

BEAR WITH ME  
(7TH DRAFT)

Written by  
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A corner store counter, empty, in an OVERHEAD MEDIUM SHOT. '70s Iranian pop music plays quietly through radio static in the background. A red-orange flower bouquet is placed onto the counter. A cashier's hand removes the bouquet and scans it.

BOBBY (O.S.)  
Actually... Could I also get...  
Those guys up there. Yeah, the  
Reds.

The cashier scans another item, then places the bouquet and a pack of Marlboro Red cigarettes on the counter.

CASHIER (O.S.)  
26.30.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.S.)  
You know what...

Bobby's hand points to the cigarettes.

BOBBY (O.S.)  
Let's stick with these, actually.  
Just these.

Bobby's hand pulls the bouquet out of frame.

CASHIER (O.S.)  
10.16.

Bobby's hand enters with a twenty-dollar bill. The cashier takes the bill and begins collecting change from the register. A CLINK CLICK CLINK of quarters into the palm.

Bobby's hand re-enters with THREE FLOWERS from the bouquet. The change-collection abruptly stops.

BOBBY (O.S.)  
Keep the change?

BLACKOUT

TITLE: BEAR WITH ME

2

INT. EM'S BEDROOM--AFTERNOON

2

Daylight washes over neatly-arranged cross country trophies, Physics Olympiad plaques, and astronomy posters. EM (18), in jogging clothes, pulls her hair into a taut ponytail and stretches.

As Em puts in her ear buds, a face-down home phone handset on her desk rings. She walks across the room and turns it over. Her eyes lock on the "ANONYMOUS" caller ID.

Em sets her ear buds down as her mother, ELLEN (52), answers on the other line. Clicking the "CALL" button, Em secretly conferences herself in.

ELLEN (O.S.)

Hello?

BOBBY (O.S.)

Happy birthday, mom.

Beat.

ELLEN (O.S.)

Jeffrey!

A BEEP signals the muted line. For a second it's just Em and Bobby on the call. She listens to his breathing. Another BEEP as Em's father, JEFFREY (57), comes on the line.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

What do you want?

BOBBY (O.S.)

Hi, dad. Um...actually...I'm in town. I took the bus. I'm down at Amin's.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.S.)

I'm clean. For good.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

It's--Robert. It's a year-long program. They don't just let you out after six months.

Beat.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Is Em around? How's she doing?

JEFFREY (O.S.)  
She's fine. She doesn't want to see  
you.

Em hangs up. She stares down at the phone.

3 INT. HALLWAY--AFTERNOON 3

European paintings and Buddhist decorations line the walls.  
Em pulls a key off of an antique brass key rack.

4 EXT. DRIVEWAY--AFTERNOON 4

A two-story white-and-gray Georgian house sprawls behind a  
manicured lawn and hedges. Em sneaks into a luxurious,  
silver Lexus SUV at the top of the long driveway.

5 EXT. CORNER STORE--AFTERNOON 5

A dingy corner store bordered by cracked, unwashed pavement.  
BOBBY (23), lanky in a worn tweed sweater and baseball cap,  
smokes a cigarette, biting his lip between drags. He wheels  
a cheap purple suitcase back and forth, holding three  
flowers with the same hand.

EM (O.S.)  
Got a light?

BOBBY  
Yeah, su--

As Bobby frees a lighter from his jeans, he sees his little  
sister. He drops his cigarette and puts it out with his  
foot.

BOBBY  
How'd you find me?

EM  
You can smoke.

An awkward beat. Bobby embraces Em. She half-hugs him back.  
After a moment, she breaks them apart.

Bobby gives Em an admiring look. She looks at his flowers.

Bobby curtsies, handing Em a flower and raising an eyebrow.

BOBBY  
Might need your help with the  
others.

Em gauges Bobby.

BOBBY  
Don't worry! I'm leaving.  
(beat)  
California.

EM  
Bobby.

BOBBY  
Northern. California. Land of  
Steinbeck... the salmon run... the  
*fohmah Govehnatah*... It's this tiny  
town. Redding.

EM  
Go ba--

BOBBY  
They call it: "The Jewel of the  
Sierra." In other words, *the* place  
to paint. You got your tourists,  
your low rent, fresh air--

EM  
Finish your program.

BOBBY  
I finished.

EM  
Mm.

BOBBY  
They let me out early.

EM  
I'm not stupid.

BOBBY  
Really? Em. Rehab's about getting  
better. It's not a jail sentence.  
(beat)  
Here.

Bobby raises the insides of his elbows and begins pulling up  
his sleeves. Em turns her head away.

BOBBY  
Em. Look. Look!

EM  
I don't care.  
(Beat)  
I mean... five months doesn't mean  
shit. You know that.

BOBBY  
It means something this time.

Bobby looks at his sister. She makes fleeting eye contact back.

BOBBY  
Can we go somewhere?

Em finds and holds Bobby's gaze. She takes the handle of his suitcase and wheels it down the sidewalk. He follows.

6 EXT. WEST ROCK PARK--AFTERNOON

6

A heavily forested mountain ridge juts out from the suburbs. In a BIRD'S EYE VIEW, we see the SUV ascend a snaking road up the ridge.

7 INT. CAR--LATE AFTERNOON

7

Squeaky clean leather furnishing. The three flowers and an empty Smartwater vibrate in the center cup holder. A jade Buddha talisman dangles from the rear-view mirror.

Em parks on the side of a cul-de-sac encircled by trees. The siblings look out the windows at Judges Cave, a ten-foot-tall boulder formation right off the road.

BOBBY  
Thar she blows.

Bobby pulls a Red out of his flannel pocket. Em eyes him apprehensively. Bobby puts it behind his ear. He looks up at her.

BOBBY  
Shall we?

Bobby puts the pack on his seat and leaves the car.

Em watches him stretch and head toward the Cave. She takes a cigarette, puts it behind her ear, and exits.

8

EXT. TOP OF JUDGES CAVE--LATE AFTERNOON

8

A spectacular view of wealthy New England suburbia extending for miles in the spring golden hour. Bobby struggles to climb up the rock. Em ably ascends after him. They sit amongst small rocks, empty beer bottles, and cigarette butts.

Out of breath, Bobby lights his Red. Em tries to light hers a few times.

BOBBY

Here.

Bobby takes the lighter and shields Em's cigarette from the wind. It wiggles in Em's mouth as he tries to light it.

BOBBY

Keep it still...

Bobby puts his finger on the tip of the cigarette to steady it. Em lets out a small laugh. He smirks.

BOBBY

You wanna smoke this or not?

She assumes a straight face and he lights it. They smoke for a few beats, looking out over the town.

(The siblings sporadically pick up and toss rocks off the cave as they talk.)

BOBBY

So. Stanford. I called it.

EM

Word gets around.

BOBBY

I have my ways.

(beat)

You nervous?

EM

No. Not really.

BOBBY

Well. If you ever needa come up for air, I'll be a four-hour ride away.

EM

You're really going.

BOBBY  
Greyhound, tomorrow morning. Fifty  
dollars from here to Detroit,  
then--

Em takes too hard of a drag and starts coughing. Bobby takes  
her cigarette and puts it out on the rock.

BOBBY  
Those things are bad for you.

EM  
You're funny. Roberta.

Bobby smirks.

BOBBY  
Here. Solidarity.

He puts his out as well.

BOBBY  
How's mom and dad?

Em thinks on it.

EM  
Couldn't really tell you. They're  
in the Hamptons, or Finger Lakes,  
like, every other weekend.

BOBBY  
Empty nest syndrome hasn't kicked  
in yet.

EM  
Eh. They might be over the whole  
"parenting" thing.

Beat.

BOBBY  
I hope they're okay.

Em looks for Bobby's earnestness. She finds it.

BOBBY  
What happened...what I did. I think  
about it every day.

Em watches Bobby turn a rock over in his hand.



EM  
She's still in physical therapy.

Bobby tosses the rock off the side of the cave. Em watches it tumble down.

BOBBY  
(looking off)  
That...person. Was me.

Em searches her older brother's eyes. He refocuses on her.

BOBBY  
I have to apologize.  
(beat)  
Say you went in. Talked to them first.

EM  
There's nothing to say... I mean, I don't know what... I'd--

Em's phone is RINGING. She looks at the caller ID.

EM  
Shit.

Em scrambles down the rock and picks up the call.

9

EXT. BOTTOM/TOP OF JUDGES CAVE--LATE AFTERNOON

9

Em paces at the bottom of the rock, her back to Bobby.

EM  
Hi, dad.

JEFFREY (O.S.)  
Where'd you take mom's car?

Bobby watches his sister for a moment. He then trepidly begins to make his way down.

EM  
I'm sorry. I should've told you. I had to go to Walgreens.

JEFFREY (O.S.)  
I thought you were going on a run.

EM  
Yeah, had to put it on hold. Ran out of tampons.

JEFFREY (O.S.)  
Oh. Okay, honey... You know we have  
reservations at six.

EM  
Yeah. Yeah, I'll be back soon.

Bobby steps into a precarious foothold.

JEFFREY (O.S.)  
Hurry up. And stay out of trouble.

Em turns around. She sees Bobby frozen in an awkward  
position, trying to keep his cool.

EM  
Okay, dad! Love you!

Em hangs up. She strides over to the rock.

EM  
Need some help?

BOBBY  
No, no, I'm fine. I'm fine.

Bobby meditates on his next move as Em skeptically watches.

Bobby tenses, then goes for it. But his hand can't grip the  
hold and he slips down. Just as quickly Em reaches out to  
support his foot.

EM  
Hey hey hey. Just let go and you'll  
land on that ledge. I'm spotting  
you.

Bobby almost sticks the landing, falling into Em's support.  
She pushes him back onto the ledge. He hops down and sits on  
the ledge, panting.

BOBBY  
The age-old tampon alibi.

EM  
Works every time.

Bobby cracks a smile. Em studies him.

10 INT. CAR--NEAR SUNSET

10

Em parks in the driveway of her house. She takes a deep breath.

EM

Whatever you do: Don't. Leave. The car.

BOBBY

Of course.

EM

If they won't see you, then I'll sneak back out. Are you sure a hundred's enough?

Bobby nods.

BOBBY

More than.

(Beat)

Em, I can't tell you how thankful I am. You are *the* best little sister a fuck-up like me could ask for. I'm *beyond* grateful--

EM

Okay, okay. Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

She exits.

Bobby watches Em walk to the front door.

11 INT. FOYER--NEAR SUNSET [CONTINUOUS]

11

Em enters and walks toward the back of the house.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

Em?

Jeffrey, weary in a tweed coat and tie, enters the foyer. He brushes past Em to the front door. She freezes.

JEFFREY

(calling up the stairs)

Ellen!

Jeffrey locks the front door.

12 INT. KITCHEN--NEAR SUNSET

12

Jeffrey leads Em into the kitchen. A nearly empty whiskey glass and bottle rest on a granite island.

JEFFREY

Where are your... you know...

Jeffrey walks behind the island. Em stands on the other side, looking at her feet.

JEFFREY

Do you have something to tell me?

EM

Um.

Ellen enters in a black dress, her makeup slightly smudged. The cut of her dress reveals part of a scar on her collarbone.

ELLEN

You saw your brother.

(nodding)

You saw him.

Beat.

EM

I ran into him. While I was shopping.

Ellen and Jeffrey take a moment to process this.

EM

He's doing really, really well.

ELLEN

Did he tell you that he broke out of Samaritan?

EM

Finished early.

JEFFREY

No, honey. We just spoke with them.

- 13 INT. CAR--NEAR SUNSET [CONTINUOUS] 13
- Bobby taps the jade Buddha, making it swing back and forth. He stares ahead blankly, shifting his focus between the front door and the swaying talisman.
- He tensely exhales. He gets out of the car.
- 14 EXT. DRIVEWAY--NEAR SUNSET 14
- Bobby lights a cigarette and paces. After a beat, he puts it out. He reaches back into the car and pulls out the flowers.
- Bobby walks to the front door. He looks through the sidelights and doesn't see anyone. He tries the handle. The door's locked.
- 15 EXT. BACKYARD--SUNSET 15
- Bobby enters through a gate. The family's big dog, LINCOLN (7), runs to greet Bobby. Bobby squats and embraces him.
- BOBBY  
Shhh. Quiet, boy.
- Bobby lifts up a mat in front of a side door, but there's nothing underneath.
- 16 EXT. SIDE OF THE HOUSE--SUNSET 16
- A small stone Buddha is nestled into the bushes in a CLOSE-UP. Bobby's enters the frame and lifts up the top half of the body. He pulls out a key.
- 17 INT. SIDE HALLWAY--SUNSET 17
- Bobby enters the house. He hears an ARGUMENT coming from the back of the house. He freezes for a moment, then heads up the side stairs.
- 18 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY--SUNSET 18
- We move with Bobby as he walks down the hallway. His FAMILY'S ARGUMENT becomes fainter and less intelligible.
- Bobby stops at the open door to Em's room and peeks in.

He then turns around to face the opposite door off the hallway. He stops there for a moment. Ever so slightly, he pushes it open.

19 INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM--DUSK

19

Bobby enters in the dim blue light to find a bed surrounded by barren walls. As he moves toward the closet, he trips over a cord. Turning around, he sees a treadmill.

Bobby opens the closet and turns on its light. He finds several cardboard boxes. He sifts through stuffed animals, skateboarding posters, and a tarnished trumpet.

Bobby digs up a pile of scattered macabre sketches and landscape paintings. He looks at them up close one at a time.

20 INT. DINING ROOM/KITCHEN--DUSK [CONTINUOUS]

20

Em sits at the head of a formal walnut brown dining table. Her parents sit on either side.

JEFFREY

We're not going to risk mom's safety, or yours, to wish him a safe journey.

EM

He's harmless, dad. We just spent an hour together.  
(flamboyantly)  
And look at me!

JEFFREY

He's playing you, Em. How do you know he isn't just gonna break in, steal from us--

EM

On mom's birthday? And the flowers?

JEFFREY

It's all part of his shtick.

Beat.

ELLEN

Where are the car keys?

Em glances toward the kitchen counter, on which the keys rest. Jeffrey catches this, gets up, and strides toward them.

EM  
He's here.

Jeffrey stops.

JEFFREY  
What?

EM  
He's outside.

21 INT. BOBBY'S FORMER BEDROOM--DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 21

Bobby continues to examine his paintings and sketches. One piece of art paper is tied with a rubber band. He takes the band off, looks at it, and sets it aside. He shuts the closet door and leaves the room with it.

22 INT. HALLWAY/DINING ROOM/KITCHEN--DUSK 22

We follow Bobby as he walks back down the stairs and through the house. He reaches a hallway divider behind which he can only see fragments of the kitchen.

Jeffrey stands in the kitchen. Em stands by the dining table. Ellen remains seated at the dining table.

JEFFREY  
He's not setting foot inside this house.

EM  
He doesn't have to.

ELLEN  
(shaking her head)  
He was almost halfway through.

Behind the divider, Bobby inches forward.

JEFFREY  
(to Ellen)  
I'm calling the police.

EM  
Stop! I don't understand why you can't just--

JEFFREY

He pushed your mother down the stairs, for Christ's sake.

(beat)

You're eighteen. You can go out and say goodbye.

Em strides into the kitchen, rooting herself between Jeffrey and the home phone on the counter.

JEFFREY

Emily.

EM

You know. I also drink. I smoke. I do drugs.

Jeffrey takes out his cell phone.

JEFFREY

Bobby isn't going to Stanford.

EM

Who the fuck cares?

ELLEN (O.S.)

(from behind Em)

We told him a year.

Em turns toward Ellen. Beat.

EM

Would you do the same thing to me?

A longer beat.

JEFFREY (O.S.)

(from behind Em)

You're not a batterer.

ELLEN

Or a pathological liar. Or a thief.

(gaining steam)

Your first mistake was to trust him. Even if he *is* planning this crazy trip, he's not gonna make it.

EM

People change.

ELLEN

Not Bobby.

(Beat)

(MORE)



ELLEN (cont'd)  
I wish he could. Em, I really wish he could. But he's just proven that he can't. All he had to do was finish. If he wanted to be part of this family, that's what he had to do. And he chose otherwise. So it's over. He ended it.

In the hallway, Bobby sits with this for a beat.

He then turns to put the flowers and art paper on top of a wooden console table. We follow him as he creeps back toward the side door.

He pauses in front of the stairs.

23 INT. EM'S BEDROOM--DUSK 23

Bobby rifles through the top of Em's dresser and her desk. On the nightstand, he finds what he was looking for: Em's wallet. He pulls out five twenty-dollar bills.

Taking a legal pad and pen from Em's desk, he scribbles a note in messy handwriting: "IOU 100. Love, Roberta." He puts it in the wallet. He exits.

24 INT. KITCHEN--DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 24

Em leans against the counter, her back turned to Ellen at the table.

EM  
I'm sorry.

ELLEN  
It's not your fault.

EM  
Then whose is it.

Em starts walking out of the kitchen.

JEFFREY (O.S.)  
You have about five minutes.

Em turns around. Her father enters, hanging up his cell phone and slipping it into his pocket.

ELLEN  
We love you, Em.

JEFFREY  
We really do.

Ellen rises from the table and walks toward Em.

ELLEN  
Come over here.

Ellen opens her arms. Em backs away. After a beat, Em squeezes past Jeffrey and out of the kitchen. She strides toward the side hallway.

Jeffrey and Ellen follow Em for a moment. Then Ellen stops Jeffrey with her arm. They watch their daughter round the corner.

25 INT. SIDE HALLWAY--DUSK 25

Em's resoluteness fades as she sees the side door cracked slightly open.

26 EXT. DRIVEWAY--DUSK 26

Em exits the house. As she nears the car, her determination wanes further.

From a WIDE HIGH ANGLE, we see her at the empty open car door.

27 INT. BOBBY'S BEDROOM--DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 27

Through Bobby's bedroom window, we see Bobby throw his suitcase over the backyard fence and climb it as Lincoln runs after him.

28 INT. HALLWAY--DUSK [CONTINUOUS] 28

Bobby's FLOWERS and ART PAPER rest on the console table. The unfurled paper reveals a CHARCOAL PORTRAIT OF THE HAPPY FAMILY in front of various framed family photos (the pictures that include Bobby only show him as a little boy). POLICE SIRENS murmur in the distance.