

RAY

Can I get you anything?

Elias shakes his head, staring at the pitiful water jug in the corner. Leah notices the picture on the mantle, walking up to it curiously.

LEAH PALMER

We're fine!

(beat)

Is it just the two of you?

RAY

Yeah, my wife, uh--

Nathan prances into the room, clutching a dozen tiny cars curled up in his shirt, laying them across the coffee table.

LEAH PALMER

Wow! You've been collecting for a while huh?

Nathan nods aggressively, placing them in neat racing lines.

LEAH PALMER

Elias likes to collect 'em too.

ELIAS PALMER

(shrugs)

I dabble.

Leah wanders around the room, scrutinizing Ray's things like a scientist at a microscope -- the depressingly tiny TV, the decaying backyard, empty jug after jug against the wall.

LEAH PALMER

So...how do know so much about cars if you don't have one?

Leah turns to look at Ray, interested.

RAY

I work in the oil fields--

He pauses, remembering, and glances to Nathan.

RAY (CONT'D)

(lowly)

--worked...before that I was a mechanic. Fixed up old muscle cars.

Leah raises her eyebrows, intrigued, and gives Elias a look. Elias analyzes Ray as though for the first time.

(CONTINUED)

ELIAS PALMER

Worked?

Ray nods, momentarily at a loss for words. Leah cuts in excitedly.

LEAH PALMER

Look, Ray..if you don't have another job lined up, we could use someone at our place to help out. Fix pipes, take care of the pool..we can't pay much, but it'd be something..

Leah reads the disinterested expression on Ray's face. The room falls into brief silence. Nathan glances up at them, puzzled.

RAY

I can't..

(beat)

Thanks for the ride -- you made Nate's week. I mean it.

Nathan grins, big and toothy. Elias nods, eager to get going.

ELIAS PALMER

Of course. Thanks, Ray. Leah, we need to go.

Leah glances at Ray, disappointed, but understands.

LEAH PALMER

Think about it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - WARD HOME - DAY

Ray peers out at the Palmers through the front door as they stroll down the empty yard.

NATHAN

They dressed weird! Dad?

RAY

(chuckles)

Yeah.

NATHAN

(quietly)

Can I have some?

(CONTINUED)

RAY
Sure, Nate.

Ray grabs the blue jug, pouring some into a cup, staring at the minute amount left miserably. He looks at Nathan's anxious expression. The SUV ENGINE starts up outside.

Ray hurriedly puts down the glass, rushing outside.

EXT. CAR - DAY

Ray runs up to the side of the car, tapping on the window. Sweaty and dirty. Leah lowers it grinning, holding out a BLUE VISITOR'S PASS. Elias looks unamused.

LEAH PALMER
I was hoping you'd change your
mind. You'll need this to get into
our sector -- Sector 4, the address
is on there.

Ray nods gratefully.

LEAH PALMER
You can start tomorrow.

EXT. DESERT STREET - MORNING

Ray leads Nathan down the cracked sidewalk, passing mountainous trash heaps and stepping carefully past threatening pieces of glass.

NATHAN
Can we ride in the pretty woman's
car again?

RAY
I don't think so, Nate.

They near Casey -- he's in bad shape, chapped lips, fatigued.

CASEY
Good morning, Ray! Just who I was
hoping to see.

Nathan reaches up instinctively to grab at the canteen on Ray's belt. Ray shakes his head regretfully as they pass.

RAY
Can't today, Casey. State split the
rations in half. Barely got enough
for me 'n Nate.

(CONTINUED)

Casey's face falls, and Nathan looks up to Ray questioningly.

NATHAN

But we'll have enough, right?

EXT. SECTOR BORDER - MORNING

A high chain-link fence patrolled by several young GUARDS in military wear, clutching dark assault rifles as they scrutinize the rushing CROWD through sunglasses. An ominous sign on the fence reads "SECTOR 4" in big red letters.

Ray stands in the midst of the messy, writhing line to the small entrance -- an opening in the fence where a GUARD is checking visitor's passes. Ray looks like he's made some effort to clean up.

An argument has started between a MAN and the GUARD. The Man gestures to his Visitor's pass, getting visibly angry, and the Guard unhesitatingly smacks him with the butt of his gun. He collapses and is dragged away. Ray gasps.

IAN (O.S.)

Dumbass.

Ray glances behind him to his right, spotting IAN, a chatty young border crossing veteran in a crisp "Hotel Paradise" uniform.

IAN

(lowly)

First time crossing?

Ray nods nervously.

IAN

You'll be fine. You're smart,
cleaned up. They hate to see how it
really is here.

They move forward in line slowly, the guards inspecting them from a distance.

IAN

You know, sometimes, they *almost*
can't control it. Too many of us.
That's when you got the best shot.

Ray frowns, and Ian studies his face, as though scanning for something.

(CONTINUED)

RAY

For what?

IAN

To get across. You think I have a
visitor's pass every time?

Ray stares at him in wonder, and Ian laughs. Ray nears the
front of the line.

IAN

Trick is, you *really* need to get
across? You gotta take it.

Ian grins and pretends to stumble, knocking into another
CITIZEN and apologizing profusely. The line grows restless,
loud, shouting, eager to get across.

GUARD

Next!!

Ray looks forward, realizing it's his turn. He hands the
intimidating Guard his blue visitor's pass. The Guard looks
him up and down.

GUARD

Purpose?

RAY

Work for the Palmers.

The Guard raises his eyebrows, surprised, and inspects his
pass again. He stares at him for a hard moment before
shouting:

GUARD

Next!!

Ray is quickly ushered through the fence entrance. He
glances back, spotting Ian in the crowd. Ian holds up a blue
visitor's pass and winks at him.

EXT. PALMER HOME - DAY

Fairly typical suburban neighborhood -- green lawns, pretty
homes, kids playing in the street. Ray stares around in
disbelief as he walks up the well-manicured pathway to the
Palmer household -- it's a beauty.

Ray pauses at the door, hesitating. It clicks open
automatically.

(CONTINUED)

LEAH PALMER (O.S.)
Come on in!

Ray steps through the doorway.

INT. ENTRANCE WAY - PALMER HOME - DAY

Even the entranceway is ornate, clean tile floors, a small stand holding a bouquet of healthy colorful flowers.

Ray is immediately met by the hard gaze of SAWYER, a burly security guard. He approaches Ray suspiciously.

LEAH PALMER
Sorry about the ambush..

Sawyer indicates for Ray to lift his arms, and starts patting him down.

LEAH PALMER (CONT'D)
..there are certain regulations
Elias prefers we abide by -- he's
never around though, unless
something's wrong -- Sawyer here
helps out with security.

Sawyer nods at Leah that Ray is clean. She smiles at him expectantly.

LEAH PALMER (CONT'D)
Usually he stay outside though.
Patrols the perimeter.

Sawyer gives Ray another look before exiting. Leah turns, leading Ray into another room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - PALMER HOME - DAY

Leah leads Ray through the enormous, lavish space, leather furniture complimented by a vast screen mounted on the wall. She swivels, throwing her arms open.

LEAH PALMER
Welcome! Now, there are just a
couple ground rules we need to
establish.
(smiles)
I'm sure we won't have any trouble.

Ray is doing his best to hide his shock at their wealth and access.

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