

The Beginner

Written by

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1. INT. COLLEGE - COUNSELING OFFICE - DAY

LONG SHOT: THE SCENE OPENS WITH A VIEW OF THE A GRASSY CAMPUS. THE SUNLIGHT GLARES INTO THE CAMERA LENS.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE CAMERA SLOWLY DOLLIES OUT TO REVEAL A WINDOW. THE SUNLIGHT SOFTLY BEAMS RIGHT INTO THE OFFICE.

CLOSE UP: THE CAMERA CUTS TO A FOOT BEING TAPPED CONSISTENTLY AND ANXIOUSLY.

CLOSE UP: THE CAMERA CUTS TO THE PROTAGONIST'S PHONE RAPIDLY STROLLING THROUGH SPOTIFY. THE SONG "**DEATH WITH DIGNITY**" BY **SUFJAN STEVENS** IS CLICKED UPON AND PLAYED. THE SCORE BEGINS TO ENTER THE SCENE.

MEDIUM SHOT OF THE PROTAGONIST'S TORSO ON THE SIDE: THE PROTAGONIST PRESSES HIS BACK AGAINST THE CHAIR.

BUST SHOT: THE PROTAGONIST LIFTS HIS HEAD--WITH HIS OVER-THE-HEAD HEADPHONE SUPPRESSES ON HIS HEAD--UP TO FACE THE CAMERA. THE FRAME SHOWS THE PROTAGONIST'S UPPER PART IN THE BOTTOM LEFT OF THE SCREEN.

TITLE CARD: "THE BEGINNER" FADES IN LARGELY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE FRAME.

NATE, 19, relaxes his phone down to his lap and gently closes his eyes. He lets out a quiet sigh. He begins to gleam around the office, noticing every detail of the people in the office. Then, his view rests upon the stack of magazines lays tirelessly on top of the table in front of him. Nate randomly grabs one of the magazines and calmly flips through the pages. He casually views all the picture and ignores the words. Suddenly, Nate zones out of the moment and stares deeply at the corner of the paper.

NANCY (O.C.)
(distantly)
Nathan?

NANCY, 30-ish, slowly steps closer to where Nate is sitting.

NANCY (O.C.) (cont'd)
(clear)
Nathan?

Nate comes back to reality as Nancy looks at him with a kind smile. Nate tilts his neck up to view at Nancy with confusion. He unwinds his headphone down. The music is now distantly played through his headphone.

NANCY
(kindly)
Are you ready?

NATE
(quietly)
Ummm. Yeah.

Nate reluctantly stands up and follows Nancy into her office.

CUT TO:

2. INT. COLLEGE - CONSULTING OFFICE - NANCY'S OFFICE -
CONTINUOUS

Nancy closes the door as Nate enters the room.

NANCY
Have a seat.

NATE
(sits down at the
chair)
Ummmmm. I'm ... sorry about earlier.
I was--

NANCY
(sits oppositely to
Nate)
That's alright. A little music helps
people relax in their trouble times.

NATE
(quietly)
Okay.

NANCY
(joyfully)
Now. What can I help you with?

NATE
Ummm. I'm ... umm ...
(presses his eyes;
shallows his anxiety)
having trouble with ... um ...
(presses his eyes)
deciding on a major.

NANCY

(nicely)

So you want ... help to pick out a major.

NATE

Umm. More like switching. I mean...
I'm in Game Development right now.

(hesitantly and
fastly)

I mean. It started out fine, you know, doing everything that I excel on, coding and stuff. But. When I'm at the core of it, I-I just feel like ...

(exhales)

an outcast.

(quickly shaking his
head)

I don't know. Maybe I'm just scare of failing, so...

(nervously; begins to
stand up)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry for wasting your time. Good day.

NANCY

(calmly)

Whoa. Calm down. What you're feeling is completely normal.

NATE

(confused)

It is?

NANCY

(causally chuckles)

Yes.

Nate stares right at Nancy's fear-reducing chuckle. He begins to gradually sit down.

NANCY (cont'd)

Look. You are on the fence about a decision and I'm here to help you navigate towards a choice.

Nate is now completely sits down.

NANCY (cont'd)

Now. Breath. Slowly.

Nate follows her advice and lets out a calm breath.

NANCY (cont'd)
Okay. Why don't you tell me what are the majors you're thinking of?

NATE
(calmly)
That's ... the problem, you see. I don't know what I want to change it to.

NANCY
Okay. Let's start simpler. What are you good at?

NATE
(blankly)
I don't know.

NANCY
(quietly irritated)
Okay. Well. You mention that you're good at coding right.

NATE
Yeah.

NANCY
Well. Have you thought about Computer Science. It's just coding; you don't have to create a game.

NATE
I have. But umm. When I mentioned coding, I didn't mean that I like it though.

Nancy raises her eyebrows up a bit.

NANCY
(curiously)
How so?

NATE
I mean. Don't get me wrong, I'm good at it, but I don't like coding and constructing a game at all. But. I like the creative process of it.

NANCY
What do you mean?

NATE

Well. I like coming up ideas and a game plan for the games, you know. A game with a beautiful story that makes the players cry their eyes out. Something like that.

NANCY

(quietly)

Hmmm.

(calmly)

Nate, what do you usually spend your free time on?

NATE

I mean. I usually just play games, watch movies, reading books, writing stories--

NANCY

(curiously)

Writing stories?

NATE

And scripts. I like crafting a fictional world where I can control things. Because in reality, I can't technically perform anything that I write.

NANCY

(pauses)

Have you ever consider doing something in writing?

NATE

(deeply breathes)

Well. I have always dreamed about being a filmmaker. But its future is ...

(exhales)

Unpredictable.

NANCY

Have you looked into the Broadcasting program we have here?

NATE

I did. But it doesn't really emphasis on the film aspect much. Besides, it seems ... more like a hobby than a career anyway. I mean ...

(MORE)

NATE (cont'd)
(his eyes bright up)
I would love to do be filmmaker, but
it doesn't reassure me with
stability.

NANCY
(looks away for a
quick second then
softly says)
Okay, I have an idea. Have you ever
taken a personality or a career test?

NATE
I have. But. All the one I took were
online. And to be honest with you,
(quietly chuckles)
I don't trust any of them.

NANCY
Okay. Just hang on a second, okay?
I'll be right back.

Nancy gets up from her chair and walks out of the office.
Nate's view follows her, but he remains seated.

Nate then looks back at Nancy's office's interior. He tilts
his head to the side and calmly stares out to the window in
the office. A bird casually flies to the edge of the window
and looks at Nate. Nate sadly watches the bird fidgeting;
then, Nate shyly avoids the bird's gaze, facing his view
towards the table.

Nancy returns with a file of paper gripped tightly in her
palms. She gets back into her chair and lays out the file.
All across the table between Nancy and Nate are tests of
strengths and weaknesses.

NANCY (cont'd)
Here are all the tests that will
determine what you're good at. And
don't worry, they are legit and
reliable.

NATE
(assures)
So... I can just fill them out and
then ... I would know what I want to
do?

NANCY
Well, it's a possibility. But umm.
You can do them anytime and anywhere
you want. You can do them at home.
(MORE)

NANCY (cont'd)
Or you can do right here and I can
help through them. But it's up to
you.

NATE
(hesitantly)
I'll ...
(takes a long second
while his eyes
closes; shallows his
confident)
do them at home. It's easier for me
that way.

NANCY
Alright.

NATE
So after I filled them out, I just
... bring it back here.

NANCY
Yep. Just bring them back here next
week and we will find out what major
will be suitable for you. Which
reminds me. I'm gonna put you in for
an appointment.

NATE
Okay.

NANCY
Same day same time next week?

NATE
Sure. That sounds ideal.

Nate reliefly stands and heads towards the door. As he
touches the door's handle and gently opens it, Nate gleams
back at Nancy.

NATE (cont'd)
(nervously)
Why do I feel like I'm gonna be a
tough case on you?

NANCY
(smiles)
I have dealt with worse. And I always
like a challenge. I'll see you next
week okay?

NATE
(smiles)
Alright. You have a good week.

Nate heads out of the office and closes the door.

MATCH CUT TO:

3. INT. COLLEGE - COMPUTER LAB - NIGHT

WAIST SHOT: THE CAMERA DISPLAYS NATE ON THE SIDE, ENTERING THE CLASSROOM. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM AS HE WALKS TO HIS SEAT IN THE BACK OF THE CLASS.

Nate anxiously sits down. He views at the seat next to him; at the same time, Nate leers at the door entrance as students roam into class.

PROFESSOR
(firmly)
Good evening, guys. How we doing tonight?

Nate distantly listens to the teacher as he continues to snipe at the entrance. The students' speaking around Nate slowly fades into noise.

PROFESSOR (cont'd)
Alright.
(casually)
Let me do the attendance quickly.

The professor begins to call out the students' names without looking up from his computer. The students states "here" to be marked present.

PROFESSOR (cont'd)
Brian?
(pauses)
Brian?

The professor shifts his view up to the back of the room. Nate looks at the professor.

PROFESSOR (cont'd)
Nate, do you know is Brian running late?

NATE
No. I ... um. Haven't hear anything from him. But I think he's running late.

BRIAN, 19, walks into class. The professor turns to Brian as he walks to the seat next to Nate.

PROFESSOR
There he is.

NATE
Hey.

BRIAN
Hey. What's up?

Brian resides on the chair and begins to log into the computer.

BRIAN (cont'd)
I just spent 3 hours before I got here just to finish the last of the code for the game.

NATE
Really? How did it come out?

BRIAN
Pretty good.
(opens the game on the computer)
Some of these code I found from online. I had to do some tweaks to fit in with the game. But most of the time, I was doing the art for the game. How about you?

NATE
(softly chuckles)
I kinda half-assed it a little bit.
(frankly)
I basically did the minimum. The code kept giving me problems even though I did search online to find solutions, but it gave up on me. Which sucked, but ...

The game on the Brian's computer finally loaded up. The game catches Nate's attention.

NATE (cont'd)
(impressed)
Wow. It looks ... pretty good. Damn. It looks really legit. Like something could be made ... professionally.

BRIAN
Thanks. How about yours?

NATE
(stammers)
Oh. It does not look great. Compared to yours, mine looks like something you dig out from the garbage. Its quality is the movie *The Room*, but in video games sense.

BRIAN
(stares at Nate
funnily)
Your jokes are not funny. I keep telling you that for ages.

NATE
(skeptical)
Hey. I think they're funny. Maybe you just don't get it.

BRIAN
(mocks with a cheap
Asian accent)
Maybe you don't get it.

NATE
Really?

BRIAN
(joyfully chuckles)
Come on. Mocking you is funny. Especially with your accent.

NATE
You know. I'm trying to dial down the thickness of my accent to sound a little less.

BRIAN
(applies a smirk on
his face)
Yeah.

NATE
(squints his eyes)
That smirk of your always make you look like a douche for some reasons.

BRIAN
(insecurely smiles)
Stop it.

NATE

No. I mean. You're likable. Up close.
I'm sorry, okay?

(calmly)

Ummmm. By the way, I went to see the
counseling office.

BRIAN

Oh. How was it?

NATE

Ummm. It's still conflicting. I still
don't know what I want to.

(pauses)

At least, the counselor did help me
narrowing down my choices.

BRIAN

What are they?

NATE

Well. I could do Computer Science ...
or something to do with film or
writing. Plus, she gave me a bunch
personality tests to see what career
path would be

(sarcastically; rolls
his eyes)

optimal for me.

BRIAN

That's something. Do your parents
know you're changing your "career
path?"

NATE

Don't you remember? I told you that I
do not tell them anything about my
academic life. Or my social life.

BRIAN

Why don't you?

NATE

(widens his eyes)

You do realize that Asian parents
don't like their kids to venture off
their own, right?

BRIAN

What are you talking about?

NATE

My parents are not people that like other people's opinions. Especially not mine.

(takes a breath)

They are mostly self-righteous. And they don't ever listen to anybody else but themselves. Especially my father.

BRIAN

What?

NATE

They still live under the regime that the alpha male has the ultimate power in the family. So, everything I said would be considered ... nonsense.

BRIAN

Hmmm. Have you considered using this counseling situation as a therapy outlet?

NATE

What?

BRIAN

(whispers directly at Nate)

Look. I know you for a long time, and you definitely have a lot of issues with ... **your parents**. I think you should at least talk about it with somebody who has knowledge about these kind of stuff.

NATE

(heavy sigh)

Therapy. I mean. I want to go. But I don't know. There's something stopping me from doing it. It could be that my parents once told me that therapy is just a scam that people telling what you want to hear, and never actually help you with the problems you're facing. Besides, why can't I talk to you about it?

BRIAN

(quietly)

I can listen. And I can be helpful as much as I can.

(MORE)

BRIAN (cont'd)
But when it comes to stuff that lies deeper. You need a professional to dissect them.

NATE
Maybe. I don't know. I'll think about it. But right now I'm gonna at least focus on finishing these tests, then, maybe it would lead somewhere. I'll hit you up when I'm done.

BRIAN
(unbelievably)
Okay.

NATE
(curiously chuckles)
What?

BRIAN
Nothing. It's ...
(scratches his head)
just you said it, but you never actually do it.

NATE
I mean. You know I-sometimes I'm busy so sometimes I forget.

BRIAN
Alright.

CLOSE UP: NATE.

Nate somberly looks away from Brian.

CUT TO:

4. INT. NATE'S CAR - LATER

CLOSE UP: NATE.

Nate drives up to his house's driveway and notices there is another car sits behind his father's car. The car belongs to Nate's aunt and uncle.

NATE
(frustrated)
Ah shit.

CUT TO:

5. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate enters the house with his headphone blasting in his ears. As he walks in, Nate takes in a deep breath and unpacks his shoes. Nate puts his shoes next to the shoe rack. Nate turns around and face his parents and relatives sitting on the couch, watching an ethnic show.

NATE
(weakly)
Hello.

NATE'S MOM
(mouthing and shakes
her head towards the
relatives)
[Say "**hello**" to your uncle and aunt.]

NATE
(mouthing)
I did.

NATE'S UNCLE
Hello.

NATE
(weakly waves)
Hi.

NATE'S AUNT
(casually)
[Did you just get out of work?]

NATE
[School.]

Nate quickly walks into his room without skipping a heart beat.

CUT TO:

6. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - NATE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate shuts the door behind him. His back presses against the door. His parents' conversation still penetrates through the walls.

Nate gets changed into something more comfortable for home. He pulls his laptop from his backpack and exits the room and into the kitchen.

CUT TO:

7. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Nate quickly walks pass the gathering and straight into the kitchen, quietly ignoring everybody on the way. He lays his laptop onto the dinning table next to the kitchen. Nate then approaches towards the fridge and opens it.

NATE'S MOM

[There are some rice and noodle with
pork for you if you want.]

NATE

(quietly to himself)
No. I have my own food.

Nate pulls out a container of sausages with pasta and tomato sauce.

Nate's aunt walks up behind him as he begins to reheat his food.

NATE'S AUNT

(curiously)
[How's school?]

NATE

(melancholy)
It's okay.

NATE'S AUNT

[You know. Diane is starting college
and she is struggle with her classes.
She has 5 classes and she is barely
getting by.]

NATE

(uninterested)
Okay.

NATE'S AUNT

[Her GPA is dropping down like hot to
cold. How's your GPA?]

Nate's mom now comes up behind Nate's aunt and listens in on the conversation. She has her hands tie behind her back.

NATE

(quietly)
[3.9]

NATE'S AUNT

That's good. [What's your major
again?]

NATE
(sadly)
Computer.

NATE'S AUNT
Wow. [That is a good career to make money. And with that GPA, it will lead to great school options in the future for transferring. What school are you thinking to transfer to?]

NATE
(emotionless)
FDU.

NATE'S AUNT
Wow. [That is great. You know. I know that you have a lot of stress dealing school and stuff. But I'll let you know, if you need anything, you let me know] okay? I got you. Okay?

Nate disengages from the conversation as Nate's aunt steps away. Nate's mom gives a sad look towards my direction.

NATE'S MOM
Nate, [did you pay the cable bill and the phone bill yet?]

NATE
(quietly aggravates)
You know. You should learn to do this stuff by yourself.

NATE'S MOM
[What did you say?]

NATE
(heavy sighs)
[Later.]

Nate's food is completely heated up. He walks into the other room where the dinning table stationed. His mom goes back into the gathering while his relatives give judgmentally glares at both his parents.

CUT TO:

8. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - NATE'S ROOM - LATER

Nate--stays on his bed--is writing his stories on his laptop. Suddenly, his mom barges into the room without knocking.

NATE
(angrily)
Can you just knock?

NATE'S MOM
(kindly)
[Can you look over this document for me? It is something to do with insurance.]

NATE
[I don't know anything about insurance. Why don't you ask Aunt 4th?]

NATE'S MOM
[You know the language. And ... I don't want to ask her. Every time we ask her for something, she would yell at us and ask you to do it. And her husband will to.]

NATE
(aggravated; quietly)
[Well. I don't know anything about this. And she is the one who opened this account for you anyway.]

NATE'S MOM
(demands)
[Can you just do this? I don't want to ask for help while I have you here.]

NATE
[Why can't you?]

NATE'S MOM
[It's ... just. She's ... always busy. And you know. Children are suppose to help their parents no matter what. If you can't do it, then why I did I borne you for? Don't you love me?--]

NATE
(frustratingly wipes
his face)
[Fine. Later.] Now can you just
please leave.

Nate's mom reluctantly walks out of Nate's room. Nate's angry eyes fix on his mom closing the door. Nate heavily releases a frustrated and sad sigh.

Nate then turns to his side, pulling out the personality tests from under his pillow. He deeply stares at them as his eyes heavily shut; then, he glazes away from the paper. Nate bust out another sad sigh.

BUST SHOT: THE CAMERA PANS TO THE ROOM'S WINDOW AS NATE
SHIFTS HIS VIEW TOWARDS THE WINDOW.

DISSOLVE TO:

9. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - NATE'S ROOM - THE NEXT DAY - MORNING

BUST SHOT: THE CAMERA PANS BACK TO NATE SLEEPING ON THE BED.

There are some noise penetrates through the walls. Nate slowly opens his eyes; he sedately blinks his eyes. Nate rises from his bed like a zombie. The sunlight blinds his eyes for quick second. Then, the noise from outside arrests his attention.

NATE'S MOM (O.C.)
[I don't know what I'm going to do.
He used to be very obedient. Now he
just acts like we don't exist.]

Nate gets out of his bed and silently opens the door to the living room.

CUT TO:

10. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - THE LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate stops at the door where the conversation loudly speaks from the the kitchen. Nate quietly stands against the door and attentively listens.

NATE'S MOM
(sadly)
[If I said anything to your father,
he will be screaming and yelling.]

NATE'S BROTHER

[Just just give him a good beating.
That'll show him.]

NATE'S MOM

[It's different here. Kids here are
more protected. If it was any other
day in our town, he wouldn't act like
the way he is right now.]

NATE'S BROTHER

[It doesn't matter.]

NATE'S MOM

[When you get here, you'll see.]

(heavily sighly)

[Yesterday, he raised his voice to me
in front of your uncle and aunt. They
gave your father and me a such a
dirty look. I told your father not to
say anything about to him. It would
just make things worse. But your
father felt humiliated, especially in
front of your uncle **who** asserts
domination over this entire family
just because he has his life
together. And he's just a brother-in-
law of your father.]

CLOSE UP: NATE LEANS AGAINST THE DOOR, CONTEMPLATING IN
ANGER.

NATE'S MOM (cont'd)

[I was thinking whenever he wakes up,
I'm just gonna tell that he should
think about me and your father, and
that he should help out more. He has
an obligation to this family.]

Nate takes in a deep breath and slams the door. The talking
in the kitchen suddenly ceases. Nate furiously enters the
bathroom.

CUT TO:

11. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate heavily presses his back against the door. He then
tightly grips his hand on the edge of the sink. He angrily
and guiltily stares right at his reflection in the mirror.
He slowly and bitterly swings his head as his eyes strongly
shut. Nate releases a quick sigh.

CUT TO:

12. INT. NATE'S HOUSE - NATE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate slams the door behind him. He climbs onto his bed and resentfully throws himself against the mattress. His mom quickly enters seconds later.

NATE'S MOM
(sincerely)
[Did you pay those bills yet?]

NATE
(angrily frustrated)
[Next time. Say it louder.]

NATE'S MOM
(calmly)
[What are you talking about?]

Nate breathes out steam; his heart rapidly beats until his chest is severely damaged. Reluctantly, Nate regains an ounce of his calmness.

NATE
[Not yet. Later.]
(grinds his teeth;
covers his eyes with
his palm)
Now. Please. Just get out.

Nate's mom exits without any sound is made. She gently closes the door as she walks out. Nate's temperature heats up; anger bangs around in his head. He begins to hyperventilates with fury. Nate forcefully grabs his phone and strolls through his contact.

As Nate reaches towards the name "Brian," he hesitates to click the text icon. His thump quietly shakes above his phone's screen. Eventually, Nate turns off his phone and sets it aside. Nate then lays his body calmly on the bed and lets out a heavy sigh. He turns to his window and views out at the bright and cloudy sky.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE GLOOMY SUNLIGHT GLEAMS ACROSS NATE'S HOPELESS FACE AS HE TAKES IN A DEEP BREATH.

The score "**World of Wonder**" by Ian Wong begins to play over the scene.

DISSOLVE TO:

13. EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - OUTSIDE - NIGHT

LONG SHOT: NATE GETS OUT OF HIS CAR FROM ACROSS THE STREET.

Nate approaches the front door of the house with a bag hanging freely from his hand. Nate hits the door bell as he stands under the dimmed orange light that saturated his clothes and skin. He skims around the dark and quiet lit area. The music is still playing over the scene.

MEDIUM SHOT: THE CAMERA CAPTURES NATE FROM THE SIDE, DISPLAYING HIM PATIENTLY WAITING FOR THE WELCOMING.

The door opens, and GRAY, 28, greets him with joy. The music begins to fade out.

NATE
(sincerely)
Hey. Sorry I'm late. I brought
dessert.

GRAY
(happily)
No worries. Come on in.

Nate enters the building with his head tilts down.

CUT TO:

14. INT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nate walks up the stairs with Gray. The noise of people slowly becomes vocal in the staircase.

NATE
Is everyone here?

GRAY
Yep. You're the last one to arrive,
but we all talking and on our phone.
Time seems to fly by.

Nate and Gray reaches the living room where everyone sits comfortably in chairs, around the dinning table.

EVERYONE
(unison)
Hey.

NATE
Hey guys. Sorry I'm late. Did you
guys start?

LILY, 19, puts her phone down while her face is still illuminated by the bright light of the screen.

LILY
(softly)
No. We're waiting for you.

NATE
(quietly grins)
That's nice.

Nate grabs an extra seat from the living room and pushes down to the dinning table. He places next to MAYA, 40-ish, as she tries to text with her husband, Craig. Everybody continues chatting among themselves in the background.

NATE (cont'd)
Hey.

MAYA
Hey honey.

NATE
So what conversation did I miss?

MAYA
Oh. We were just talking about Mark's 21st birthday. I'm gonna take him to Las Vegas to celebrate.

NATE
(excited)
That's cool.

Nate smilingly turns to MARK, 20, who presses his whole body against a lounge chair.

NATE (cont'd)
(his thumb quickly
points at Mark)
You're gonna take this man-child down to Las Vegas to catch some STD, huh?

MARK
(firmly while staring
at his phone)
Eat me, you Asian.

NATE
It will probably leave a bad after taste in my mouth, soooooo No Thanks.

MARK
(raises his phone
down and looks at
Nate)
Hey. If I give you 5 dollars
(imitates a
stereotypical Asian
accent)
will you love me long time?

NATE
(smiles)
Full Metal Jacket again?

MARK
(confident)
It never gets old. With you.

Nate joyfully rolls his eyes away from Mark.

NATE
(direct to Maya)
Your son is still a dick. Likable.
But still a dick.

MAYA
(whispers)
Why do you think I'm gonna take him
to Las Vegas?

Nate quietly chuckles.

MAYA (cont'd)
(chuckles)
You do know that he is not actually
my son, right? I mean I consider him
like one.

NATE
I know. But when you started working
at the store, you guys ... developed
a mother-son relationship so fast.
It's weird, but endearing. Knowing
that he has a second mom to look
after him.

MAYA
I consider you too, you know?

NATE
(skeptical)
Really?

MAYA
I mean. There're some days I hate
you, and some days I love you.

NATE
(sarcastically)
Great.
(smiles)
But thanks.

JOHNSON, 30, loudly interrupts everybody's private
conversations while sipping his beer.

JOHNSON
(rapidly)
Okay. Are we ready to play "Cards
Against Humanity" or something else?

NATE
Yeah. Let's play Cards Against
Humanity. It's our Game Night
tradition. Come on.

JOHNSON
Alright. Let's get set up.

The noise of the room begins to fades out as everybody
clears the table that filled with plates and food.

AERIAL SHOT: THE FRAME DISPLAYS THE TABLE.

ZOOM OUT: THE CAMERA GRADUALLY ZOOMS OUT FROM THE UP-CLOSE
FRAME OF THE TABLE.

DISSOLVE TO:

15. INT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

BUST SHOT: JOHNSON HOLDS UP A BLACK CARD AND READS.

Everybody around the dinning table stays silent.

JOHNSON
(loudly)
The FBI uses blank to interrogate
terrorists.
(flips through the
white cards; laughs
loudly as he reads
them)
Dead parents. Garfield. Passive-
aggressive post-it notes.
(MORE)

JOHNSON (cont'd)
An army of fire ants. Courtney Love.
Three blind mice.
(lays down all the
cards)
All of these are amazing. But I'm
gonna go with the passive-aggressive
notes. That's just too subtle.

Nate quietly raises his hand and accepts the win. The noise
sarcastically erupts the atmosphere.

MAYA
(sarcastically
getting angry)
What!? You don't like my Garfield.
That bastard would drain your energy
out.

JOHNSON
It's just not funny enough for me.

Everybody burst out laughter as she dramatically leers at
Johnson.

JOHNSON (cont'd)
(cheerfully)
I love you Mayaaaaaaa. You're the
best mom.

Maya happily rolls her eyes at Johnson. Then, Johnson
erectly stands right up.

JOHNSON (cont'd)
(hurriedly)
Okay. Don't start the next ground
until I come back. I'm gonna go smoke
real quick.

Johnson fastly exits the room. Most of everyone's gaze
follows Johnson as he closes the door to the back yard.

Everybody then immediately pulls out their phones, checking
on their social feeds. Nate frustratingly wipes his face,
catching Maya's attention.

MAYA
(still facing her
phone)
Are you ok, honey? You seemed a
little bit zoned out today.

NATE
(deflecting)
Oh. It's ... nothing. I ummm just--

MAYA
What's going on?

NATE
I mean. It's just the usual. My life
sucks. My parents suck. Nothing
really changed.

MAYA
But there's something deeper going on
right?

NATE
(continues wiping his
face)
I don't know.

MAYA
Come on. I'm a mom. I have an
instinct for detecting what's wrong.

NATE
(shutters; heavily
sighs)
I ... am about to make a big
decision. But ... there's something
... preventing me from actually
making
(exhales)
One. And when I said it out loud,
(chuckles; covers his
face)
it sounds really stupid.

MAYA
(firmly)
No it's not. What's the decision?

NATE
(looks at her)
I'm changing my major. My counselor
said I should decide either computer
science or something in arts. And
it's going no where even after I took
those career and personality tests
she gave me. I feel like I keep
hitting a dead end with no answer.
(MORE)

NATE (cont'd)
(wipes his face;
shakes his head)
Listen to me. I feel like I made this
thing bigger deal than it actually
should be.

MAYA
(comfort)
First of all, it actually sounds like
a big deal.

Nate's confused gaze turns to her sincerely.

MAYA (cont'd)
You're making a decision that will
determine your future. Entirely. It's
huge. You're clearly conflicted on
this issue, and I get it. It's hard
to make a decision.
(pauses)
But ... isn't it obvious?

Nate's face gently squints as his neck softly pulls back.

MAYA (cont'd)
(soft)
From the months I know you, you have
devoted yourself to arts. You keep
talking about movies, critiquing
them. On top of it, you write these
really good stories. And I read them,
I should know.

NATE
You really like them?

MAYA
Despite the grammar, you could turn
your writing into a career.

NATE
I thought about that too. But ... is
it logical to stick with something
that generate income? **Stability?**

MAYA
(exhales)
Yes. But it is also important to do
something that makes you happy.

Nate faces his head down on the table with his palm warmly
touches his forehead.

MAYA (cont'd)

Nate. I have a suggestion for you. When I can't make a decision about something, I usually go to somewhere peaceful and eventually, after I absorb in its surroundings, the answer would appear in front me. It's hard to explain how it even happens, but it does. So ... I think you should go to somewhere peaceful and hopefully your answer will surface.

NATE

(reluctantly)

Why can't you just tell me what to do?

MAYA

(softly)

Because it is not my decision to make. But no matter what you do, this messed up family will support you.

BUST SHOT: NATE.

Nate quietly smiles at Maya's comment.

ZOOM IN: THE CAMERA SLOWLY ZOOMS IN ON NATE.

The backdoor swings open and Johnson's voice can be heard throughout the room.

JOHNSON (O.C.)

Ok. I'm back. Whose turn it is?

CUT TO:

16. EXT. JOHNSON'S HOUSE - OUTSIDE - LATER

The score "**The Light Dreamers**" by **Luis Alvarez** plays softly over the scene, tuning every other noise out.

LONG SHOT: LILY, MAYA, MARK, AND NATE EXITS THE HOUSE THROUGH THE DOOR.

Nate receives a hug from Lily and a pat on the back from Mark. They both fare well right after the interaction with Nate. Both approach towards their cars and start the engines. The headlight brightly beam onto the darkly empty street. The yellow lights of both cars join into the quiet atmosphere, diffusing themselves with the dimly lit street lamp.

Maya gives him a quick hug before she says goodbye. Nate and her talk inaudibly as the yellow lights slowly flash through their faces. Maya gives him a gentle smile and walks away.

CLOSE UP: NATE SOMBERLY SMILES AS THE LAST YELLOW LIGHTS FLASH THROUGH HIM. HIS GAZE FOLLOWS ITS DIRECTION.

17. EXT. LAKE - THE NEXT DAY - SUNSET

LONG SHOT: THE FRAME SHOWCASES THE MAJESTIC OF THE LAKE. THE GLARING OF THE PURPLE SURFACE GLIMMERS IN THE CAMERA LENS. THE FRAME ALSO DISPLAYS A BENCH--FROM BEHIND--WITH NATE SITTING ON IT (SILHOUETTE LIGHTING--SHOWING A SHADOW FIGURE).

FULL SHOT: NATE SITS ON THE BENCH, BREATHING IN THE ATMOSPHERE.

Nate admires the lake's majestically reflection of lights with his arms cross on his chests. The trees' leaves rattle with each other as the cold winds blow by. The distant lights of houses across the lake begin to illuminate like fireflies. The noise of the slowly moving water raves through Nate's ears. The wet rocks laid around the lake reflect the brightness of the sunset.

NATE REFLECTION (O.C.)

(awes)

What a beautiful view!

The music begins to fade out.

NATE

(turns to the other
side of the bench)

It is.

A reflection of Nate sits on the other of the bench with one of his arm rests on the top of the bench's back.

NATE'S REFLECTION

(squints his eyes
from the glares)

Maya was right. Peacefulness does
bring out the answer.

NATE

(scoffs)

What answer? There's nothing here.

NATE'S REFLECTION

Then why am I here?

NATE
(sarcastically)
I don't know. Desperation?
Hopelessness?

NATE'S REFLECTION
(chuckles)
Why don't you just admit it, then?

NATE
Admit what?

NATE'S REFLECTION
That you're afraid. Afraid of making
a choice for yourself.

NATE
(scoffs)
You don't know what you're talking
about.

NATE'S REFLECTION
I'm you. I basically know **everything**
about you. And I know for a **fact** that
you are not keen on taking risks.
You're still just a scare little kid
who still needs guidance.

NATE
(quietly)
Stop it.

NATE'S REFLECTION
I mean. The tests you took. All of
them say that you are **artistic** and
investigative. But you still won't
accept that.

NATE
(raises his voice a
little)
Please stop.

NATE'S REFLECTION
Maybe you're right. You're just a
loser traveling on a road to no
where. Just like your parents
predicted.

NATE
(breaks down)
STOP. Please. Just Stop.

Tears begin to form on the corner of Nate's eyes. The score "**Wonderment**" by **Moonlight Echoes** starts to play somberly in the background.

NATE (cont'd)

(voice breaking)

You want me to admit it. Yes. I'm. Afraid. **Terrified** even. For the last 19 years of my life. Every decision was made **for me**. I didn't have a say in **anything**. Now. I have a choice. And I'm terrified of committing to one. Because what if I chose the wrong one. What if I regret not making the right choice. And whatever I choose, I have to hear those **cruel** judgments from the two people that don't even **love** each other.

(voice heavily breaks down)

I don't what to do. Or what to choose. I feel like I'm **stuck** in a hopeless pit where nobody there to help me escape.

NATE'S REFLECTION

(comfortably looks at Nate; softly)

And there it is.

NATE

(hopelessly)

What! My misery.

NATE'S REFLECTION

Your problem.

Nate stares at his reflection.

NATE'S REFLECTION (cont'd)

Nate. Look back your life for a quick second. Don't you see that your life is predestined by your parents? That's why you can't choose; you're afraid of what they might say to you. Or do to you. You're **afraid** of living in the uncertainty.

(MORE)

NATE'S REFLECTION (cont'd)

(scoots closer to

Nate)

But things change now. You are in a different place compared to those years of being under your parents' control. You can be your own person here and now.

(chuckles)

You can do whatever you desire. Live the life you want. **Be in control.**

NATE

(reaffirms)

What if I fail?

NATE'S REFLECTION

Then you know that you tried. You know that you took a risk. And learned from it.

(assures)

Life is unpredictable and scary. But you're gotta live your life happy, make the best out of it. Do something that will make you happy. Don't settle.

NATE

(wipes away his tears)

To be honest with you, I feel lost--

NATE'S REFLECTION

(slowly)

Everybody is. That's why everybody is searching for their own footprint in the world.

(smiles)

They just do it one day at a time.

NATE

I can't believe you're my answer.

NATE'S REFLECTION

(uplifts)

I'm better than your answer. I'm the person you're gonna become. Independent. Freewill. And doesn't care about anybody's opinion but his own.

NATE

(scoffs)

All this time. The answer hides inside my head.

NATE'S REFLECTION

(softly)

Not your head. That place is a mess.
You should find someone to help you
clean it up. That's the only way, I
feel, for you to move forwards. To
solve the issues that lurking within
your head.

Nate chuckles at his reflection with gently smile. Nate's
reflection stands up and faces Nate before bidding farewell.

NATE'S REFLECTION (cont'd)

And remembers this. You're not alone
anymore. There are people who care
about you and will surprise you in
the most unexpected hours. **Just** don't
give up hope.

Nate gives his reflection one last look. Then, he faces down
to the ground.

COWBOY SHOT: NATE SITTING ALONE ON THE BENCH. HIS FACE
RAISES UP FROM THE GROUND. THE PURPLE AND ORANGE GLARES OF
THE LAKE BOUNCES ON HIS FACE.

Suddenly, his pocket vibrates, throwing him off. Nate slowly
pulls out his phone and stunningly sees "Brian" on the
screen. Shyly, he swipes right.

MEDIUM CLOSE UP: NATE.

NATE

(cracking)

Hey. What's up?

(pauses)

No. I'm ... feeling ... better.

The music in the background fades out.

DISSOLVE TO:

18. INT. COLLEGE - COUNSELING OFFICE - NANCY'S OFFICE - DAY

MEDIUM SHOT: THE VIEW OF THE WINDOW: THE SUNLIGHT SOFTLY LIGHT UP THE LIVELY GREEN OF THE GRASS. THE STUDENTS CASUALLY WALK BY, EITHER BY THEMSELVES OR IN A GROUP.

ZOOM OUT: THE FRAME BEGINS TO ZOOM OUT FROM THE WINDOW.

NANCY (O.C.)
(firmly)
Nate.

CLOSE UP: NATE SNAPS OUT OF HIS GAZE AT THE WINDOW.

Nate's attention is suddenly directed at Nancy. She looks at him with curiosity.

NATE
(softly)
I'm sorry. I'm just a little out of it today.

NANCY
Is everything alright?

NATE
Yeah. I'm just ... tired. What do the tests indicate?

NANCY
Well. You scored higher in artistic skills in most of them.
(shuffles through the paper)
As well as investigative skills.

NATE
Okay.

NANCY
I strongly suggest you look into being something in arts. Everything here directs you towards it. So do you say?

NATE
(hesitates; strokes the sides of his thighs with his palms)
Before I made a decision, can I ask you something off topic?

NANCY
(sincerely)
Sure.

NATE
Can I ... schedule ... more
appointments with you?

NANCY
What for?

NATE
I feel that I have anxiety and
depression stirring inside my head.
And there are other things inside me
that begin to break me, both
physically and emotionally. So can
you help me? Be Better.

NANCY
(slowly smiles;
softly)
Of course. We are here to help.

NATE
(gently nods)
I don't know why I felt scared to say
that.

NANCY
Really? You're scared of asking me
that?

NATE
I don't know why. I just ... feel
like it.

NANCY
Okay. We'll talk about that more
later. Now, let's get back to this.
(writes on the form)
Okay. Everything is filled. The only
thing left is for you to say what
your new major would be?

Nate slowly reaches up to his chest with his hand, staring
deeply at the form. He gently smiles.

CUT TO:

18. INT. COLLEGE - CAMPUS - LATER

FULL SHOT: NATE.

Nate exits the Student Center with a determined face. The sunlight illuminates the colors of his clothes. With his backpack heavily scraped onto his back, Nate pulls out his phone and dials.

NATE

(softly)

Hey. I just finish the counseling.

(pauses)

Yeah. I chose something.

(exhales)

I chose to follow my passion. And--

Nate suddenly comes to a halt. In front of him stands a bird, idling in its space. Both look deeply at each other; then, the bird spreads its wings and flies off into the blue sky. Nate's gaze follows its direction. Nate sheds a big smile and continues to walk away with his head tilted down. The song "**Power Hungry Animal**" by **The Apache Relay** kicks in the background as Nate smiles.

Nate walks out of the frame.

FADE TO: BLACK

THE END.