the rest of the crew waits. They get to the sign and begin unscrewing it.

JERRY  
Shit looks a lot bigger up close.

BEN  
That's what... never mind.

They continue working the sign until it's free from the post.

JERRY  
Hell yeah! Easy as I thought it'd be.

BEN and JERRY race back into the car.

QUINN  
(pulling back onto the road)  
You guys got it?

BEN  
Of course we did!

ISAAC  
Fuck yeah!

DERRICK  
Well done.

JERRY  
I got dibs on this one.

QUINN  
We're hitting the smaller twenty five next, right?

JERRY  
Think so.

ISAAC  
Cool, that one's gonna be mine.  
Can I help get THAT one out at least?

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JERRY  
Sure, I guess you can get one of  
the screws.

The crew keeps driving until they reach another sign, a small  
white 25mph speed limit sign.

JERRY  
Ok, let's do this again. Y'all  
know the drill.

The guys get out of the car as QUINN turns off the lights. The  
guys begin to work on unscrewing the sign with ISAAC starting  
with the bottom screw.

ISAAC  
Shit, this is stuck!

JERRY  
(in hushed tones)  
Bro be quiet! Hand over the  
wrench.

QUINN begins working on the screw but struggles to get it free.  
Amidst the relative silence of the desolate road, DERRICK rolls  
his window down causing a loud squeaking noise.

BEN  
(whispers harshly)  
Bro, what the fuck?

DERRICK  
(from inside the car,  
gesturing his head behind  
them)  
I think we may have a problem.

BEN  
Huh?

JERRY looks back and sees headlights in the distance.

JERRY  
(whispering)  
Back in the fucking car!

The guys pile back in, QUINN starts the car and they rush back  
onto the road.

QUINN  
Shit!

BEN  
Think they saw us?

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DERRICK

I don't know. (Pauses, looking in the rear view mirror) It looks like the vehicle has a guardrail and light rack on top.

ISAAC

(looking back)

You're fucking kidding me.

QUINN nervously speeds up.

QUINN

(also looking back)

Shit, you're right.

DERRICK

(turning to JERRY)

You have your ID, right?

QUINN

Fuck. I think I left my wallet in my dorm room.

BEN

Awesome.

QUINN starts driving more haphazardly, speeding and swerving.

QUINN

Kinda freaking out guys.

BEN

Bro chill out! We'll be fine! They haven't pulled us over yet.

The cop car gets closer to the Subaru.

BEN

QUINN we'll be fine! Just slow down!

QUINN

(slowing to well below the speed limit)

Do we have something to cover the sign? I think I have a blanket back there. Can't remember though. Shit. Guys we might be fucked.

BEN

Nobody's getting fucked on my watch.

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ISSAC laughs nervously. The lights on the police car begin to light up yellow.

ISAAC

Shit.

QUINN

What do I do, pull over? They aren't red and blue flashing?

BEN

Yeah dude I guess just pull over.

QUINN slows the Subaru and begins to pull to the side, and the cop car rushes past. QUINN continues to sit in silence as they all wait for a few seconds.

JERRY

Fuck. That was close.

ISAAC

What are the odds? A cop car in the middle of nowhere?

BEN

Yeah that may be a sign to head back.

QUINN continues to sit in silence.

BEN

(scooting up from the back seat)

You good man?

QUINN

(as though shaking out of it)

Yep.

BEN

Sure?

QUINN

I'm fine.

QUINN pulls out from the side of the road, going where they came from.

DERRICK

Well done guys.

ISSAC

Hey, thanks for the heads up. Did your job well man.

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JERRY  
We down to wrap up now?

QUINN  
Yeah, I'm not in the fucking mood  
for a part two of that right now.

ISSAC  
Geez man, calm down.

BEN  
Guys, chill. Let's just head back.

ISSAC  
I don't know, I guess I fail to  
see the problem here. We got what  
we came for, minus one sign.

BEN  
ISSAC.

They drive back in silence.

**INT. CAMPUS CAFETERIA - DAY**

BEN and QUINN are sitting in the college cafeteria with JERRY,  
ISAAC, and DERRICK eating breakfast.

ISAAC  
I still can't believe it.

JERRY  
I know man! I thought for sure we  
were toast.

BEN  
The craziest part though?  
Technically signs are worth a ton  
of cash, meaning we were  
committing a grand larceny level  
of theft.

JERRY  
Damn. What would the cop even do  
if they saw the signs?

QUINN  
Not really trying to think about  
that right now.

There's a pause.

ISSAC

I mean, kids do shit like that all the time. Do they just cuff everybody or what?

BEN

Most aren't stupid enough to get caught thought.

ISAAC

Or unlucky enough.

BEN rolls his eyes, and there is a brief pause. JAYDEN walks in, visibly depressed. BEN eyes him indiscreetly and ISAAC picks up on it.

ISAAC (CONT'D)

Hey, I heard that he broke up with his girlfriend. They had been together for years, and she just dumped him. Out of the blue.

DERRICK

(sarcastically)

Why thank you for your valuable input. We all desperately wanted to know all about JAYDEN's love life.

ISAAC

Hey, they'd been dating since high school. They were the freshman power couple. You know, the quarterback and the cheerleader. That sort of thing.

BEN

No shit. I did realize he was the fucking quarterback.

JERRY

Red-shirt freshman.

BEN

Didn't know she was a cheerleader either.

DERRICK

Speak of the devil.

SANDRA walks in, a contrast to JAYDEN's gloomy mood, accompanied by a small posse of friends.

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BEN  
You know what? Fuck it. Wish me  
luck.

BEN quickly gets up and walks toward SANDRA.

JERRY  
What the hell is he up to?

QUINN shrugs his shoulders. BEN then stops in front of SANDRA. He strikes up a conversation out of earshot. BEN pulls out his phone as SANDRA talks to him, as seen from the cafeteria table and JAYDEN storms out of the room. BEN's friend group, with the exception of ISAAC, seems a little confused. BEN walks over back to the table, triumphant.

JERRY  
(smiling)  
What the fuck was that?

BEN  
She finally dropped that asshole,  
and I didn't wait to make a move.

QUINN  
Damn man, you didn't give it ten  
seconds to cool down.

BEN shrugs, giving QUINN a look that says, "So what?"

ISAAC  
Well, I don't know why they aren't  
cheering you on.

BEN  
See? Thank you ISAAC.

ISAAC  
Who knows? Maybe you guys could be  
the next freshman power couple.

DERRICK  
Ah, the intricate workings of the  
college social hierarchy.

JERRY  
(in a stiff voice, mimicking  
DERRICK's tone)  
You'll have to forgive DERRICK, he  
must be feeling particularly  
snobbish today.

DERRICK  
Perhaps.

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BEN

Ok, well I'm gonna go head out to the gym. (Looks to QUINN) Hey, wanna join me?

QUINN

Oh, nah. I would prefer not to spend the next two hours in agony.

BEN

That's what she said.

QUINN

Dude. Chill.

BEN

(flipping QUINN off, as though in jest)  
Oh, fuck you.

QUINN

(smiling)  
Fuck you too.

ISAAC

(grinning broadly, holding up two middle fingers)  
Fuck us all.

DERRICK

(holding his hands up in exasperation)  
I'd prefer you didn't do that.

BEN struts off scene as the group smiles, still sitting.

#### PARTY MONTAGE

Shots of him on campus reveal him to be popular as we walks to classes, giving people fist bumps and high-fives. Scenes of BEN drinking and smoking weed are shown, as well as BEN partying with ADAM, QUINN, DERRICK, ISAAC, and JERRY. BEN pulls various stunts to the approval of the crowd, including jumping on a beer pong table and breaking it to raucous applause, and he gets up pumping his fists into the air. It shows him successfully flirting, gaining popularity quickly. He tells stories to an eager crowd. And to finish the montage is BEN jumping off a roof wearing sunglasses in slo-mo into a pool wearing a giant rubber ducky inner tube, the camera flashing to black faster and faster with intermittent scenes of BEN landing in the pool until the montage cuts to black.

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**INT. ALPHA PHI - NIGHT**

BEN walks with SANDRA into a typical college party scene. BEN greets DERRICK, ISAAC, JERRY and QUINN, and ADAM walks into the living room where they are standing.

ADAM  
(slyly)  
Why hello, lovebirds.

BEN  
Dude, chill. SANDRA, this is ADAM.

SANDRA  
(somewhat awkwardly)  
Oh, hi.

BEN  
(gesturing toward QUINN)  
And this is QUINN.

QUINN  
Nice to meet you.

SANDRA nods to QUINN.

ADAM  
(to BEN)  
Hey, I heard JAYDEN's here. I think he's looking for you.

SANDRA looks visibly uncomfortable at this news, but BEN doesn't seem to notice her reaction and tenses up a little.

BEN  
Fine, yeah, I'm happy to have a little chat. Where's he at?

JAYDEN  
(walking from another part of the house)  
Hello, asshole.

BEN  
Charmed, as always.

SANDRA looks away, now completely uncomfortable.

JAYDEN  
You think you're the shit. But you're getting lucky and out of your fucking league. You bluff enough and someone is gonna call it.

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The party begins to quiet as the tension builds between BEN and JAYDEN.

BEN  
(holding his chest as though  
it was pierced by an arrow,  
speaking sarcastically)  
You really got me there. I guess  
getting lucky is one way of  
putting it.

SANDRA's eyes dart to and from BEN this comment.

JAYDEN  
Your sarcasm only gets your skinny  
ass so far.

A crowd has developed as people quiet to hear BEN and JAYDEN.

BEN  
Insulting my ass? I don't know  
that I can take that.

JAYDEN  
Oh, very funny. But your comedy  
doesn't help much in a fistfight.

SANDRA  
(Cutting in)  
BEN, you don't have to--

BEN  
No, no, he's right. Comedy doesn't  
help in a fight. Good thing I'm a  
jack of all trades. I'm happy to  
fight you, JAYDEN, no problemo.

QUINN  
(quietly to BEN)  
Hey, BEN, I don't think--

BEN  
(more loudly, so others can  
hear)  
Oh, don't worry. This son of a  
bitch has it coming. He has to  
learn a little lesson.

JAYDEN  
Learn what it feels like to kick  
your ass, maybe.

ADAM  
(mockingly)  
Oh, clever line. (Turns to BEN)  
Do me a favor and kick HIS ass,  
won't you?

BEN  
Sure thing.

ISAAC walks into the center of the room, as though an announcer, between JAYDEN and BEN.

ISAAC  
Alrighty, folks, we're about to  
begin. Now boys, no dirty moves.  
I'm talking a fair fight. What  
exactly that means, I have no  
fucking clue.

BEN  
(motioning to his shirt)  
Hold up, I wanna make sure I keep  
this clean. Your blood wouldn't  
really match the color scheme  
well.

JAYDEN  
(rolling his eyes)  
Right.

BEN theatrically takes his shirt off to reveal a six-pack and chiseled frame. Whispers and general excitement from the audience ensues. He flexes, grinning. QUINN puts his head in his hand.

ISAAC  
Well, fuck. Everyone, this is  
going to be good. Ok, boys, time  
to fight!

ISAAC walks out from the center, and BEN and JAYDEN circle each other. JAYDEN throws a punch that doesn't land, and BEN quickly ducks and punches JAYDEN in the stomach, knowing the air out of him. Reeling slightly, JAYDEN stumbles back to compose himself. BEN backs off, feigning a yawn, then motioning for JAYDEN to give another swing. JAYDEN aims a blow at BEN again, but BEN pulls and uppercut and hits JAYDEN in the jaw. BEN jumps back and punches JAYDEN in the nose, which is quickly bloodied. JAYDEN stumbles again, and with a look of fury lands a punch on BEN's face. BEN steps back, startled, sneering with a bloody mouth.

BEN  
Ok, motherfucker, here we go.

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BEN launches a barrage of punches JAYDEN is unable to deflect or dodge, and the crowd cheers. Then JAYDEN seems to wobble, and BEN launches a knockout punch. The crowd goes wild, including ISAAC and JERRY, though DERRICK and QUINN bear expressions that are closer to relief. SANDRA just looks uncomfortable.

ADAM  
(clapping BEN on the back)  
Congratulations, you son of a  
bitch. You just kicked the star  
quarterback's ass.

BEN seems to soak up his surroundings as the drunken revelry envelopes him, cheering him on.

**EXT. ALPHA PHI - NIGHT**

QUINN and BEN are sitting outside the frat house by the sidewalk. Inside the party is still going strong. Their noises are muffled, and there are relatively quiet surroundings as BEN and QUINN are sitting. BEN is holding an ice pack up to his face where JAYDEN landed the punch, and his face is bruised.

BEN  
Hey, sorry if it got out of hand  
today. I was just so pissed.

QUINN  
You're good. Did a little out of  
hand, though.

BEN  
Maybe.

QUINN  
Where'd you even learn to fight  
like that?

BEN  
I've been doing boxing as cardio.  
Football players may be strong,  
but that only goes so far in a  
fight.

QUINN  
That looked more like MMA shit to  
me. But hey, where's SANDRA? She  
seemed a little freaked out.

BEN  
(motions to the house)  
She's still in there.  
(MORE)

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BEN (CONT'D)

I think her friends are keeping  
her company.

QUINN looks uncomfortable but doesn't say anything. There is noise of glass smashing in the house, a brief pause, and then continued shouts and cheers from the party.

QUINN

Damn. Wonder what that was.

BEN

Yeah, these parties are fun and  
all, but can get weird as hell.

QUINN

Says the guy who once jumped off a  
roof in a rubber ducky inflatable  
for no apparent reason. Man, I  
don't know about this plan. You  
went a little crazy in there with  
JAYDEN.

BEN

(defensively)

Dude, he's the asshole who  
challenged me to the fight!

QUINN

Yeah, but can you blame him? What  
I'm trying to say is that you're  
different than you were before.

BEN looks angry at this, and makes as though to speak, but  
QUINN cuts him off.

QUINN (CONT'D)

Hey, nothing wrong with that. I'm  
just saying it's weird to see you  
like that. I'm not used to it.

BEN looks as though he's going to yell, angry, but then droops  
and becomes visibly tired.

BEN

Yeah, to be honest it's a little  
weird for me too.

QUINN

You ok?

BEN

Yep. I'm fine. Just... I'm still  
tired. Like I'm keeping up an act.  
But it feels good, I guess.

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QUINN

Hey, maybe you should call this  
shit off.

BEN

No, I'm going to do everything as  
scheduled. I'm not giving up now.

QUINN

Maybe. But, I mean, just for  
tonight? Head back now. It  
wouldn't look out of place,  
considering what just happened.

BEN contemplates this idea for a few seconds.

BEN

Nah, I'm gonna just head back in  
there. Might as well.

QUINN

You sure?

BEN

Sure. Yeah. I am. Let's head back  
in.

BEN and QUINN get up and walk to the entrance.

BEN

(as they walk into the house)  
It's go time.

#### **INT. SPANISH I CLASSROOM - DAY**

BEN sneaks into a Spanish classroom about ten minutes into  
class, sitting in the back corner of the room. It's a smaller  
class, about thirty students in the group. The professor is a  
lady in her mid fifties, frizzy hair and eccentric personality,  
and mid lecture about pronouns.

SEÑORA JACKSON

(noticing his entrance)  
And how generous of you to grace  
us with your presence, Señor BEN.

BEN

I'm flattered you even remember my  
name, SEÑORA JACKSON.

SEÑORA JACKSON

Well your self introduction antics  
left quite an impression.  
(MORE)

Made in Highland

SEÑORA JACKSON (CONT'D)  
Anyway, it's time for us to begin practicing those conversations on page 23, just turn to whoever's next to you. Remember to use the right gender when referring to classmates!

BEN turns to the girl next to him, and they shared eye contact. She's a fairly normal looking college student, no distinctive clothing or physical characteristics.

ARIA  
Great. This what I get for sitting in the back of class.

BEN  
(amused)  
What?

ARIA  
Oh, forgive me for not wanting our resident class clown as a partner again.

BEN  
Hey, I never claimed that title.

ARIA  
Oh please. You crave attention more than Charles.

BEN  
Huh?

ARIA  
My pet cat. Back home.

BEN  
Don't act like there's any reasonable expectation I'd understand that reference. And I can't say I'm all that excited about being paired with the cat lady either.

ARIA  
Poor you.

BEN  
Well, should we get started with pronouns?

ARIA  
Sure. Surprised you wanna actually  
work on Spanish.

BEN  
Oh trust me, I'm more just trying  
to avoid any other conversation  
that would ensure otherwise.

ARIA  
Ensue. But hey, that's actually a  
smart move.

BEN  
(Flipping through the book)  
I guess the first question is  
asking about roommates. Who's  
yours?

ARIA  
In Spanish or English?

BEN  
Spanish I guess.

ARIA  
Ok... Ella es SANDRA.

BEN  
NO WAY.

ARIA  
What?

BEN  
YOU'RE ARIA?

ARIA  
How'd you know my name?

BEN  
SANDRA'S roommate?

ARIA  
Oh no. You must be BEN.

BEN  
In the flesh.

ARIA  
I had really hoped she'd have  
higher standards.

BEN

Hey, ease up on the compliments. I can only take so much flattery. Besides, how have I never seen you around before?

ARIA

I'm not really the party type, if that's what you mean. We have talked in class before, you know.

BEN

Oh, right.

ARIA

Apparently that didn't count for much, considering we didn't get to each others names.

BEN

Fair.

SEÑORA JACKSON

Alright class, time to take this thing to the front of the room.

ARIA

Thank goodness.

BEN

Couldn't have said it better myself.

**EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY**

BEN and QUINN meet up after class, converging on a path on the college campus, heading toward their dorm. It's winter now, and they are dressed accordingly.

QUINN

How was the gym?

BEN

Great. There I was, minding my own business, when some chick asks to work in with me using the leg press machine. A few minutes later and bam, (pulls out phone) number acquired.

QUINN

Oh, damn. Didn't realize you even broke up with SANDRA man.

Made in Highland



BEN  
(awkwardly)  
Yeah that's the thing, still  
working on establishing the end of  
that.

QUINN  
Seriously?

BEN  
Hey, I haven't done anything yet!  
No overlap.

QUINN  
I thought you really liked her  
though.

BEN  
Nah, I mean, it was fun and  
everything for a month or so, but  
I realized it just wasn't a long  
term kinda thing.

QUINN  
Ok. It's your love life, I guess.

BEN  
What?

QUINN  
(partially in jest)  
I mean, do you really want to be a  
hoe?

BEN  
(laughs)  
A hoe? It's not like I cheated,  
and it lasted a little while. And  
you act like being a player would  
be a BAD thing and like one night  
stands are some crazy scandalous  
sin.

QUINN  
You literally had one girlfriend  
in high school.

BEN  
You act like THAT'S a good thing.

QUINN  
I'm just saying. With everything  
going on it seems a bit like  
playing with fire.

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BEN

Yeah, but play with fire enough  
and you become fireproof. I'm  
already there.

QUINN

Yeah, as poetic as it sounds I  
don't know if that's a good thing.  
Or even true.

BEN

Well, I'm fine. You don't need to  
worry.

QUINN

I guess.

BEN

Hey, I'm going out tonight. Want  
to come with?

QUINN

Uh.. sure. Wait, fuck. I've got a  
class at eight tomorrow, and  
there's a final worth like fifty  
percent of our grade.

BEN

Are you serious? You're going to  
turn down a party to go bed early?  
I have a class at ten tomorrow I  
haven't shown up for in like two  
weeks.

QUINN

Shit. It's way too late to drop  
it.

BEN

Yeah, but I'm a new man now. F's  
don't scare me.

QUINN

Bro, that's not a flex. You good?

BEN

It's all good man. Please don't  
stress about my fucking report  
card.

QUINN

Yeah yeah yeah, I don't want to be  
your babysitter or anything.

Made in Highland

BEN  
(pausing)  
But, I mean, you kinda act like  
it.

QUINN  
What the hell is that supposed to  
mean?

BEN  
You're always checking in on me,  
you're telling me what I should  
and shouldn't do--

QUINN  
Hey, I'm just trying to be a good  
friend.

BEN  
Yeah, it's nice but also getting  
on my nerves. And it's only one  
way. It's not like I'm always  
giving YOU advice. Just leave me  
be with that shit. I can work it  
out.

QUINN  
Fine, fine, I'll stop.

BEN  
Ok. I know you mean well.

QUINN  
So we're good?

BEN  
Yeah. We're good.

They keep walking in silence.

**INT. PI DELTA PSI - NIGHT**

ADAM and BEN are talking surrounded by scenes typical of a college party. They are both accompanied by two different women. One looks less than excited about being there with ADAM.

ADAM  
So I sold him his own mother  
fucking lawnmower for two-hundred  
dollars! That stupid son of a  
bitch didn't mind!

BEN  
Damn. That's crazy.

Made in Highland

ADAM

I know. He had it coming, though.  
I heard he's a peeping tom. Cleans  
the girl's locker room at just the  
right moments.

BEN

Shit. How is he still employed  
here?

ADAM

I don't know. I just heard about  
it from one of my friends. The guy  
looks like it too. Ratail. Fat  
motherfucker. Always wears socks  
and sandals at the same time like  
an idiot. You might have seen the  
janitor before.

BEN

Yeah, I think I've seen him  
around. Looks like a total creep.  
Hey, LISA, can you get me a  
refill? Pretty please?

LISA

(looking eager)  
Oh, yeah, totally!

SELENA

(eager for an excuse to leave  
ADAM and his stories)  
I'll go with you.

LISA

Ok!

LISA and SELENA head off toward another part of the party, and  
BEN and ADAM continue their conversation.

ADAM

(discretely)  
Hey, I got my hands on some fun  
pills.

BEN

What kind of pills?

ADAM

So basically if you want to hook up with someone but don't want to go through the hassle of spending the whole night convincing them, you give their drink a little... boost. With this stuff they'll be putty in your hands.

ADAM pulls out a white plastic baggy with a couple of white pills inside. ADAM pulls one out.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Want it?

BEN

(uncomfortably)

Nah, I don't know, man. That's Bill Cosby level shit.

ADAM

C'mon, don't be a pussy. Besides, it's just sex. They wake up like nothing happened. No harm no foul.

BEN

Still, I don't need pills to hook up with someone.

ADAM

Nah, just a pussy. It's ok tho.

BEN

You know what? Fine. Fuck it.

ADAM hands him the pill. LISA and SELENA walk over, with red solo cups in tow.

ADAM

Hey, girls, I just had an idea. We get a good drink swap going. I feel bad making y'all grab all our drinks.

LISA

I mean, why not?

ADAM

Cool.

ADAM gulps, and as he lowers the cup BEN notices him discreetly putting the pill in the rest, dissolving immediately.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Here you go, SELENA.

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SELENA looks a little suspicious, and you get the impression she knows what's going on but is resigned to her fate. She takes it and drinks.

ADAM  
You gonna share yours, BEN?

BEN  
Uh... yeah.

BEN drinks from his cup but doesn't add anything, hesitating as he looks at ADAM.

BEN  
(handing the cup to LISA)  
Here you go.

Lisa looks over as ADAM interrupts.

ADAM  
Hold on, I'm curious if there's a  
difference between our drinks.

ADAM smirks as he takes a sip, then slips another pill, handing the cup to LISA, who gives him a curious look.

LISA  
What are we doing?

BEN looks uncomfortable and doesn't speak.

ADAM  
BEN's sharing his drink.

LISA  
(still confused)  
Why?

ADAM  
(smiling)  
He just wants to let you know he  
appreciates you grabbing one for  
him.

LISA shrugs and takes a deep sip, emerging from her cup and smiling. ADAM looks over at BEN and gives him a subtle thumbs up.

SELENA  
Why are you doing that?

ADAM  
Because I can't believe I got you  
to go out with me.

Made in Highland

SELENA  
(smirking)  
Weird, man.

About ten minutes later, the scene has deteriorated as both SELENA and LISA are making much less sense.

SELENA  
(slurring slightly)  
NO WAY. THAT'S CRAZY.

ADAM  
I know right! Hey, I was just thinking, you wanna explore upstairs with me? I just had idea for something pretty fun to do.

SELENA nods and they both go upstairs, SELENA stumbling, and LISA is left with BEN.

LISA  
Has anyone ever told you, you're like, so sexy?

BEN  
Uh... Nope. Not really. Listen, maybe-

LISA goes in for a kiss, but BEN moves back.

BEN  
(scratching his head)  
Uh, you know, I'm getting kinda tired, I'm gonna head back to my place.

LISA  
Ok, I'll come too.

BEN  
You know, I don't think my dorm mate would appreciate that very much.

LISA  
(slurring even more)  
Fuck your dorm mate.

BEN  
Now that's not very nice.

LISA  
(pausing)  
No, it wasn't.

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Then LISA looks around and sees another guy, making a beeline stumbling a little for them.

LISA (CONT'D)  
Hey, has anyone every told you  
you're super duper hot?

BEN looks uneasy as he leaves the party, looking over his shoulder. The guy looks delighted to have the girl in his company as BEN leaves.

**INT. CAMPUS CAFETERIA - DAY**

BEN's friend group (QUINN, DERRICK, JERRY, and ISAAC) and him are eating in the food court.

JERRY  
So, how was your guys' break?

ISAAC  
DERRICK ate shit skiing during the trip, so that was pretty much the highlight for me. Everything else just couldn't compare to that moment.

DERRICK  
It was not even that bad.

ISAAC  
Oh, it was. It was BAD.

JERRY  
Anyway, I know what these two assholes were up to for most of it, I was there with 'em. What about you, QUINN?

QUINN  
Pretty typical Christmas. Headed home. Ate a shit-ton of food. Came back here.

DERRICK  
Productive trip, I see.

QUINN  
Extremely.

JERRY  
BEN? Anything to say on the subject?

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BEN  
You guys know, I just stayed here.

DERRICK  
I still don't understand how your parents did not attempt to kill or kind-nap you? Because if not, your parents are remarkably strange.

BEN  
I just told them I was really behind on school work. Which was true. Ended up on a ayahuasca retreat though, which was fun.

QUINN  
You're shitting us, right?

BEN  
What? I like to think I'm spiritually in tune enough to handle something like that.

JERRY  
Sure that wasn't just code for getting high all break?

BEN  
Now that would just be plain deceptive.

JAYDEN walks into the room, looking untidy and visibly irritated.

QUINN  
What the hell happened to JAYDEN?

Members of the group turn to take a look at JAYDEN.

JERRY  
No fucking clue. (Turns to BEN)  
You didn't kick his ass again, did you?

BEN  
I wish. But no.

JAYDEN, after seeming unsure and getting up from an empty table, approaches where BEN is sitting.

JAYDEN

(loudly, so that others in  
the food court can hear)

BEN, I'm fed up with your  
bullshit. SANDRA didn't deserve  
what you did to her and frankly  
I'm not too happy with you either.

BEN

(more quietly)

The fuck is this?

JAYDEN

(in the same tone)

Meet up at this party I'll send  
you the address to. We'll have a  
drink-off. Last man standing  
resumes status as a party god.

BEN

(rolls eyes, annoyed)

Oh, you think my flaw is low  
alcohol tolerance.

JAYDEN

No, I think you're a pussy.

BEN

Well for starters I would look  
quite a bit different if I really  
was one. (No reaction from JAYDEN  
or his friend group; the joke  
didn't land) Ah, fuck. (Then,  
resigned) Yeah, I'll prove I'm  
better than you once again.

JAYDEN

Ok, glad to hear you aren't  
completely chicken after all.  
We'll meet up at a party. This  
one's not on greek row, I'll get  
you the address later. Let's do it  
Friday night. Invite your friends;  
you're going to need to throw a  
pity party after I wipe the floor  
with your ass.

BEN

Ok, first of all, that's not how  
that expression works. And  
secondly, it's going to be your  
ass passed out on the floor while  
I'm still partying mine off.

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JAYDEN

I guess we'll find out Friday.

JAYDEN walks out of the food court, and the normal hustle and bustle that dimmed slightly as the conversation's volume increased goes back to normal. BEN resumes eating as though nothing has happened, but everyone at the table is looking at him.

QUINN

This is a bad idea.

BEN

What?

QUINN

You know what I'm talking about.

BEN

Listen, this shit's totally normal. JAYDEN's pissed that I'm above him on the social ladder and can't take it. He's desperate.

DERRICK

Yes, I do agree he seems desperate.

JERRY

And that's why you shouldn't do this. Hardly anyone ever uses a drinking contest to settle something like this. Maybe two friends want an excuse to get blackout drunk or something, but you've got to admit something's off.

BEN

You guys, it's JAYDEN that's off. He's the one who's lost his fucking mind. Trust me, everything's fine.

QUINN

But BEN, this could be potentially unsafe. I mean, JAYDEN definitely looked off. You had to of seen that, and I'm beginning to suspect that he's on something.

BEN

You mean on crack or something?

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QUINN  
I don't know man. Something.

BEN  
So?

QUINN  
So that means if a fight breaks out or something happens he won't be making logical decisions.

BEN  
He never does anyway. What's the problem?

QUINN  
I mean this could be a trap, and you could get seriously hurt. You've got to see this.

BEN and the group pause as the conversation reaches an impasse.

BEN  
Okay. I get it. I know what's going on here.

QUINN  
So that do you think he's up to, then?

BEN  
No. Not him. You.

The group bursts into expressions of surprise and a level of tension builds.

BEN (CONT'D)  
You guys can't take it anymore. I'm leaving you behind. You're stuck with your status and I'm the most popular guy on campus.

QUINN  
The fuck?

BEN (CONT'D)  
And I see now that you don't want me to climb any higher, to outpace you even more. You're just jealous!

JERRY  
Hey man, don't be a dick.

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BEN  
But it's true, right?!

QUINN  
No! It's total bullshit!

The space around them quiets slightly as it did when JAYDEN and BEN had their tense interaction. QUINN seems to realize this and talks quietly and the conversation continues in hushed tones.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
I know you've gone through some  
shit before. So I'm not going to  
say what I want to say right now.  
But-

BEN  
(interrupting)  
Say what?

QUINN pauses.

QUINN  
You're losing your shit.

BEN  
Excuse me?

QUINN  
This whole frat boy act isn't  
working. I can see you're  
miserable!

JERRY, DERRICK, and ISAAC look uncomfortable as the conflict between BEN and QUINN takes over.

BEN  
Oh, really? Open your eyes, QUINN!  
I'm on top of the world!

QUINN  
Are you, though?

BEN continues, unflinching.

BEN  
Yes. Look at me! I can hook up  
with whoever I want to. I can get  
into any group you can think of.  
My rival's going down in flames  
and I'm doing great. I know you're  
only jealous, so fuck off!

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BEN storms off from the table, leaving a frazzled JERRY, DERRICK, and ISAAC, with QUINN who seems hurt more than anything else.

**EXT. OUTSIDE DORM - DAY**

BEN is walking to the dorm from the food court when ADAM comes up, seemingly waiting for him by the residence hall.

ADAM

Hey, I heard about what you're planning with JAYDEN.

BEN

Already?

ADAM

I was nearby and heard enough to know what's going on. Should be fun. You're coming, right?

BEN

Of course. My chicken shit friends don't like it though. They think something's up.

ADAM

(smirking)

You realize they're pissed you're leaving them in the dust, right?

BEN

Yeah, that's what I said.

ADAM

Maybe it's time for you to get some better friends. Anyway, I had a great plan. I've got buddies who are taking things to the next level, and I'm sure they'd love to come.

BEN

(looking a little confused)

What does that mean?

ADAM

You know. College parties have their weed and booze. Meanwhile the adults are on better shit the kids don't get to play with.

BEN

You mean coke and stuff?

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ADAM

Sure. Other, harder shit too. Same concept though.

BEN

Oh, nah, I don't think that's necessary.

ADAM

C'mon, don't be a pussy. You'll be fine. This sort of thing happens all the time and no one gets hurt.

BEN

No, man, hard drugs can fuck you up. I don't want to mess with that shit.

ADAM

Oh, payed attention in middle school when they tell you all about the dangers (uses a baby voice) of the big bad drugs? You already get drunk and smoke weed, when it comes down to it there's really no difference. You know it's bullshit, right?

BEN

It's not that. I just don't want things taken too far. Besides, what if--

ADAM

Oh, get your shit together. Either you're in or you're out. There is no line to walk here.

BEN

Fine. You want to know the real reason? I don't trust you. At all.

ADAM

(sarcastically)

Oh, I'm SO offended. You don't trust me. Nobody trusts anyone around here! Get in, get out, have a good time before the real world catches up to you! Just relax. I'll tell my buddies to meet up as soon as you send me the location.

BEN

No. I'm done. I'm out.

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ADAM  
Fine by me.

ADAM pauses as he and BEN wait for a second, as though neither is finished talking but doesn't know what to say.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
But all the status, all the popularity you find so great now, be ready to watch it fade away. If you don't want to play ball, you shouldn't have got in the game.

BEN  
This isn't what I signed up for.

ADAM  
Whatever. But say bye-bye to hooking up with cheerleaders and partying with the social elites. Your time is up.

BEN  
Bullshit. Even they know not to get into this stuff. Just leave me alone.

ADAM pauses again thinking, and BEN makes as though to leave.

ADAM  
(as though he has transformed)  
Wait! Sorry. That was out of hand. You don't need all that shit anyway, I just wanted you to have a grand entrance.

BEN  
But, you said--

ADAM  
BEN, just stop. Life here is fucked up sometimes, and you can't fix that. Freshmen like you don't see it at first, but this is a twisted paradise. I already admitted it got out of hand.

BEN  
Oh. Ok. Yeah, I probably got a little out of hand today too.

ADAM  
Cool. Well, anyway, I'll be there.

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BEN  
Great. Glad we could work things  
out.

ADAM nods, and they go their separate ways as BEN enters his dorm building, though he doesn't seem completely confident about his decision.

**INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT**

BEN pulls up in his spray-painted pink Honda Accord, with a new front windshield and windows (though the actual body of the car is still untouched). BEN checks his phone, and then gets out of the car and into the house, which is blaring loud music. He walks into a typical party scene, and is greeted by a few people. He recognizes someone who he's seen at other parties and walks over to him.

BEN  
Hey, RYDER, have you seen ADAM  
around?

RYDER  
Nope. Don't think I've seen CRU in  
awhile.

BEN  
Huh? What do you mean?

RYDER  
CRU File. ADAM. ADAM ANTAS?  
Thought you would have heard his  
nickname by now.

BEN  
Nah, why do you call him CRU?

RYDER  
Oh, you don't know? I thought you  
guys knew each other pretty well.

BEN  
I mean, sort of. What's that  
nickname about?

RYDER  
You've been missing out. It's a  
cool story. So CRU is a Christian  
club on campus. Anyway, one of  
ADAM's first pranks happened at  
one of their parties, where he  
spiked the punch there.

(MORE)

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RYDER (CONT'D)

Well, you know, it was a Christian party so normally it's supposed to be sober and shit. Nobody caught on to the fact that people were getting wasted until dozens of people drank the punch. Apparently, some of the stuff ADAM put in there was to make the night a bit more interesting. He snuck a few girls out, meanwhile the CRU president was making out with randos. I'll just say the next day there were a few complaints filed. CRU demanded that the culprit would be caught and expelled. ADAM got away with it despite a pretty intense investigation. They still have a file on the incident, and it was ADAM's first big stunt that earned him the rep as a prankster.

BEN

Damn.

RYDER

Yeah. I can't believe he didn't tell you. It's his first claim to fame.

BEN

Yeah, I don't know. But anyway, do you know where he's at?

RYDER

Oh, no, I have no idea.

BEN

Ok. Where's JAYDEN?

RYDER

Who?

BEN

Sorry, there's this asshole who challenged me to a drinking contest and said to meet up here tonight.

RYDER

Well, if this JAYDEN's coming I haven't heard about it. He sure didn't tell anyone else here.

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BEN

What do you mean? I thought it would be this, well, you know... big event or something.

RYDER

(chuckling)

Dude, it doesn't work like that. And my guess would be that he said that to fuck with you.

BEN

Fuck.

RYDER

Hey, it's not all bad. We've got some of the stronger shit upstairs if you want to improve your night.

BEN

Nah. (Pauses) Well, you know, maybe.

RYDER

Great, well, be my--

In the distance, police sirens can be heard, getting louder as they approach the house.

RYDER (CONT'D)

Guest. Fuck me.

BEN

Oh, shit. How often does-

RYDER ditches BEN as chaos ensues in the house as partiers realize the cops are coming. The music is quickly turned off, highlighting the panicked shouts of people in various levels of drunkenness. Cops pull up to the house. People are streaming out of the house but apparently the cops have caught on, racing around. A cop grabs a megaphone and shouts instructions to the crowd.

FRANK STILLMAN

(via megaphone)

Stay inside the house! DO NOT run!  
It'll just be worse if you do!

BEN looks around inside the house; he's one of the only ones left just standing around, and decides to try and sneak out the back. As he leaves through a backdoor he sees that the backyard is essentially a trap, cordoned off from an exit, and a huddle of people are waiting, surrounded by police.

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BEN

Fuck.

BEN turns to go back in the house, but a cop is pounding on the door, which was apparently locked. BEN runs upstairs, and to his horror sees a scattering of needles and people who seem to have absolutely no clue what chaos is going on beneath them. The room is dingy and there is a dull light illuminating the place. With sluggish expressions they look up at BEN, who terrified goes back down the stairs.

FRANK STILLMAN (O.S.)

Open up! We will break down the door!

BEN

Wait! Wait! I'm in here! Just a second!

BEN looks at the door and then unlocks the handle. Cops immediately bust in, swarming the place as handcuffs are placed on BEN.

FRANK STILLMAN

Hey, thanks for your cooperation. Smart move, kid.

BEN

I swear I had no idea about what was going on here!

FRANK STILLMAN

We'll see. If by some miracle you don't have anything in your system, and because you didn't evade us, you should be okay. Your friends, on the other hand, are in deep shit.

BEN

Friends are a strong word.

FRANK STILLMAN

(chuckles)

Ok. Well, we're still going to take you in like everyone else.

With the continued blaring of sirens, the camera reveals the cops taking the parties into custody and going upstairs to see the assortment of various, very illegal substances. People who appear to be ghost-like and in their twenties are put in handcuffs, but just look mildly surprised, some more just scared.

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**INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT - MOVING**

BEN is sitting in a jail cell with the other party-goers. Leaned over, sitting with his hands over his eyes, a murmur surrounds as his cellmates audibly wonder what will happen next. MRS. CARTER is a woman in her mid to late thirties.

MRS. CARTER  
Alright, BEN WILLARD?

BEN  
Yeah, that's me.

MRS. CARTER  
Come with me.

The cell doors open, and others inside look longingly at BEN as he leaves the cell. He and Mrs. CARTER walk toward the entrance of the precinct.

MRS. CARTER (CONT'D)  
Talking to FRANK it seems like you feel it was a mix up with you being at that party.

BEN  
Yeah, so you talked with him?

MRS. CARTER  
When putting together what happened tonight he mentioned that detail. I don't know if you realize it, but what you saw was probably the tip of a dangerous iceberg.

BEN  
No, when I went upstairs... (he paused, as though realizing this was a potentially embarrassing detail) Uh, when the cops showed up and, well, honestly I looked for where to go and I went up there, I saw everything.

MRS. CARTER  
Hate to break it to you, kid, but that WAS the tip of the iceberg. How drugs get from producers to kids like you is a dirty process. The users play a small role.

BEN  
Damn.

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They reach a waiting area near the entrance.

MRS. CARTER

Well, as you asked we contacted Mr. WYAT and he should be on his way to pick you up.

BEN

Great! Anything I need to do?

MRS. CARTER

No, we have all the statements we need to put together what happened. And it corroborates with you just being a bystander. Now, listen, I know how this will sound but you should at least hear it. (She looks more sternly at him) Parties like this might look different to you, but all too often they lead there. Just stay out of that shit.

BEN

Yeah, I'm starting to see that.

MRS. CARTER

You're free to go whenever your ride is here. Have a good rest of your night!

BEN

Yeah, you too ma'am!

BEN looks around at the waiting area and takes a seat. The entrance leads to a front desk where someone in uniform is sitting, talking to another cop who is in the open area behind the desk. One is a young woman, and the other is a middle-aged man. As BEN settles in, the door opens and to his shock he sees what seems to be the janitor at his school, an overweight man with a rattail.

MRS. JOHNSON

(entering the precinct and leading JACK)

Ok, JACK, you know the drill.

JACK nods with discouragement and follows the cop as they turn to the left of the front desk, though visibly avoiding eye contact with a man at the desk. OFFICER ANTAS, the cop at the desk, is a middle aged woman with an unremarkable appearance.

OFFICER ANTAS

Damn.

Made in Highland

OFFICER EVENSON

What?

OFFICER ANTAS

That's the second time this month he's been in here. I'd bet my life it's for the same offense.

OFFICER EVENSON

What? I would have thought you'd see plenty of regulars here.

OFFICER ANTAS

Oh, you do. And you get used to it fast. People who you think can turn it around never do. But this guy's different.

OFFICER EVENSON

(mockingly)

Oh, a real sob story?

OFFICER ANTAS

(stern, distastefully)

Yeah. A sob story. His parents died when he was just a kid, and his wealthy grandparents let him go through the foster system. He came out living on the streets and addicted to any substance you can name. It's a wonder he's survived. Well, when the grandparents died and the rest of their kids found out what happened, they felt bad so they hired him at the university (the grandparents were descendants of the guy who founded the place and had some leeway there). Anyway, he had seemed to get on the right track, maybe with a few rough patches. He even got married. But then the divorce came, and everything went downhill. He keeps trying to get sober but can't pull it off. And the school board keeps complaining about it, says that if the guy has one more incident and can't get clean than they're gonna have to fire him. Well, looks like tonight there was an incident.

OFFICER EVENSON.

Damn.

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OFFICER ANTAS

To make it worse for the past decade rumors have been circulating around the kids at the college he's some kind of pedophile, a peeping tom, which isn't true at all. Kids just want an excuse to hate someone who looks like that. People make reports about the rumors, but they've all been impossible or nonsensical accusations. Partially because the guy is a grounds maintenance worker and some kid says they saw him cleaning the bathrooms in the girl's locker room. Shit like that is the cherry on top for guys like him.

OFFICER EVENSON

(contemplatively, after a brief pause)

Kids can be assholes.

OFFICER ANTAS

Kids CAN be assholes.

OFFICER EVENSON.

Hey, how do you know all this?

OFFICER ANTAS

(smiles wearily)

I'm his sister.

OFFICER EVENSON.

Shit! You're serious?

OFFICER ANTAS

Yeah.

OFFICER EVENSON

(awkwardly)

Well, sorry.

OFFICER ANTAS

It's alright. I just have a feeling it's going to be a long night here for JACK.

The two cops share a moment of discouraged silence, and the doors to the precinct open to show QUINN wearing warm winter clothes. BEN looks a little awkwardly up at QUINN, then gets up and approaches the front desk.

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BEN  
This is my ride.

OFFICER ANTAS  
Ok then. Have a good rest of your  
night, and stay out of trouble!

BEN  
Sure thing, ma'am.

QUINN and BEN walk silently out to QUINN's car, and they get  
in. There's a moment of silence as they sit there.

QUINN  
You ok?

BEN  
Yeah. I'm fine.

QUINN  
Shit, what were you thinking?

BEN  
I know. I'm sorry.

QUINN  
What the fuck happened? All they  
told me was that you seemed to  
have been caught up in a party and  
told me to come and pick you up.

BEN  
I went to go, you know, face off  
with JAYDEN but it turns out he  
wasn't there. Hard drugs were  
instead, and a bust was on the  
verge, so I kinda got caught up in  
everything.

QUINN  
But you're underage. Didn't you at  
least have a drink?

BEN  
I was going to. Lucky for me I  
didn't get the chance.

QUINN  
Fuck, BEN. This is not how I  
wanted to spend my Friday night.

BEN  
I'm sorry. You were right.  
(MORE)

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BEN (CONT'D)  
I got... pretty fucked up with everything going on. I was a total dick.

QUINN  
Too true. (Pauses) But I'm kinda glad this shit went down.

BEN  
You know? Me too. It was a colossal fuck-up, but it might have been worth it.

QUINN  
Seems like you've been needing a wake up call. Guess this was it.

QUINN starts the car and they pull out of the parking lot.

**INT. BEN AND QUINN'S DORM - NIGHT**

BEN and QUINN are back in their dorm after QUINN picks BEN up from jail. They remove their jackets and QUINN plops himself down in front of the TV, turning it on.

BEN  
Hey, are we good?

QUINN  
(in an exhausted tone)  
Are we good? BEN, we've been through enough shit to make it through this. Yeah, I'm a little pissed, and I probably will be for awhile. But yeah, we're good.

BEN  
Cool. Hey, we're still on for that workout thing after school, right?

QUINN  
(chuckles)  
Yeah, I think so.

BEN  
Ok.

BEN walks over into his room, and gets out his suicide note, which continues to grow longer and longer.

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**INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY**

BEN is working out with QUINN, JERRY, ISAAC, and DERRICK. They are at the bench press station, and QUINN and BEN are both being spotted by the other three. They finish their reps.

QUINN  
(wincing somewhat, getting up  
from the bench seat)  
I still don't know how the hell  
you got me to do this.

BEN  
(sitting up)  
C'mon, it's fun.

QUINN  
Bullshit. Not even you could  
possibly enjoy this.

JERRY  
Hey, I've been wondering, is there  
something I'm missing with the  
whole workout obsession thing?

BEN  
I don't think obsession is the  
right--

QUINN  
It's the right word for it.

DERRICK  
The perfect word.

DERRICK, JERRY, and QUINN are looking at BEN with exasperation.

ISAAC  
(defensively)  
Well, BEN, I think that it's cool.

JERRY  
Hey, we're not saying it's a bad  
thing. I just don't understand why  
the hell it's such a big deal.

QUINN  
Yeah, I mean, since last summer  
you've talked about how you were  
going to get ripped. (QUINN ribs  
BEN) Well, you got your wish. I  
still don't know why.

BEN

I don't really know either. I guess it's just, well, this year I wanted to do everything I had dreamed of doing. I party hard. I break my fair share of rules. I get girls. And I got a six-pack. It was a package deal, I guess.

DERRICK

Makes sense.

JERRY

I mean, I still don't really get it. But to each their own.

BEN

Well, I've made my defense. Not much more to say. You know, this rest period is way too long.

QUINN

It worked!

The group smiles.

JERRY

Well, boss, what's next? What new body part is going to be dead tomorrow.

DERRICK

Please don't answer that question.

BEN

(amused)

Uh, well, we could do skull crushers. They really work the long head of the...

BEN trails off as JAYDEN walks in the gym. He seems to be in a good mood, a smirk on his face as he strides up to BEN.

JAYDEN

Hey, BEN you son of a bitch!

BEN

It's YOU.

JAYDEN

Damn straight. What happened last night? You fell for my little plot.

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BEN  
That's what you call it?

JAYDEN  
(loudly, announcing to the  
anyone near)  
This motherfucker went to the  
wrong party and spent a long night  
in jail. This loser believed my  
bullshit. What charges did they  
slap on you? Hopefully something  
good.

QUINN  
JAYDEN, back the fuck off.

JAYDEN  
Oh, is the poor baby sad because I  
took him off of his little high  
horse?

BEN pauses, then launches into an abusive fury.

BEN  
Oh, like I'm somehow the loser in  
this situation? Coming from the  
guy who had his ass handed to him  
time and time again?

Staff faulty at the gym notice this increase in volume and head  
towards BEN

BEN (CONT'D)  
You can't handle losing again and  
again to me, so you try and pull  
some stunt to land me in jail!  
(BEN pushes JAYDEN aggressively)  
Well, hate to disappoint but I'm  
not facing any charges! You lose  
again!

MRS. WILLIAMS  
Hey! Young man, you're--

BEN (CONT'D)  
Give up! I'll just kick your ass  
again! You're a piece of shit,  
arrogant as fuck, and now you're  
the one exposed as a fraud!

MRS. WILLIAMS  
If you don't stop now you're going  
to--

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BEN (CONT'D)  
(to the crowd)  
This loser just keeps crawling  
back for more. Give up!

MRS. WILLIAMS  
Disciplinary visit it is. If one  
more word comes out of your mouth  
it'll be worse.

BEN's rage seems to subside as JAYDEN walks away with a shocked look.

QUINN  
Shit, BEN.

BEN  
I'm done with him.

MRS. WILLIAMS  
That being said, you're coming  
with me.

BEN is escorted out of the gym by MRS. WILLIAMS. As he leaves the building, he looks back with regret over his shoulder.

#### **INT. DISCIPLINARY OFFICE - DAY**

BEN is sitting outside the same office from when he got into a quick tussle with JAYDEN, this time alone. The door opens and MRS. WILLIAMS leaves the room.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
(from inside the office)  
Ok, MR. WILLARD, come on in.

BEN gets up and walks into the room of a typical school administration office. Portraits line the desk of what is presumably MRS. JOHANESSEN's family, and various certificates are placed on the walls.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
So, it seems you've had quite an  
intense past 24 hours.

BEN  
Yeah, I guess so.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
First a brief trip to the local  
precinct, and now this. Is there  
anything I need to know about?

Made in Highland

BEN

Uh... no, I don't think so. Wait, how did you know about the whole, you know, uh, jail thing?

MRS. JOHANESSEN

(amused)

It shouldn't surprise you that when any of our students take a trip there we are notified, even if there are minor charges. I was contacted with a brief explanation of what seems to have transpired last night.

BEN

Oh. Ok. So you know I was innocent?

MRS. JOHANESSEN

Innocent? You still showed up at the party. BEN, nobody really wants to press charges and you don't really need to defend yourself, so you can cut the bullshit. I'm not some wide-eyed, naive person. I know very well what you guys get up to here, and honestly if I tried to stop it all, my efforts would be futile anyway. I'm not going to punish you if I find out you do what most other students here get up to. So what's going on?

BEN

Ok. So there's some guy whose been on my nerves for awhile. We kinda developed a rivalry this year. Anyway, he, well, he--

MRS. JOHANESSEN

Yes?

BEN

He said he wanted to have a drinking contest.

BEN pauses, as though waiting for MRS. JOHANESSEN's reaction.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

As I hope you can see, I am remarkably un-fazed. Confused, maybe, but nonetheless. Continue.

Made in Highland

BEN

Well, he told me to go to this one location to meet up, but didn't show up. When I got there, and realized he wasn't there, well, I was on my way out when a bunch of cops showed up and all that shit went down.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

Ok. Well, then, that explains the outburst today I was just briefed on. I assume it was him?

BEN nods.

MRS. JOHANESSEN (CONT'D)

Ok, so I pulled up your file and got a bit of a review. And, if I was reading it correctly, there was an incident with you getting in a tussle earlier this year with another freshman. We had to have a quick chat to determine what to do with you both. Same guy?

BEN

Yep.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

I'll be frank with you, BEN, I have other matters I'd like to attend to. I didn't take this job so I could have little sit-down chats with teenage boys who have problems with authority or insecurity or whatever else. While necessary for making a threat, I can't say I especially appreciate MRS. WILLIAMS bringing you to me. Your time is valuable to you, so I don't want to waste yours, either. If there is something serious going on I need to know about then just tell me; I won't be coaxing it out of you. If not I trust you'll be able to handle your own problems.

BEN

Ok. Yeah, that's really it.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

Alright then. You're excused.

Made in Highland



BEN  
Ok, thanks!

BEN gets up and is about to leave when MRS. JOHANESSEN makes another comment.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Oh, and BEN, I may not be a counselor, but we do have these here if you want help. Their job IS to help you manage your problems. However, if you want one piece of advice from me, it would be to know what you're aiming for. These parties and rivalries don't seem to be such a great target. And if you live life not knowing what you're aiming for, you're screwed.

BEN  
(contemplatively)  
Oh. Ok. Thanks for the advice.

BEN makes as though to leave, and then leans back in for one last question.

BEN (CONT'D)  
If you don't mind, what thing are you, you know, aiming for?

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
(smiling)  
A someone rather than a something. But like I said, maybe this is a better conversation to have with a counselor.

BEN  
Huh.

BEN nods and makes his exit from the office.

#### LONELY MONTAGE

There are scenes of bleak surroundings as BEN gives up partying and working out, staying in his room not doing anything or working on his suicide note. BEN rejects offers to party or to hang out with his friends. QUINN checks in on BEN, who is just lying in bed, not doing anything.

Made in Highland

**INT. BEN AND QUINN'S DORM - DAY**

BEN is lying in his bed with the door open, QUINN peers in, and thinks that BEN is asleep. However, as soon as he leaves, BEN opens his eyes, remaining still. Outside QUINN calls JERRY.

QUINN (O.S.)

Hey, JERRY. (brief pause) Yeah, I'm doing good. BEN's really off though. Something has him fucked up. (brief pause) Yeah, it's honestly a little creepy. After he dropped partying I wasn't too disappointed, but then he quit going to the gym and everything else he got up to. All he does is go to classes and head back here. Even then he misses most of them. Hardly eats either. I was wondering if you could come over and hang out for a bit. It might cheer him up. (brief pause) Yeah, tomorrow at three would work. Bring ISAAC and DERRICK. And remember, don't mentioned what happened with JAYDEN. He seems, well, fragile enough as it is. (brief pause) Ok, well, see you then.

QUINN hangs up, and BEN gets up and out of bed.

QUINN

(surprised and nervous)  
Oh! Hey BEN. Didn't realize you were awake.

BEN

Firstly, I'm not fragile. Second, what happened with JAYDEN?

QUINN

Uh, you're right, you aren't. Fragile was the wrong word. Well, tonight I was thinking we could-

BEN

What the fuck happened with JAYDEN?

QUINN sighs.

QUINN  
Ok, well, I guess you'll probably  
find out anyway. A few weeks ago  
JAYDEN attempted suicide.

BEN  
Oh shit.

QUINN  
He's okay now though, I think.  
I've seen him back in class and  
stuff.

BEN  
A few weeks ago? As in after I  
cussed him out and told him to  
give up?

QUINN  
Damn, BEN. Don't blame yourself  
for this.

BEN  
Who said I was blaming myself?

QUINN takes an awkward pause.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Shit. Killed himself.

QUINN  
Tried to. He's fine now, like I  
said.

BEN  
It all comes down to the same  
thing. Fuck. You know, there's  
someone I need to talk to.

QUINN  
Hey, BEN, I don't know if talking  
to JAYDEN is a great-

BEN  
I wasn't talking about JAYDEN.

BEN grabs his jacket and shoes, then sits down and pulls out  
his phone.

QUINN  
Who are you going to talk to,  
then?

BEN looks up at him.

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**EXT. CHAPEL BUILDING - DAY**

ADAM is waiting outside by a chapel building when BEN strolls up to meet him. There is a gloomy scene, with a cloudy sky, contrasting with ADAM's upbeat mood.

BEN

ADAM, I know you're not the religious type, so why the hell did you want to meet me HERE?

ADAM

This is where I earned my nickname, CRU File. I've got a story to tell.

BEN

Wait, hold up, this isn't what I came here to do.

ADAM

I know. But we need to have a little chat.

BEN

I already know what you did here.

ADAM

(surprised)

Oh? Someone tell you about me spiking the punch?

BEN

Yeah.

ADAM

Tell you what I did to EVERETT?

BEN

No, who the hell is EVERETT?

ADAM

Some dipshit. My freshman dorm-mate. He always got on my nerves, bragging about his golden boy lifestyle and trying to drag me to church. Fine at first, then it started to get on my nerves. He's the one who invited me to the party here.

BEN

Why the fuck does that matter?

Made in Highland

ADAM

I was pissed. He had just told me about the perfect girl, some high-school sweetheart he intended to marry. He wouldn't stop talking, and I couldn't... I didn't like that very much. Well, I showed up to the party, and you know the rest.

BEN

I do.

ADAM

Well, except you don't. One of the girls I ran off with? Well, you can guess who.

BEN

Guess who? Oh, shit. You're demented. The girlfriend?

ADAM

Oh, that's not all. I made sure to double dose EVERETT's cup. It takes the effect to the next level, especially for guys. He woke up in a prison cell, doomed to at least a few years in jail to pay for his crimes.

BEN

What the hell happened?

ADAM

C'mon, you can guess. Those pills? Next level?

BEN

Fuck.

ADAM

(grinning)  
Exactly.

BEN

(disturbed)  
We're... we're done here.

BEN determinedly turns and walks away from ADAM.

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ADAM  
(calling out to BEN)  
Oh, BEN, wasn't there a reason you  
came out to visit me here?

BEN pauses, and turns back.

BEN  
(hesitantly)  
Yeah. What happened with the whole  
drinking competition situation?  
Where were you?

ADAM smiles.

ADAM  
Again, can't you guess?

BEN  
I want to know.

ADAM  
Fine. JAYDEN offered me a hundred  
bucks to plant dope on you as you  
walked in. I did my best. I wasn't  
able to pull that off, but either  
way, I convinced you to go to the  
party, so in a way I did have  
success. Once I knew you had  
entered the building, I tipped off  
the cops that there was some  
seriously illegal shit in that  
house, which of course there was.  
Meanwhile, JAYDEN called in a  
complaint about a loud party in  
case the cops ignored me.

BEN  
Fuck you.

ADAM  
Oh, BEN, don't be so pissed. I got  
JAYDEN back. After your little  
outburst in the gym--

BEN  
How did you know about that?

ADAM  
Never mind.  
(MORE)

Made in Highland

ADAM (CONT'D)

After the outburst I told JAYDEN he was a piece of shit human being, that he didn't deserve to waste anymore oxygen, and that he should just do us all a favor and jump off a tall building. Said he should spare us all and off himself.

BEN

Fuck! ADAM, you're... you're...

ADAM

(smiling)

Oh, he didn't jump off a bridge though. I believe it was a mix of potent pills.

BEN

I'm calling the cops.

ADAM

Tell them what? They won't believe you, and you have no proof. What would they even charge me with?

BEN

Fine. I'll get EVERETT out of jail. And I'll tell them about your fucking pills.

ADAM

(smiling)

Oh, you have no evidence. And if you try I'll be sure to get you back later. Don't fuck with me BEN, you should know now you'll just regret it. Thought you could become my protege, carry my legacy. I'm not the first. But you don't seem to have the balls.

BEN

Leave me alone.

BEN walks away quickly, disturbed.

ADAM

(standing still by the chapel)

Hey! BEN! Wait up! Don't you want to hear more stories? I have them.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

ADAM (CONT'D)  
You'd be surprised what I can get  
up to in three years.

**INT. DISCIPLINARY OFFICE - DAY**

BEN bursts into the room where he once waited with ADAM, having gone straight there from talking outside the church with ADAM. He barges into MRS. JOHANESSEN's office.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
(sarcastically)  
Please, come in.

BEN  
I need to tell you about  
something.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
What's going on?

BEN  
I didn't know who to tell, so I  
came here. There's a guy here,  
ADAM. He convinced a someone to  
attempt suicide. He framed someone  
else for rape. Well, not framed  
exactly. Somehow worse. But  
there's more too.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Holy hell. That's a serious  
accusation. You're sure?

BEN  
He just bragged to me about it.  
Yeah, I'm sure.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Who is it?

BEN.  
ADAM. ADAM ANTAS.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Oh shit.

BEN.  
What?

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
ADAM ANTAS's dad all but owns this  
place.

(MORE)

Made in Highland



MRS. JOHANESSEN (CONT'D)  
He's the director of the school board, and probably has more power than the president. ADAM's great-grandparents were directly related to the founder of this institution and he's a major donor now. Damn, BEN, I hope you have enough proof. If I bring up those sorts of charges without conclusive evidence I'm going to be fired. Hell, we had nearly conclusive video evidence and eyewitnesses saying he was guilty with the Dean's car prank. But somehow his dad got him out of that one too.

BEN looks appalled.

MRS. JOHANESSEN (CONT'D)  
But this is different. Please tell me you have some sort of proof.

BEN  
No. He just told me it all.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Damn. But you're sure?

BEN  
I know it.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
Well, I'll look into it. But without proof it's a lost cause. Do you have any leads? Anything that could link him to his... crimes?

BEN  
(desperately)  
No. Wait. There was an incident back a few years where someone spiked the punch at a CRU church party or something.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
How do you - oh.

BEN  
Yeah. It was ADAM. Knowing it's him maybe it can help narrow down the case.

Made in Highland

MRS. JOHANESSEN

No one has touched that file in years, BEN. (pauses) To be honest there's a good chance ADAM will get away with everything, and if it's just that it won't be taken too seriously. I don't see how I can catch him at it. But hell, you said he convinced someone to commit suicide?

BEN

Kind of, he told him to kill himself. Survived though. This guy named JAYDEN.

MRS. JOHANESSEN looks surprised opens a file on her computer and searches something, pulling up a file on her computer.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

Your JAYDEN, I'm guessing. That's the kid who reported on ADAM with the car prank earlier this year.

BEN

Shit. That probably explains it.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

Listen, I need you not to tell another soul what you know. If ADAM finds out you're up to something I'm worried he can do real damage without any concern for consequences.

BEN

You're saying give up?

MRS. JOHANESSEN

I'm saying there's no point in you throwing your life down the drain. Which is what you'll be doing if you try and spread the word about ADAM. I told you, his parents are loaded and, to be honest, complete assholes. ADAM's dad doesn't get along with the Dean well, but he can afford to because of the funding they provide for the school. They're used to being able to push people around.

BEN

Damn. So ADAM gets away with it?

Made in Highland

MRS. JOHANESSEN

I mean, like I said, I can do some under-the-radar looking into it. But I doubt it will go anywhere.

BEN

Fuck.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

I know it sucks, but you have to realize this is no new phenomenon. There are people, who until the day they die, will get away with all of their misdeeds. Some people, and I would count ADAM and his father in this group, only look out for themselves. And they aren't always held accountable. It doesn't help that ADAM's got a charismatic flow that convinces everyone he's just an innocent prankster.

BEN

And that's supposed to make me feel better?

MRS. JOHANESSEN

It means it's not your job to stop ADAM. In theory, it's mine. And even I can't.

BEN

But MRS. JOHANESSEN, he's drugging girls and sleeping with them. That's seriously twisted, not to mention illegal, and he isn't going to stop.

MRS. JOHANESSEN

(sighs)

You act so surprised. I wish it was as uncommon as you seem to think it is. College guys have this mentality that girls are only good for sleeping with. And guys like ADAM, they take that to the next level. They don't even care about consent, much less recognizing them as anything more than a sex object.

BEN

Well... what do I do, then?

Made in Highland

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
About ADAM? Nothing. For  
everyone's sake. I know it's hard,  
but it will be worse if you sound  
the alarm.

BEN  
I can't forget it. I won't be able  
to forget about it.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
And I'm sorry you can't. Sometimes  
the only way to get past it is to  
find something else to take your  
mind off it. Do something else.

BEN  
Damn. Okay. Well, I'll try.

MRS. JOHANESSEN  
It's noble that you're so  
determined to see justice here.  
But I'm afraid it's a lost cause.

BEN leaves the office deeply discouraged, and slams the door  
angrily on his way out.

#### **EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY - MOVING**

BEN is visibly disturbed after his interaction with MRS. JOHANESSEN. He walks over to his dorm building, but after a pause, he continues to walk as cloudy weather continues. He continues to walk even after leaving campus, processing everything that he just experienced. His surroundings become a blur, as internally the tempo of his thoughts spiral out of control. He enters almost a panicked state, until he snaps out of it in front of a large cathedral. He stands outside the building, appreciating its imposing figure and pondering if he should enter. He seems to shake out of it and continues walking.

#### **INT. BEN AND QUINN'S DORM - DAY**

BEN is sitting in his room, writing a now novel-length suicide note. QUINN is in the living area, sitting on the couch and scrolling through social media on his phone.

QUINN  
Hey, Ben.

BEN (O.S.)  
Yeah?

Made in Highland

QUINN

What do you think about hitting the gym? We haven't done it in awhile.

BEN

(amused, as he gets up from writing, putting the note in a desk drawer)

I never thought in a million years that you would be the one trying to drag me to go working out.

QUINN

Hey, I'm not tryin' to drag you anywhere. But it's weird that you just quit. And I don't just mean that about working out. What's going on, man?

BEN

I... I don't know. I guess it was fun partying, but that one thing kinda freaked me out. I saw some seriously fucked up shit upstairs where I was arrested. I mean, damn, I don't want to end up like that.

QUINN

Don't blame you.

BEN

I know I had this whole plan to live out everything I thought I wanted, but to be honest it was in a weird way the same as being super uptight. Still felt like I was missing something. I know I achieved what I set out to, but I'm ready to throw in the towel. I already gave up partying like hell and trying to perfect my physique.

QUINN

Well, you tried. On to the next strategy. (seeks BEN's hopeless mood) Dude, you're only eighteen. You've got time to figure this shit out.

BEN

Totally, yeah.  
(MORE)

Made in Highland

BEN (CONT'D)  
I guess I'll just try the next  
thing, and if that doesn't work,  
then the thing after that.

QUINN  
There you go.

BEN  
Back to square one, I guess.

QUINN  
Nah, don't say that. You've  
learned a lot so far.

BEN  
I guess.

BEN heads back into his room, and pulls out the note again.  
QUINN walks in to follow up, and sees the note.

QUINN  
Shit. What's that? A novel?

BEN  
Oh, uh, no, I've been gone awhile  
for my intro to lit class, and  
professor said I could make it up  
if I did this crazy long  
assignment. Some life story shit.  
But I'm almost done, I think.

#### **INT. BEN'S DORM BEDROOM - NIGHT**

BEN is sleeplessly lying on his back, looking up at the ceiling, pondering everything that happened with ADAM and MRS. JOHANESSEN. He gets up, not groggy at all, and walks over to QUINN's bedroom. He makes as though to knock on the door, but then stops and sighs. He turns back and goes back into his bed.

#### **INT. BEN'S DORM BEDROOM - DAY**

QUINN enters the room after finishing classes in the afternoon, and checks in on BEN to see he's still in bed, presumably having been there for the entirety of the day, on his phone scrolling through social media.

QUINN  
Hey.

BEN  
(not looking up from his  
phone)  
Hey.

QUINN  
You been in that same spot all  
day?

BEN  
Yeah, guess so.

QUINN  
I mean, you're paying for tuition  
here, you might as well go to  
class.

BEN  
(looking up)  
Damn, that was out of nowhere.

QUINN  
Sorry, that came out a little  
aggressively. Point is, you're  
freaking me out. You don't do  
anything anymore. I'm getting  
worried.

BEN  
Dude, I get it, but I've just been  
super tired recently. Not much to  
it.

QUINN  
I don't know. I'm at the point  
where I might bring it up to  
someone else, someone who might be  
able to help.

BEN  
(startled)  
Holy hell, QUINN, it's not like  
I'm gonna kill myself.

QUINN  
Bro, nobody said that. And still.

BEN  
Tell you what, if I go to class  
today, will you quit with the  
worrying?

QUINN  
Fine. For now.  
(MORE)

Made in Highland

QUINN (CONT'D)  
Go to your last class of the day  
and I'll stop bugging you about  
it.

BEN  
Deal.

BEN rolls out of bed, sweatpants and sweatshirt on, puts a  
baseball cap on his head, grabs his backpack and starts putting  
on his shoes.

QUINN  
Wow, that was almost impressive.

BEN  
Thank you.

BEN walks out of his dorm door on his way to class.

**INT. SPANISH I CLASSROOM - DAY**

BEN walks into his Spanish classroom and groggily sets his  
backpack down at a desk.

SPANISH PROF  
Ok class, as we all know by now,  
the best means of understanding  
Spanish is to let it happen  
organically. We've begun  
progressing into a wider verb  
vocabulary, as well as irregular  
conjugations, so to begin the  
class I need you to find a partner  
and conduct a casual conversation,  
but replace all verbs and nouns  
you can with its Spanish  
counterpart. We will reconvene as  
a class once there's a lull, at  
which time we'll resume the  
lecture on Mayan civilization.

BEN rolls his eyes and looks at ARIA.

BEN  
Welp. Time to pretend I know some  
Spanish for two minutes, I guess.

ARIA  
(sarcastically)  
That's an optimistic way of  
putting it.

Made in Highland



BEN

Hey, I'm just being realistic.  
We're about to watch a  
presentation entirely in English  
about the Mayan civilization so  
that we have "a better  
understanding of the language". I  
officially regret showing up  
today.

ARIA

Yeah, looks like you really spent  
a lot of time getting ready for  
the day. What a sacrifice.

BEN

Wow, ARIA, today you've only  
spoken in sarcasm. You should try  
and keep the streak going.

ARIA

Well today's the first day in  
about a month you've showed up to  
the class. I feel like that's the  
most remarkable thing about this  
conversation.

BEN

(pretending to be flattered)  
Oh my, you've noticed my absence.  
I knew you were head over heels in  
love with me.

ARIA

(joining in with a dramatic  
tone)  
Oh no, I've exposed myself, how  
could I have let it slip so  
easily.

BEN

Don't worry, I'm used to it. It  
always comes down to this one time  
or another.

ARIA

(Chuckles wryly)  
Yeah, I'm sure you could list all  
your female friends at this place  
on one hand.

BEN

Wrong, I wouldn't even need one.

Made in Highland

ARIA

Oh, you're even worse than I thought. Have you become even more of an asshole during hibernation? I would have hoped it'd be a healing retreat or something. You talked about ayahwasca once, right?

BEN

Ok, that was my bad. And fine, I'll count you as one friend. There you go. One finger. (BEN flips her off)

ARIA

Mature. But seriously, you see it that way?

BEN

I mean, when a straight guy gets to know a straight girl there's inherently the question of whether it's romantic or not. The closer they get, the more odds shrink that it's purely friendship. By the end of it you're either the villain or the victim. Either a guy won't be able to commit because he's gonna be attracted to other girls, or she just wants attention.

ARIA

Firstly, that speech was as corny as the rich kid asshole existence you exhibit. Secondly, that's pessimistic, even for me. So you think a guy and girl can get never get close to one another without it turning into something more?

BEN

Maybe there are exceptions, and they prove the rule. None of my close friends are girls because it just makes things complicated. Sure, if they're fifty years old that's something else. But otherwise, it's either a date or nothing at all.

ARIA

Damn.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

ARIA (CONT'D)  
So you're saying that friendship  
with the opposite sex only leads  
to pain and suffering?

BEN  
Deep friendship. That's the only  
qualifier.

ARIA  
You really think that everyone's  
intentions are that messed up?

BEN  
(in an airy tone)  
Listen, I was once young and naive  
like you were--

ARIA  
You're a year younger than me.

BEN  
Shhhh. The point is, I've tried  
what you're talking about. I gave  
up on your idea BECAUSE I've tried  
it. So going to college I didn't  
make the same mistakes.

ARIA  
Oh, poor you, did you get your  
heartbroken?

BEN  
(chuckles)  
When you put it like that...

ARIA  
(rolling her eyes)  
Good grief.

BEN  
(amused)  
Hey. Don't make fun of my pain.

ARIA  
Honestly I'm surprised. I mean  
yeah, I know you've objectified  
women since the start of this  
class...

BEN  
Hey.

ARIA (CONT'D)

But I'm surprised at how cynical  
you are. You seemed more like a  
fun-loving frat boy than a  
wrinkled, sexist, bitter  
philosopher.

BEN

That's actually my rapper name.

ARIA

Oh yeah?

BEN

You should check out my SoundCloud  
sometime.

ARIA

Wow, great way to segway out of  
the conversation.

BEN

I felt like it was leading our  
friendship to an unhealthy depth.

ARIA

Uh oh. I knew you'd fall for me  
soon.

BEN

How the turn tables...

ARIA

I think we should stop talking.

BEN

Good idea.

SPANISH PROF

I sense a lull. Now, I believe it  
is time to resume our lecture on  
Mayan culture, particularly the  
significance of child sacrifice in  
ancient cultures...

BEN and ARIA share an amused glance as the lecture continues.

**EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - NIGHT**

DERRICK, ISAAC, JERRY, QUINN, and BEN are walking back after  
seeing a movie in theaters.

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ISAAC

So this is how people spend their time when they don't get wasted on Friday nights? Go to the movie theater?

DERRICK

Well there is also homework, enjoying hobbies, board games-

ISAAC

I'm gonna stop you right there with the board games. Normal people don't play board games. Fucked up people play board games.

QUINN

Why the hostility man? Even I'm fine with some occasionally.

ISAAC

You're saying you're not fucked up?

QUINN

(amused)

Yeah, you got me there.

BEN

He really does.

ISAAC

Damn, BEN, I mean without partying you must have a whole hell of a lot of free time on your hands.

BEN

I guess, yeah. Oh, hey, speaking of free time spring break's coming up and I was thinking about going on a solo camping trip.

JERRY

Yeah, that IS coming up, isn't it?

BEN

Yep. I was looking forward to some time outside in the woods, even though I really have no idea what I'm doing.

ISAAC

Oh, I can help you out. I used to go camping all the time.

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BEN

Perfect. The idea of going out by myself is kinda scary as hell, but it could also be super fun. I really have no idea what to expect as far as safety precautions and stuff.

ISAAC

Oh, you should be fine. I haven't had any problems there.

BEN

Ok. Well, even so, I was just thinking it might be good to make sure I can protect myself from predators. You know, in case a bear or a wolf gets hungry or, uh, something.

DERRICK

That doesn't seem like a very likely scenario.

BEN

Maybe, but I was wondering if any of you have some sort of easy-to-operate weapon I could use for self defense or something.

DERRICK

(surprised)

I have a pocket knife you could use, although I doubt it would do you much good. Bear spray is probably-

BEN

(cutting DERRICK off)

Well, that would be fine, but I was talking something more... intense.

QUINN

Like what?

BEN

Well, I meant more like a gun or something.

The group has a surprised reaction, with the exception of ISAAC.

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ISAAC

You're in luck. I inherited a super dope old pistol from my grandpa. Old fashioned revolver. Still works though, I think.

QUINN

(to BEN)

Hold up. You sure? That shit's heavy duty.

BEN

I don't plan on using it or anything. And ISAAC, that pistol sounds perfect. I don't want a super loaded rifle or anything.

ISAAC

Ok. You know how to shoot a gun?

BEN

Oh, no, I haven't ever shot one.

ISAAC

Well, you're target's got to be pretty close then if you want a hope at hitting anything. But yeah, I don't think you'll need to use it. Should be fine.

BEN

Sounds good then.

JERRY

Damn. You sure want to pack heat? Honestly it might be more dangerous to do that than to just leave it alone.

BEN

Nah. Mostly I'm just looking for peace of mind.

ISAAC

Whatever you say. I've got it in my dorm. Let me know before you leave, and I'll pass it off to you.

JERRY

There's a gun in our dorm, ISAAC? Holy shit.

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ISAAC  
What? I've never used it or anything.

DERRICK  
Objectively speaking that seems to be a very bad idea.

ISAAC  
Whatever. I've been fine so far.

JERRY  
ISAAC, you really need to tell us about that kind of shit.

ISAAC  
(defensively)  
Sorry, DAD. Want to know where I keep the weed, too?

JERRY  
You've got weed our dorm?

ISAAC  
Damn. I thought I told you.  
Besides, it's not much. You can't even smell it.

DERRICK sighs and puts his face in his hand, stopping.

JERRY  
ISAAC, get rid of that shit. Smoke it or something. If we get busted with that, we're fucked. How long has it been there?

ISAAC  
It doesn't matter. I'll make it disappear tomorrow.

DERRICK  
Thank you for the heads up.

QUINN  
Ok, we should probably head to our dorm. See you guys later.

JERRY  
Bye!

DERRICK and ISAAC wave, as BEN and QUINN walk toward their dorm.

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**INT. BEN'S DORM BEDROOM - NIGHT**

BEN and QUINN are watching a movie in their dorm, as BEN is texting ARIA on his phone, her contact being ARIA with a thumbs down emoji.

QUINN  
Dude, you're missing the climax.

BEN  
(detached)  
That's what she said.

QUINN  
Damn. (Looks over to BEN's phone)  
Dude, why are you texting SANDRA's  
roommate? And why is there a  
thumbs down emoji next to her  
name?

BEN  
Huh?

QUINN  
ARIA, right? Wasn't that her?

BEN  
Yeah, guess they were roommates.

QUINN  
Huh. Well that can't go badly.

BEN  
I don't even know what you're  
talking about.

BEN smirks as the movie continues.

**INT. JERRY AND ISAAC'S DORM - DAY**

BEN and QUINN are playing video games with ISAAC and JERRY in their dorm. They are sitting on a couch, all holding Xbox controllers. A couple weeks have passed, it is now near spring break.

QUINN  
Damn! You guys win again!

JERRY  
I warned you not to challenge us  
to try and play group FPS games.

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BEN

That's essentially asking us to play group PFS games. Besides, you guys have way more experience here. You totally have the upper hand.

ISAAC

Hey, no one said this was a fair fight. You guys were screwed from the beginning.

QUINN

Too true. Hey, what are you guys doing for spring break? It's right around the corner.

JERRY

Oh, me, ISAAC, and DERRICK are taking a trip to Miami. It's a bachelor's trip, since none of use have landed a babe yet. It's gonna be dope.

BEN

Speaking of which, where's DERRICK now? I thought you guys shared a dorm or something.

ISAAC

Nah, he agreed to get his own dorm. His grandparents are loaded, so it wasn't a problem for him.

QUINN

DERRICK's a funny character.

JERRY

Well that guy's been through some crazy shit. His parents pretty much abandoned him and left him with his grandparents when he was like ten. Really fucked him up.

BEN

Shit.

ISAAC

Yeah. I can't believe you guys haven't heard about it until now.

QUINN

We never really asked about it. Wish I did sooner.

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BEN

Me too. Hey, ISAAC, you still have that old revolver?

ISAAC

Oh, shit. I totally forgot about it. But of course, it's in the drawer next to my bed.

JERRY

Why did you even bring that here?

ISAAC

(while getting up and going to his bedroom)

I don't know. Safety, maybe? Just thought it might be a good idea.

JERRY

Or maybe a really bad idea.

ISAAC

Whatever. It came in handy, now, didn't it?

ISAAC walks out of the bedroom, and hands the gun over to BEN, who takes it in his hands. The revolver is old fashioned, as though something out of a western.

BEN

Cool.

QUINN

You sure you want to be carrying it around?

JERRY

Packing heat is serious. Especially without a permit. Not to mention you could be kicked out of this place.

BEN

I know. I'll just take it to my dorm and then bring it on the trip.

BEN takes the gun, and tries to figure out where to put it. He motions around trying to find a good spot when he settles on just holding it.

BEN (CONT'D)

This this has a safety mode, right?

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ISAAC

Think so. Not sure. Probably don't want that point that your junk though.

BEN nods and looks uneasily at the gun.

QUINN

So, BEN, I know you've been planning to do this alone, but I was wondering if you wanted any company. I still don't have any other plans.

BEN

Thanks, but I think I will go it alone. I need to work on some shit.

JERRY

You good?

BEN

Yeah.

ISAAC

To be honest we've noticed you seem to kinda have been through a dark patch. (Looks hesitant) Sure you can handle bringing a gun?

BEN

Man, don't worry. It's nothing like that.

ISAAC

Ok. Well, I don't want to sound like some pussy who's super sensitive and shit but I hope you get feeling better.

JERRY

And I feel the same.

QUINN

(smiling)

You know, I been meaning to talk to you, ISAAC, about toxic masculinity.

ISAAC

(in a mix of humor and honest annoyance)

Hey, fuck off.

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QUINN laughs.

BEN

Well, either way, I appreciate it. Maybe later we can have a chat or something.

JERRY

Sure. Well, anyway, I've got to head out. You know, BEN, I'm starting to understand why you got into working out so hard. I swear I'm gonna have abs in like a week.

BEN

(smiling)

Good luck with that. Well, me and QUINN should probably head back.

ISAAC

Alright. You bring that back in one piece, BEN. Also bring back you in one piece.

BEN

Sure thing.

JERRY

Good luck not blowing off your junk!

BEN

How moving. See ya.

BEN and QUINN leave the dorm. As they walk, BEN starts to slow his pace.

BEN

Hey, I'll meet you at our room in a bit, ok?

QUINN

Yeah, you goin' somewhere?

BEN

Nowhere special, just gonna hangout with a friend before we part ways during the break.

QUINN

Gotcha, who is it?

BEN

Uh... just someone I know from class, don't think you'd know them.

QUINN

Whatever you say man, I'll see you later then.

BEN

Later!

They continue walking, having gone separate ways.

**EXT. HIKING TRAIL**

BEN and ARIA sit on a bench overlooking a sunset at the end of a short trail. The sun is just about to touch the horizon.

BEN

Yeah no way. I would never.

ARIA

(amused)

Why not?

BEN

I don't know. The Bachelor... it's a show to laugh at, you know?

ARIA

Right right, cheesy as hell and everything, but you don't think it'd be fun?

BEN

The last thing I need is televised evidence of my dating life.

ARIA

Yeah it'd probably run way longer than anyone'd care to watch, huh?

BEN

(A little taken aback)

Hey.

ARIA

(wincing)

Sorry. Just meant it as a joke.

BEN

Yeah, you're good.

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There's a bit of an awkward pause.

ARIA  
I'm proud of you, though.

BEN  
(laughs)  
Huh?

ARIA  
Well in like the month since you  
reappeared in Spanish class you've  
become much less of a douchebag.

BEN  
(smiling)  
Wow, my esteem is just really  
getting a big ol' boost from this  
conversation.

ARIA  
Hey, you're welcome. Just glad to  
know I could prove you wrong.

BEN  
Ok what's that about? You mean the  
Bachelor?

ARIA  
(laughs)  
No, earlier this year. You were  
saying you could only be friends  
with dudes. Congrats.

BEN  
(rolls eyes)  
Yeah. Right. I definitely don't  
look back on anything I said in  
that class is cliché, cheesy, or  
just annoying as fuck.

ARIA  
(shrugs)  
What can I say? Growth.

There's a lull in conversation.

BEN  
I don't know, though.

ARIA  
What do you mean?

BEN

I act nicer, I think. But at the end of the day, I might have the same problem.

ARIA

And what's that?

BEN

You don't feel weird at all? Like no question, all this is, just friendship.

ARIA

I mean, right now, yeah.

BEN

But what about in one year, after we keep talking like this and hanging out and all that? That's still all it's gonna be?

ARIA

Honestly, I don't know. I never thought I'd spare a second thinking about you outside of class, and here we are. But do you honestly know what you want?

BEN

I... I do. I really like being around you.

ARIA

And you having been talking to, DMing other girls or anything?

BEN

Hold on, we aren't even dating. Totally unfair standard.

ARIA

Case in point. This is a good option. It's not what you want.

BEN pauses, unsure how to respond.

BEN

Listen. I'm sorry. It's just that-

ARIA

(not in aggressive tone)  
Just cut the bullshit, BEN. I get it.

(MORE)

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ARIA (CONT'D)

You aren't choosing between this or nothing, it's between waiting for this to come through or just getting something else you want. I get that it's not worth the risk to you. You need something now, and I just don't want to be that for you.

BEN

That's not fair.

ARIA

True though?

BEN

No, I... I'm sorry ok. Sorry I brought it up.

ARIA

Hey, I played an equal role in that. I'll take the blame as necessary.

BEN

(smiling)

Appreciate it.

The sunset has now just settled below the horizon.

BEN (CONT'D)

What's next then?

ARIA

Dunno. Maybe time to figure it out. Come back later and re-asses?

BEN

Right. More time.

ARIA

(smiling)

Hey, if you can wait the whole break I'll give you credit for it. Even if you are on some solo camping trip.

BEN

(smiles back with a weary expression)

Sounds like a plan.

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ARIA  
Well, not much left here to see,  
time to head back?

BEN  
Sure.

**EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS**

BEN and QUINN walk up to JERRY, DERRICK, and ISAAC later that day. Around them is the hustle and bustle of college students preparing to head out for spring break. DERRICK is loading his car, a black BMW, with a few bags, putting them in the trunk.

QUINN  
Damn, DERRICK, nice whip.

DERRICK  
Thank you.

JERRY  
Looking forward to a trip in it.

ISAAC  
(wearing a large cowboy hat  
and throwing a backpack in  
the backseat)  
Road trip time!

QUINN  
Totally. Well, you guys have fun.  
I'm going to have my fair share of  
fun too, you know.

JERRY  
Yeah? What are you up to?

QUINN  
I'm planning on heading out to the  
west coast. Got a cousin there.  
Should be fun.

ISAAC  
Nice. Guess we're all heading to  
the beach. Except for you, BEN.  
Good luck on your camping trip.

BEN  
Thanks. Maybe not as exciting, but  
I'm looking forward to some peace  
and quiet.

JERRY  
(under his breath)  
Heads up. There's JAYDEN.

JAYDEN is putting bags into his car next to SANDRA, and the two of them are talking. Around him seem to be a couple of new friends. BEN looks a little troubled, then walks over determinedly over to JAYDEN.

QUINN  
BEN! That's not-

BEN  
(turning back)  
I need to do this.

BEN reaches JAYDEN, and they share a brief, cold look.

BEN  
JAYDEN, I just need you to know  
I'm so sorry about all that shit I  
pulled this year. It was fucked  
up.

JAYDEN nods.

JAYDEN  
Me too.

BEN nods, and walks back over to his friend group, who are surprised and visibly relieved. DERRICK nods to BEN, who smiles.

JERRY  
Someone please translate. I don't  
speak fluent nodding your head.

QUINN  
I think it's code for "we're good  
here." Right?

BEN  
Pretty much.

As they're talking, ARIA passes by, and waves from a distance. BEN waves back.

QUINN  
You two still talking?

BEN  
I think? Not sure.

ISSAC  
Huh?

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BEN  
Never mind.

DERRICK  
JERRY, ISAAC, we need to leave soon.

JERRY  
Gotcha. Ok, well, bye!

BEN  
See you.

QUINN  
Yeah, later, guys!

ISAAC, JERRY, and DERRICK get into the car and pull out of their parking spot. As this happens ADAM is visible talking with a group of girls in a different parking lot, dramatically telling some sort of story.

QUINN  
(looking over at ADAM)  
Hey, whatever happened with you and ADAM?

BEN  
Oh, fuck, I thought I told you. Found out he's a total douchebag. He's done a shit ton of horrible things I didn't know about so I told him never to contact me again.

QUINN  
Oh, damn. That sounds intense.

BEN  
Yeah, it kinda was. But I've moved past that.

QUINN  
That's good.

They both look around at the departing college students preparing for spring break, a somewhat awkward pause.

QUINN (CONT'D)  
Well, guess this is goodbye.

BEN  
Yep.

They share a hug.

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QUINN  
See you after spring break, man.

BEN  
Yeah.

QUINN  
(giving BEN an intense look,  
putting his hand on BEN's  
shoulder)  
You going to be okay? You seem  
kinda off today.

BEN  
I'll be fine. Don't worry.

QUINN  
If you say so. I'm gonna go pack  
up.

BEN  
Ok. My shit's already in the car.

QUINN  
Sounds good. See you!

BEN  
(walking toward his Honda  
Accord)  
Bye!

#### EXT. CAMPING GROUNDS - DAY

BEN drives the Accord that still has the pink spray paint for a few hours until he reaches a sparsely inhabited camping site. There isn't anyone else there who is camped out there or any park rangers visible, though there is a cabin on one side of the campgrounds. There is a lake that can be seen from the main entrance, though not right next to the entrance or cabin. He parks by a site and gets out, looking at the tent, but opts instead to take out the note and revolver. He sits on a log by the fire pit, writing on the back of a textbook. BEN is continuing to write and reaches a point to which he stops. He looks back at his note, then signs it. He checks his watch, revealing that it is late afternoon. BEN has the gun out, fiddling with the old fashioned revolver, sitting on the same log by the fire. He accidentally messes with the gun to expose the chamber, and he can see there is only one bullet left, which he takes note of. He sets the gun down on the ground, below the log, thinking. A few moments pass.

ALAN  
(from a distance)  
Excuse me!

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BEN jumps, startled by the sudden noise.

BEN  
Uh, yeah?

ALAN is a park ranger, a bearded man who appears to be in his mid sixties, who is approaching from the distance.

ALAN  
You alright?

BEN  
What do you mean?

BEN kicks the pistol further from the ranger's view as ALAN approaches.

ALAN  
I mean, this place is closed.

BEN  
Huh?

ALAN  
I guess I could do a better job of making it obvious. I don't really have any signs for that and I had to open up the gates as a friend of mine recently drove through to check in.

BEN  
What do you mean?

ALAN  
Like I said, the park's closed, son.

BEN  
Oh, sorry, my maps app said it was open.

ALAN  
Gotcha, well, I hate to break it to you but this site isn't very safe at the moment. There was a bear attack here a couple weeks ago, made national news and everything. Camper went for a hike and didn't come back. It's been a problem ever since.

BEN  
Damn, that's intense.

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ALAN

I'm having trouble cutting through the red tape at the moment but we're working on figuring out a solution. Point is, you're best off finding another place to stay tonight.

BEN

Really? I mean, wow. Didn't realize animal attacks were really a serious threat.

ALAN

Yeah, in normal circumstances you're right. No idea why the grizzly has an affinity for this area, but there are plenty of sites within a couple hours of here that have had no issues. Better safe than sorry, you know.

BEN

I guess.

ALAN

Sorry to interrupt your trip, looks like you were just getting settled. (ALAN sees the papers lying around) You've been busy?

BEN

Yeah, you know, I just really like being able to write out here where it's remote.

ALAN

Great way to spend a weekend like this. Well, like I said, I'd recommend packing up.

BEN

Ok, well, thanks for the heads up.

ALAN

Of course, it's my pleasure. Let me know if you need anything, I'll just be back at my cabin.

BEN

Ok, sounds good. Thanks!

BEN nods as ALAN walks away, heading back up to his cabin. He then begins to pack up his supplies.

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BEN continues to pack up, putting everything away until only the papers are left. He takes them and puts them in the car, then closes the trunk and gets into the drivers seat. But when he turns the key, the car shudders and won't start.

BEN  
Seriously?

BEN makes multiple attempts without success.

BEN  
You've got to be kidding me. Fuck.

BEN walks out of the car, slamming the door and walking in the direction of the man's cabin. It's beginning to get dark as BEN knocks on the door of ALAN's cabin, which is an unremarkable box that one might expect a low-budget campground to have.

ALAN  
(as he opens the door)  
Hello there. Something wrong?

BEN  
Yeah, my car won't start.

ALAN  
(surprised)  
Oh. That is a problem.

BEN  
Hey, I know it's asking a lot, but could you like drive me to a nearby hotel or something?

ALAN  
Ah, see, I would be up for that if only I had a car.

BEN  
Shit.

ALAN  
But hey, you can call a friend or something. Hopefully you've got one nearby.

BEN  
I do have, wait, fuck.

ALAN  
What's up?



BEN

Oh, sorry, I've got friends but they're on vacation, at least like ten hours away.

ALAN

Well in that case, I guess you're stranded.

BEN

Damn.

ALAN

Like I said earlier, you don't really want to be staying out in a tent if you don't have to. I can make room in here if you can bring some of your stuff in assuming you don't have any other options besides staying the night.

BEN

Oh, thanks. I appreciate it.

BEN walks over to his car, noticing clouds above.

#### **INT. ALAN'S CABIN - NIGHT**

BEN and ALAN are sitting in ALAN's cabin, which from the outside is a nondescript outpost, but from the inside is full of life despite the compact space. BEN reclines in a comfortable chair while ALAN sits in a recliner, both equidistant from a fire but not pointed directly at it. It's a space that emanates warm tones, a contrast to the darkness outside. There are a few potted plants, a tea kettle and pot steaming with the contents of a fresh batch of tea. There's also a record player with a set of different albums and a Bible on a shelf, including Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*?

BEN

(sipping tea from a small cup)

That's a sick record player.

ALAN

I appreciate that, it actually used to belong to my mom. It's a miracle it works at all anymore.

BEN

(Motioning over with his cup)

You have a favorite album?

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ALAN

Oh, that's a good question. As much as I love everything on that shelf, Marvin Gaye's What's Going On may have to take the cake. Ever heard it before?

BEN

No, can't say I have.

ALAN

Can't blame you, I guess you could say it was a little before your time. You have a favorite record?

BEN

Oh, I don't know. I guess to me most sound the same, every album has a few songs I really like but most of the time the rest of it just seems like filler.

ALAN

Yeah, that's the thing about one of these. (He says gesturing toward the record player) Can't really skip very easily. I guess that's part of the beauty of it though.

BEN

What do you mean?

ALAN

Well, what I love most about putting a record on is listening to the story, front to back. Something about soaking it in, just hits the spot sometimes.

BEN

Everything on there tells a story?

ALAN

One way or another, yeah. Some are a little more veiled than others.

BEN

That's why you like the Marvin Gaye one?

ALAN

That certainly plays a role, I think.

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BEN

Yeah, sometimes I wish I could appreciate more stuff like that. Haven't really learned to yet though.

ALAN

Well the key with music, or anything, is learning how to receive it as much as anything. If you have something specific you're looking for, you risk not finding it. And if you aren't looking for anything at all, why bother, you know?

BEN

(smirking)

Quite the profound advice.

ALAN

(smiling)

Hey can you blame me? Out here there's not a lot to do but think and learn to appreciate things.

BEN

I don't know. I've tried to find a lot of things trying to what will finally click like that. Felt good sometimes, but I haven't really found that thing yet.

ALAN

How so?

BEN

Well, I don't know. To be honest, I feel like my default setting is more... a lower place mentally, I guess. And over time I find things that kinda get me over that feeling. But it's like I build a tolerance to whatever that is, if it works at all, you know?

ALAN

That can't be easy.

BEN

Oh, it's ok. Like I said, you just found your thing and I haven't found mine.

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ALAN

Well for the record, these stories aren't the thing that saved me, not in itself at least. And the way out, at least for me, wasn't finding something that made me feel good longer. That's just something that keeps your head above even more before going back under.

BEN

What's the secret then?

ALAN

(laughing)

I wish it was as simple as a conversation. Healing took different avenues, sometimes medicine, sometimes music, sometimes both. God at the root though. Hearing other people's stories helped place my own, figure out what I'm doing here.

BEN

So it was more of a religious thing for you?

ALAN

Oh, everyone's religious. Everything has something that matters most to them, something they'll offer up sacrifices for. You and me, we just have been in a place where nothing really seemed up to that standard.

BEN

I wouldn't put it that way, but I see what you mean. I think.

ALAN

Here, I'm only so good at this. Lots of practice thinking, not so much talking. Can I just play you one of these?

BEN

(shrugs)

I mean, there's not exactly a whole lot else to do.

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**INT. ALAN'S CABIN - NIGHT**

It's a few hours later after listening to a couple albums and going through explanations of both of them. It's pitch black outside as ALAN and BEN continue their conversation.

BEN

It's so interesting, I totally would have thought Tell Him was just another love song without actually looking at it!

ALAN

I told you, that song has been more formative spiritually than almost anything else in my life.

BEN

Damn, I never really looked at stuff like this as a place to tell stories. Not like this.

ALAN

My favorite part is how other people's stories can help place our own.

BEN

What do you mean?

ALAN

Well, don't you see yourself at all in these stories?

BEN

I guess.

ALAN

Well, now your story is at least informed by them. And you can choose how you want yours to be shaped by them, if you want.

BEN

You know, it's interesting you mention that. I've been working on this project that I feel like really tells the story of who I am.

ALAN

That's the stack of papers I saw earlier? I assumed it was some sort of book you were writing.

Made in Highland

BEN

Kinda yeah, it's like what these other people have been doing through music.

ALAN

And what's your story about?

There's a slight pause.

BEN

I don't know. The story's kinda about how I don't know. Like you said, trying to find a way out of that headspace and not really finding anything.

ALAN

Do you have plans to publish it one day?

BEN

Oh, I don't know. I think I hope other people read it sometime. I don't know if I'll publish it.

ALAN

Would you want me to read it?

BEN

(laughs)

In one night? I don't know, it's a long one. And I haven't really finished it, I guess.

ALAN

Glad to hear it's still in progress.

Another slight pause.

BEN

The thing is, stories only go so far. Life happens, you know? Things you can't erase from the past, and things we can't change right now. The silver lining is nice but sometimes putting it in a good light isn't enough to change things.

ALAN

Oh, it's not about escapism.

(MORE)

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ALAN (CONT'D)

That's no different than what you've been talking about, finding what keeps your head just above water. That's what these are all about, finding where to put the pain. We can let it defeat us, we can try and channel it to be productive, we can let it shape us so we hate the world.

BEN

(smirking)

Now don't go all preacher mode on me.

ALAN

(chuckles)

My apologies. I don't mean to. I just... if what I found could help you out I'd hate to look back and think I didn't say anything.

BEN

Well if you had to sum it up, no fear of preachiness or whatever, what would you say?

ALAN pauses.

ALAN

I had to find a way out of somewhere, someone I didn't want to be. That part had to die, somehow, but what next, if anything, right? Lo and behold, I found something worth sticking around for after that part of me was gone. Started over, this time ready to roll with the highs and lows because I had something to ground me. Keep me steady. Find that, and you're golden.

BEN

Ok, I can't help but feel like you're still beating around the bush, but I'll take it.

ALAN

(chuckles)

Sorry, I do my best. Like I said, for me, it was God.

(MORE)

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ALAN (CONT'D)

If I was any good at preaching  
maybe I wouldn't have ended up a  
park ranger.

BEN

Well, at any rate, thanks for  
sharing, it's really interesting  
to talk to someone about this.

ALAN

Anytime. If for whatever reason  
you end up back here I'd love a  
part two to this conversation. In  
the meantime though I think I'm  
ready to call it a night.

BEN

Yeah, I guess you're right, I  
didn't realize how late it was.

The cabin sits in momentary silence as the ripples from the  
conversation reverberate around the now quiet room.

#### **INT. ALAN'S CABIN - MORNING**

BEN wakes up as morning light cuts through the windows of  
ALAN's cabin. He gets up, a little groggy, and walks around to  
see ALAN had left a note on the record player. It reads as  
such, "Hi BEN! So sorry to do this, but something came up at  
another park and I went to go help a friend of mine with an  
emergency. Help yourself to anything you need while I'm gone;  
hopefully your friend will arrive soon, as you mentioned. If we  
don't see each other again, I hope you know what I immensely  
appreciated our conversation and hope you find what you're  
looking for. Here's a list of other stories I'd encourage you  
to check out: Swimming and Circles, both by Mac Miller. To Live  
in the Mercy of God, by Denise Levertov. Also the book of  
Ecclesiastes. You might find it interesting. Last but not  
least, if you're interested in finding God like I have, check  
out the song Sing About Me, I'm Dying of Thirst, by Kendrick  
Lamar. Particularly at the minute mark 10:55. Best of luck,  
ALAN," BEN looks up, smiling from the note.

#### **EXT. ALAN'S CABIN - DAY**

About an hour has passed, and BEN has been checking his phone  
outside ALAN's cabin, seeing QUINN's progress getting closer to  
his location. BEN's things are packed and outside. A honk  
signals the approach of QUINN and his car bustling down the  
dirt road. BEN looks up with a smile, walking over to the car.  
QUINN turns it off and walks over.

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QUINN  
What a dumbass!

BEN  
Good to see you too!

The two embrace in a hug.

QUINN  
Dude what happened? I get this text saying you're out in the middle of nowhere stranded out of the blue, something about your car breaking down.

BEN  
I know, it's been a crazy 24 hours.

QUINN  
I mean, no offense, but why didn't you call a tow truck or something?

BEN  
I guess I didn't really know who to call. This park ranger suggested I call a friend to pick me up, so I called you.

QUINN  
Damn, man. Did you at least get any good stories from your little trip?

BEN  
It's funny you mention that, I feel like I got a few.

QUINN  
That's an ominous answer. Anyway, how about we throw your stuff in my car?

BEN  
Ok, sounds good.

QUINN  
(as he picks up BEN's sleeping bag)  
Oh, did you hear about ADAM?

BEN

(perking up as he throws the  
rest of his stuff in the  
trunk)

No, what happened?

QUINN

Well, after you left a couple cops  
pulled up on campus and arrested  
him. It was this whole show.

BEN

No way, you're bullshitting me!

QUINN

Deadass man, it was insane. Don't  
know what the charges were, but  
ADAM was NOT happy. Think it was  
pretty embarrassing too, it being  
on campus and everything.

BEN

Hell yeah. That's awesome.

QUINN

He must have done some pretty  
messed up shit for you to be this  
happy about it.

BEN

Yeah, I'll tell you about it on  
the drive back.

QUINN

You know where we're going? Like  
do you want to go home or  
something? And what about your  
car?

BEN

No idea. I can figure out the car  
thing when I get out of here. For  
now I guess I have my bags packed  
and no plans. We can go where you  
want.

QUINN

I don't know man, I mean you could  
always tag along with me at the  
Oregon coast.

BEN

Well, let's start there.

(MORE)

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BEN (CONT'D)  
Once I'm there I can just find a  
towing service or something.

QUINN  
Whatever you want to do, let's go  
then.

They both get in the car. QUINN starts the car.

BEN  
(from inside the car)  
Oh, dude, I just realized, ISSAC  
is gonna be super pissed.

QUINN  
(putting the car in reverse)  
What's up?

BEN  
I lost his gun.

QUINN  
(looking over)  
Huh?

BEN  
I don't know how, I thought I  
brought it but after putting  
everything in and out of my car I  
can't find it.

QUINN  
(pulling onto the dirt road  
again)  
That's bizarre. Think someone  
stole it or something?

BEN  
No, I don't think that's it.

The camera pans to the car bustling along the dirt road as the  
cabin sits behind it in the relative distance.

#### **INT. ALAN'S CABIN**

Inside the cabin are both the suicide note and the pistol left  
behind on the record player.

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**EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - CONTINUOUS**

To end the movie there is a montage of BEN taking a camping trip out to the same campgrounds. With him is QUINN and QUINN's new girlfriend, as well as JAYDEN. This is part is CRUCIALLY specific: the song "Life In Color" by OneRepublic plays. There are shots of them driving to the campgrounds, a sign that says, "OPEN", setting up camp, playing on the beach, (BEN has a less chiseled frame though still healthy) building a campfire, and talking, dancing, and laughing by the fire. BEN, QUINN and JAYDEN say goodnight and head to their own tent. Later in the night BEN gets out of the tent and sets his sleeping bag out under the stars, sleeping under an evergreen tree and as the music ends the screen fades to black.

**EXT. CAMPGROUNDS - MORNING**

Finally we see BEN's face getting hit with water dropping from the evergreen tree as he lies in his sleeping bag in the grass. He wakes up, his face twitching as the water hits it, until he opens his eyes groggily. Then, fully awake his face bursts into a grin. Cut to black.

THE END

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