A SUBURBAN TRAGEDY

by

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EXT. SUBURBAN AVENUE - NIGHT

A car whizzes through a green traffic signal.
The car passes a bank sign with a large digital clock flashing: 2:56 AM

DANIEL
(o.s.)
If she was so hot, why didn’t you say anything?

ALEX
(o.s)
Are you kidding me? A girl that hot? No way in hell.

DANIEL
(chuckling)
Why not?

INT. DANIEL’S CAR - NIGHT

DANIEL DAVIS, 22, is behind the wheel. His brother, ALEX
DAVIS, 17, is in the passenger seat.

ALEX
I had no shot.

DANIEL
Not with that attitude.

ALEX
She had to be at least twenty-four.
I’m sure she falls all over herself for high school guys.

DANIEL
So you lie. You could’ve gotten away with twenty. I mean, I would buy twenty.

Alex pulls out a pack of gum and pops a piece into his mouth.

DANIEL
(glancing over)
You should probably toss me a piece of that.

ALEX
You had like two drinks an hour ago.
DANIEL
Who cares?

ALEX
It’s my last piece.

Daniel shoots his brother an annoyed look.

Alex hands over his last piece of gum.

DANIEL
I’m starving.
(to Alex)
You hungry?

ALEX
Nah.

DANIEL
You sure?

ALEX
Yeah. I’m beat. Could care less about food.

DANIEL
Well, I’m gonna stop and grab a bite.

ALEX
Knock yourself out.

EXT. SUBURBAN AVENUE – NIGHT

Daniel’s car turns into a restaurant drive-thru lane.

INT. DANIEL’S CAR – NIGHT

He pulls up to the speaker and rolls the window down.

DRIVE-THRU ATTENDANT
(over speaker)
Thank you for stopping at Cozy’s, can I interest you in a dollar dog combo?

DANIEL
No, thanks.

Alex turns the radio up.
DANIEL
(to Alex)
Turn that down, fool.

ALEX
Sorry.

Alex turns down the radio as Daniel addresses the menu board.

DANIEL
I’ll have a bacon cheeseburger, no tomato, a large fry, and a medium Sprite.

DRIVE-THRU ATTENDANT
Will that be all for you, sir?

DANIEL
That’s about--

BANG! An SUV runs right into the rear of Daniel’s car. The two brothers jolt forward.

ALEX
(startled)
What the hell?

Daniel looks in his rearview mirror.

DANIEL
Didn’t this guy see me here?

ALEX
Apparently not.

Daniel turns to look out the rear window. The DRIVER is yet to exit his vehicle.

DANIEL
(opens door)
Wait here.

He gets out of the car.

EXT. DRIVE-THRU - NIGHT

Daniel approaches the SUV shielding his eyes from the bright headlights.

The DRIVER and PASSENGER both get out.

DANIEL
You fella’s alright?
The driver, a rugged beast of a man, walks around the front of his SUV and up to Daniel.

    DRIVER
    What the fuck? I thought you were pulling up.

    DANIEL
    I never even took my foot off the brake.

The passenger, shaved head with forearms like tree trunks, walks up.

    PASSENGER
    (to Daniel)
    The fuck’s a matter with you?

    DANIEL
    Dude, you guys ran into me!

INT. DANIEL’S CAR - NIGHT
Alex watches the confrontation from the passenger seat.

    ALEX
    Shit.

EXT. DRIVE-THRU - NIGHT
Alex jumps out of the car and approaches the group. They are now in a heated argument.

    DANIEL
    ...that’s what insurance is for. It’s no big deal.

The passenger lunges toward Daniel and shoves him.

    PASSENGER
    Gettin’ smart, motherfucker!

Alex dashes toward the passenger.

    ALEX
    (shoving passenger)
    What the fuck is your problem, man?

    PASSENGER
    Oh, what the fuck are you gonna do?
DRIVER
(to Alex)
Oh, you a tough guy?

Daniel gets between his brother and the passenger.

DANIEL
Look! It’s a goddamn bumper! Lets exchange info and move on. The police don’t even have to get involved. Okay?

DRIVER
(glaring at Alex)
Fine.

Employees from within the restaurant are now watching from the windows.

DRIVER
(to passenger)
It’s in the glove box.

The passenger heads toward the SUV.

DANIEL
(to driver)
Thank you.

Alex and Daniel walk back toward their car.

ALEX
Assholes.

DANIEL
Shut up. I don’t really feel like getting stabbed tonight.

Alex opens the passenger door and fishes through the glove box.

Suddenly, the passenger sprints toward Daniel with an aluminum baseball bat.

CRACK! The bat meets Daniel’s face.

He falls to the pavement.

ALEX
WHAT THE FUCK?!

He rushes the passenger in an attempt to tackle him.

The driver runs over and pulls Alex off the passenger.
DRIVER
FUCKER!

He punches Alex in the face.

Alex falls backward and cracks his temple on the edge of the passenger door before falling to the ground, unconscious.

Daniel fights to get up, but is dazed. Blood dripping down his face, he manages to get to his feet.

PASSENGER
(to Alex on the ground)
Look at you now, hardass! Ain’t so fuckin’ tough now, you little piece a shit!

The driver looks at the people watching from inside the restaurant.

DRIVER
(to passenger)
SHIT, MAN, WE GOTTA HIT THE FUCKIN’ ROAD!

Out of nowhere, Daniel rushes the driver and pushes him against the bumper of the SUV. He punches him in the face repeatedly.

The passenger comes up behind Daniel and hits him in the back of his head with the bat.

Daniel keels over and falls to the ground. The passenger continues wailing on him.

Police sirens are heard from a distance.

Terrified employees scream and holler, pounding on the windows.

DRIVER
FUCK! COME ON!

PASSENGER
(to Daniel)
MOTHERFUCKER!

The driver and passenger jump back into the SUV and speed away.

Alex opens his eyes and wobbles to his feet. He walks to the rear of Daniel’s car.
ALEX
(chin quivering)
Oh Shit...

Daniel’s lifeless body is laying on the pavement. His face is covered in blood. His eyes are frozen and fixed on his brother.

Alex falls to the ground. He picks up his dead brother and cradles him in his arms.

ALEX
(sobbing hysterically)
NO...GOD...SOMEONE HELP US....GOD...WAKE UP...DANNY...PLEASE...

Police cars pull up in the parking lot.

Several stunned employees move out of the restaurant and toward Alex.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

SUPER: “One Year Later.”

Alex jogs around the neighborhood with headphones in.

He looks pale and disheveled. The dark shadows around his eyes suggest sleep doesn’t come easy.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Alex enters the kitchen, wiping sweat from his face with a towel.

MARIA DAVIS, 44, is sitting at the kitchen table. She’s pale, drained, drinking a cup of coffee and looking out the window.

Alex walks over to the fridge and gets a bottle of water.

ALEX
(out of breath)
Morning.

MARIA
Good morning, dear.

She doesn’t take her eyes off the window.

ALEX
Get any sleep?
MARIA
Not so much.

ALEX
Me either.

MARIA
Your doctor called. He wanted to see if you can come a bit earlier.

ALEX
Shit.

MARIA
(faces Alex)
What?

ALEX
I completely forgot about that.

MARIA
Are you busy?

ALEX
Nah, it just seems like an enormous waste of time.

MARIA
I don’t want you to give up on this.

ALEX
I won’t. Don’t worry about it.

Alex sits down at the table.

MARIA
I’m gonna stay at your grandmother’s tonight so you’re on your own for dinner.

ALEX
No problem.

He glances out the window.

ALEX
Mom?

She doesn’t answer.

ALEX
(touches her hand)
Mom.
MARIA  
(looking at him)  
Yeah, dear?  

He turns away.  

ALEX  
Nevermind.  

He rises and kisses her on the forehead. She forces a smile.  

MARIA  
I love you, sweetie.  

ALEX  
You too.  

He exits.  

INT. DR. PRUITT’S OFFICE - DAY  

DR. MARK PRUITT sits in a chair facing Alex, who is on the couch.  

Pruitt is a clean cut middle-aged man with intense eyes. He sports a five o’clock shadow and has a relatively upscale dress sense.  

PRUITT  
Your mother tells me she is worrying about you lately.  

Alex gazes out the window behind him.  

PRUITT  
Any particular reason?  

ALEX  
She’s a mom. They worry.  

PRUITT  
Understandable.  

ALEX  
I really think she should be sitting here.  

PRUITT  
Why is that?  

ALEX  
You’ve spoken to her. Can’t you tell she’s somewhere else?
PRUITT
I haven’t gathered that.

ALEX
She does a really good job of hiding it from everyone else, but I know she’s--

PRUITT
Going through changes?

ALEX
I was gonna say, “fucked up”.

PRUITT
Losing a son will do that to a person.

ALEX
So will losing a brother.

PRUITT
Is there something you wanna talk about?

ALEX
We’ve been over this a thousand times. Nothing ever changes. It’s pointless to keep dancing around it.

PRUITT
Well, that could be because you aren’t allowing changes to take effect.

ALEX
What the hell is that supposed to mean?

PRUITT
Have you started the journal I suggested?

ALEX
No.

PRUITT
I rest my case.

ALEX
You think writing my thoughts in a goddamn notebook is gonna make me feel better about this? It’s not.
PRUITT
What else are you doing, Alex?

He glares at Pruitt.

PRUITT
You see what I mean? I can give you all the advice in the world, but as long as you ignore it--

ALEX
I’m not ignoring it.

PRUITT
What do you call this? You come here every week and we have a staring contest for an hour. You have taken every suggestion I’ve given you with a grain of salt.

ALEX
What the hell do you want me to do?

PRUITT
I want you to apply yourself. I want you to care about getting better...

ALEX
(overlapping)
I don’t.

PRUITT
...I want you to come in here and open up so I have the slightest opportunity to help you.

Alex shakes his head in anger.

ALEX
What do you think you’re gonna do? You think you’re gonna figure me out?

PRUITT
You have to work with me here, kid.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex lays in bed writing in a notebook.
ALEX
(v.o)
I constantly find myself questioning the existence of God...

QUICK FLASH: A crucifix rotates until it’s inverted.

BACK TO SCENE.

ALEX
(v.o)
Why did He allow this to happen to us?

BUZZ! His cell phone vibrates on the dresser beside his bed. He shuts the notebook quickly and answers it.

ALEX
What’s up?

KEVIN
(over phone)
What’s happening, dude?

ALEX
Not much. Looking for an excuse to--

KEVIN
(interrupting)
I’m havin’ people over tonight. Folks are in Tampa. You should get off your ass and head over.

ALEX
Didn’t know your old man was much for the tropics.

KEVIN
Dude, it’s hardly the tropics. Anything to get away from writing tickets.

ALEX
Either way. I don’t really feel like doing anything.

KEVIN
Come on, man, there’s gonna be some hotties over here. Don’t be such a fag.

ALEX
I don’t know, dude, I’m really tired.
KEVIN
Bitch.

Alex is quiet for a moment, pondering.

ALEX
Shit. What time?

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Teenagers are scattered around the modern living room. Rock music blasts from the stereo.

Alex is sitting on the couch beside a DRUNK GIRL. He looks tired and bored.

DRUNK GIRL
(shouting over music)
Hey! Aren’t you in my Chemistry class?

ALEX
I’m not really sure.

DRUNK GIRL
Yeah! I think you are!

ALEX
What hour?

DRUNK GIRL
Fourth.

Just then, THEO, 17, approaches the drunk girl. He is dressed to the nines with more than enough product in his hair.

THEO
Hey hottie! We’re doing shots in the kitchen. You down?

DRUNK GIRL
Hell yeah!

THEO
(turns to Alex)
Sorry, bro. You snooze, you lose.

ALEX
(light sarcasm)
What a total disappointment.

Theo takes the drunk girl’s hand and leads her away.
Alex gets up and walks over to KEVIN BAXTER, 18, who is chatting with MALLORY BANYON, 17, and KAITLIN TINSEL, 17.

Kevin is the guy who definitely went through puberty way too early. He wears a tight fitting t-shirt and is built like a linebacker.

Mallory is a traditionally pretty girl. She can probably pull off wearing no makeup although she has eyeliner and blush on tonight.

The leggy blonde known as Kaitlin is bubbly and flirtatious with a sexy stare, suggesting she is on the prowl.

ALEX
(to Kevin)
I think I’m gonna split.

KEVIN
Man, you’re a fag. You just got here.

ALEX
I’m not really feelin’ it.

MALLORY
(to Alex)
You don’t say “hi”?

ALEX
(smiling)
Hi Mal.

MALLORY
Have you met Kaitlin? She goes to North.

Alex smiles at Kaitlin.

ALEX
(to Kaitlin)
How’s it going?

KAITLIN
(smiling)
Pretty good.

MALLORY
You’re not leaving already, are you?

ALEX
I was thinkin’ about it.
KEVIN
Of course he is. He’s a bitch.

MALLORY
Why do you always have to be such an ass, Kevin?

KEVIN
(putting his arm around Alex)
He knows I’m just fuckin’ around.

Alex forces an irritated smile as Kevin messes up his hair.

KAITLIN
(to Alex)
I think we should get you another drink.

ALEX
I didn’t have a first one.

KEVIN
All the more reason to have another.

Kaitlin smiles and grabs Alex’s arm.

KAITLIN
Shall we?

ALEX
(smiles)
I guess.

KEVIN
(slapping Alex’s back)
Alright then.

Alex throws him a nervous smirk.

EXT. BAXTER HOUSE – BACKYARD – NIGHT

Alex and Kaitlin sit at a table drinking beers. They are on a deck surrounded by tiki torches. No one else in sight.

KAITLIN
It’s so nice out here. I can’t believe those morons are still inside.
ALEX
I guess they didn’t want to miss the action.

Their attention shifts to the kitchen window where Kevin taps the top of a girl’s beer bottle with his own. She quickly puts her mouth over it, but is too late.

Kaitlin laughs.

Back in the kitchen, the girl shoots beer out of her nose.

ALEX
(re: window)
Nice.

KAITLIN
So, how do you and Kevin know each other?

ALEX
We’ve been friends since like fourth grade. We actually hated each other at first.

KAITLIN
That’s not hard to believe.

ALEX
How so?

KAITLIN
He’s kind of a dick, but you didn’t hear that from me.

ALEX
An acquired taste.

KAITLIN
I don’t know what Mal sees in him.

ALEX
He’s a good guy. He means well. He does. Just has a different way of expressing himself.

KAITLIN
I just don’t like him.

ALEX
Everyone’s entitled to their own opinion, I guess.
KAITLIN
What about you?

ALEX
What about me?

KAITLIN
What’s your story?

ALEX
My story? I don’t have much of a story. I actually...

KAITLIN
...have a girlfriend?

Alex smiles.

ALEX
No, that is one thing I don’t have.

Kaitlin moves her chair closer to Alex. Her bedroom eyes stare him down as she bites her bottom lip.

KAITLIN
That’s a nice surprise.

ALEX
Is it?

She moves in and kisses him.

ALEX
You don’t waste any time.

KAITLIN
When I see something I want, I take it.

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kevin is hunched over on the couch with Mallory beside him. He is drunk and his face is beet red. She offers him a bottle of water.

MALLORY
You should have some of this. It’ll make you feel better.

KEVIN
That shit doesn’t work.
MALLORY
How do you know?

KEVIN
I just do.

MALLORY
Just drink it. Stop being an ass.

She puts the bottle to his face and he swats it away, knocking it to the floor.

MALLORY
You’re such a dick when you’re drunk!

Across the room, Theo is chatting with a group of his buddies. One of them does the infamous beer bottle tap and knocks Theo’s bottle to the floor.

CRASH! The bottle shatters and coats the hardwood in beer.

KEVIN
(jumps up)
WHAT THE FUCK!

Theo’s attention turns to him quickly.

KEVIN
What the fuck is wrong with you?

THEO
I’m sorry, man, it was an accident. We were just messing around.

Theo’s buddies back away leaving the stunned teenager to hold his own.

KEVIN
Well, it’s not fuckin’ funny. Who the hell invited you anyway?

THEO
I...I...came with some friends...dude...I’m totally sorry. Just chill out.

Kevin moves closer to him.

KEVIN
Get a towel, motherfucker, start cleaning this shit up.
I will, man. No problem at all.

The party has silenced and everyone has their attention on the confrontation.

You better get something to take care of that glass too.

Fine. Where can I get--

Suddenly, Kevin lunges at Theo and grabs him by the neck. He slams the teenager’s face to the floor.

The crowd gasps and backs away.

KEVIN
KEVIN! LET HIM UP!

Now, clean the shit up with your fuckin' tongue!

Kevin presses Theo’s face into the floor. Little pieces of glass are embedding themselves into his skin.

Go ahead, you pussy, lick that shit up!

Tears roll down Theo’s face as blood seeps from his cuts. Alex comes out of nowhere and pulls Kevin off the helpless teen.

DUDE, LEAVE HIM ALONE! WHAT THE FUCK?!

Kevin struggles to get free, but Alex has a tight bear hug on him.

(yelling at Theo)
GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY HOUSE, YOU FUCKING FAGGOT!

Theo jumps up and bolts out the front door. His buddies follow close behind.

The remaining guests stare at Kevin in fear.
Mallory glares at him and walks out of the room.

INT. ALEX’S CAR - NIGHT

Alex is behind the wheel with Kaitlin riding in the passenger seat.

KAITLIN
I can’t believe he did that. That kid is a psychopath. He definitely has issues. What a total asshole!

Alex remains silent.

KAITLIN
He seriously could’ve killed that kid.

ALEX
Aren’t you being a little dramatic?

KAITLIN
How can you be taking this so lightly?

ALEX
I’m not. That kid was a prick anyway.

KAITLIN
Does that make it right?

ALEX
Yeah...a little...I don’t know.

KAITLIN
Whatever.

ALEX
Look, the guy’s my best friend.

KAITLIN
You should get a new one.

ALEX
He’s a little psychotic when he drinks.

KAITLIN
That’s pretty damn scary.

ALEX
I know. You see, his dad...
He stops himself.

KAITLIN
What?

ALEX
Nevermind.

KAITLIN
His dad what?

ALEX
It’s irrelevant.

Kaitlin gazes out the window for a moment.

KAITLIN
Thanks for driving me home.

ALEX
Not a problem.

Alex yawns.

KAITLIN
You tired?

ALEX
Not really. I haven’t been sleeping well lately.

KAITLIN
Wanna go somewhere and hang out?

ALEX
Sure, what did you have in mind?

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Kaitlin are making out heavily on his bed. She takes her shirt off and throws it on the floor. Alex gets on top of her. She pulls his shirt off and starts undoing his pants.

ALEX
Are you sure?

She nods in approval. He leans in and kisses her.

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE - NIGHT

BOOM! The sound of thunder.
Lightning strikes and rain cascades to the pavement.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Alex and Kaitlin are asleep beneath the covers.
A flash of lightning brightens the room for a split second.
Alex opens his eyes.
Thunder crashes.
Kaitlin’s head is resting on his bare chest. He slips out of bed.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT
Alex creeps down the hallway in his boxers.
At the end of the hall, he sees that his mother’s bedroom door is open a crack. The lights are on.
Alex walks slowly toward the door and stops in front of it. He knocks softly.
No answer.

ALEX
(whispering)
Mom? You home?

Thunder.

ALEX
Mom.

He pushes the door open.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - MARIA’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Alex’s eyes widen in terror.
Maria is hanging from a rope. Her eyes are glazed over in white.

ALEX
(bloodcurdling scream)
M0000000000OM!
INT. DAVIS HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex jolts up in bed. He’s drenched in sweat.

Kaitlin wakes up as well.

KAITLIN
Jesus! Are you okay?

Alex is out of breath.

KAITLIN
What happened?

ALEX
Nightmare....just a nightmare.

Tears stream down his face.

KAITLIN
Must have been some nightmare.

ALEX
I....I haven’t really been sleeping well.

KAITLIN
Should I go?

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

MICHAEL DAVIS, 45, is on a ladder cleaning leaves out of the gutters. He is a good looking older man with salt and pepper hair.

He scoops a pile of leaves out of the gutter and throws them in a trash barrel below.

Alex appears at the foot of the ladder.

ALEX
What are you doing here?

MICHAEL
Taking care of my house. Somebody’s gotta do it. When was the last time you took a peek at these gutters?

Alex doesn’t answer.

Michael looks down at him.
He drops another pile into the trash barrel and steps down the ladder.

MICHAEL
Where’s your mother?
ALEX
Grandma’s.

MICHAEL
What’s she doing there?
ALEX
Don’t know.

MICHAEL
You really should get on this lawn, too. The weather’s starting to get nice and--

ALEX
(interrupting)
You know, I really could care less.

Michael says nothing and stares at his son.

MICHAEL
Well, I’m not gonna be stopping by to do little bullshit chores forever. You’re gonna have to take the initiative sometime.

ALEX
I’ll get right on that.

Alex walks back inside the house.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - TRACK - DAY

Alex and Kevin are jogging.

KEVIN
....think she was pretty freaked out?

ALEX
Wouldn’t you be?
KEVIN
Not really. People do a lot of stupid shit in their sleep. Mal has conversations with herself, but you didn’t hear that from me.

ALEX
Probably thinks I’m out of my fuckin’ mind.

KEVIN
Why do you care? At least you got laid.

ALEX
I definitely waived “bye-bye” to that for a long time.

KEVIN
You’ll be fine, man.

ALEX
Any word on that guy you went Patrick Bateman on?

KEVIN
Nope. Why do you keep bringing that up?

ALEX
Well, it was pretty fucked up. What you did.

KEVIN
Yeah, I’ve been thinking a lot about it. I feel really bad.

ALEX
Really?

KEVIN
(laughs)
Nah!

ALEX
You’re such a dick, man. You didn’t even know that kid.

KEVIN
Fuck him! That kid was a fag anyway!
ALEX
You fucked him up pretty bad. Did you see the glass stuck in his face?

KEVIN
Hysterical.

ALEX
What if he reports you or something?

KEVIN
(rolling his eyes)
Come on, man, do you even have to ask?

ALEX
I guess not.

KEVIN
It’ll all work out.

ALEX
You’re gonna do whatever you want regardless of what I say. There’s no point in wasting my breath.

KEVIN
So, why do you try?

ALEX
I have no idea.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex rumbles through his locker for books. He locates his Psychology book, shoves it in his backpack, and slams the locker door.

As he walks down the hallway toward his next class, he notices a young woman standing at the door.

She is very attractive in a sophisticated fashion. Her outfit consists of a skirt that ends right above her knees and a dress shirt buttoned to show only the slightest bit of cleavage. This is KATHERINE TAYLOR, 25.

Alex approaches the door and Katherine shoots him a smile that would stop traffic.

KATHERINE
Good afternoon.
He smiles nervously and scurries into the classroom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Alex takes a seat in the front row.

The bell rings and students take their seats as Katherine enters.

KATHERINE
Alright, everyone, get settled so we can begin.

Alex stares at her as she moves to the center of the classroom.

KATHERINE
I am Miss Taylor and I will be taking over this class for Mister Walker for the remainder of the semester.

A STUDENT raises his hand.

KATHERINE
(pointing at student)
Yes?

STUDENT
Where’s Mister Walker?

KATHERINE
I believe he has some sort of medical condition.

STUDENT
Is it serious?

KATHERINE
I really don’t know.

STUDENT
(disappointed)
Drag.

KATHERINE
Any other questions?

No answer.

KATHERINE
Okay, then. Let’s get started.
Katherine’s voice fades to a muffle as Alex continues to study her. She has the kind of eyes that look right through you. Her smile is far too comforting.

MALLORY
(o.s.)
Alex?

Alex snaps out of his spell and notices Mallory in the desk behind him.

ALEX
(turns)
Oh....hey....what’s up?

MALLORY
(smirking)
Have fun Saturday night?

ALEX
Aside from that unfortunate incident.

MALLORY
I can’t believe you.

ALEX
What?

MALLORY
Kaitlin?

ALEX
Who cares?

MALLORY
That’s so not you.

KATHERINE
(calling out to Alex and Mallory)
Can you two save the conversation for after class?

They exchange embarrassed looks.

ALEX
Yeah....sorry.

KATHERINE
Thank you.

She shoots that warm smile again.
INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Class has ended. Students spill into the hallway from every which way.

Alex and Mallory exit the classroom.

MALLORY
I can’t believe you slept with her.

ALEX
What’s the big deal?

MALLORY
I don’t know. She’s a little on the....

ALEX
....slutty side?

MALLORY
Promiscuous.

ALEX
I gathered that.

MALLORY
Doesn’t that scare you?

ALEX
I guess. I don’t know. Who cares?

MALLORY
You should be more careful. I don’t want you to catch anything. Were you safe?

ALEX
Of course.

MALLORY
That’s a plus.

INT. DR. PRUITT’S OFFICE - NIGHT

Second session with Alex and Pruitt.

ALEX
I’ve been having these nightmares.

PRUITT
Again?
ALEX
Yeah. Only this time they are very real. I mean, they are about specific things.

PRUITT
Explain.

Alex sits silently, remembering.

ALEX
Okay. I wake up in the middle of the night and find my mother hanging in her bedroom.

INT. MARIA’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Maria hangs from a rope around her neck. Her eyes are glazed over white.

INT. DR. PRUITT’S OFFICE – NIGHT

PRUITT
Hanging....what....by a rope?

ALEX
Yeah.

PRUITT
What do you think this means?

ALEX
I don’t believe dreams really have a meaning. That’s stupid.

PRUITT
I wouldn’t write off the possibility completely. Say they did have a meaning. Just entertain the idea. What would you say about this one.

ALEX
I don’t know. I would say it’s probably a combination of a bunch of things.

PRUITT
Like what?
ALEX
Well, fear that my mom will eventually kill herself and I won’t be able to stop it.

PRUITT
Having no control in that situation?

ALEX
Exactly.

PRUITT
Has she shown any evidence that she’s suicidal?

ALEX
Not really. Do they ever?

PRUITT
Well, some do and some don’t. I would say that most show some sort of sign.

ALEX
Like I said before, we hardly ever talk. It’s hard to hold a conversation with her for more than a few minutes.

PRUITT
Do you ever talk about your brother?

ALEX
No. She can’t do it. It’s too much for her.

PRUITT
What about you?

ALEX
What do you want to know?

PRUITT
I want to know if you’ve been able to forgive yourself.

ALEX
I don’t think I ever will.

PRUITT
Why is that?
ALEX
I feel like I could’ve done something.

PRUITT
You said yourself that you were out cold.

ALEX
I know.

PRUITT
There’s not really much you could do in that state.

ALEX
I can’t help but feel responsible. Like I failed.

PRUITT
Do you believe in fate, Alex?

ALEX
I don’t know.

PRUITT
Is it possible that Daniel was meant to die that night regardless of what you or anyone else did?

ALEX
It’s possible.

PRUITT
I’m not saying that it’s a certainty. Speaking hypothetically here.

ALEX
I can’t answer that. I mean, what’s the difference between fate and God’s ultimate plan?

PRUITT
Some people believe that fate is God’s ultimate plan. That each and everyone of us have our lives completely mapped out by God.

ALEX
I don’t buy that. There isn’t any proof of that.

(MORE)
I think it’s another stupid scapegoat so people don’t have to take responsibility for their own lives.

PRUITT
It could be, but as you said, there’s no proof of that either.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE – KITCHEN – NIGHT

Maria is sitting at the table again. There are piles of old photos scattered all over.

She is holding one of Daniel as a child.

ALEX
(o.s.)
Hey.

She looks up to see Alex standing beside her.

MARIA
(re: photo)
Look at this one. Would you look at the smile on my boy?

Alex peers over her shoulder at the photo and smiles.

ALEX
(sitting down)
Why are you doing this to yourself?

MARIA
Doing what?

ALEX
Sitting around here all day with the pictures and the videos? You’re not gonna get any better if you keep doing this.

MARIA
(tears welling)
I need to remember. I need to remember him.

ALEX
Your not gonna forget. None of us are.
MARIA
(dropping photo)
I can’t talk about this right now. It’s not a good time.

ALEX
(raising his voice)
Well, when is a good time, mom? It’s never a good time for you. I’m still here. I’m still alive. Why don’t you try not to forget me?

MARIA
I’m sorry, sweetie. I’m so sorry.

Maria is sobbing now with her hands on her head.

Tears well in Alex’s eyes as he looks at his tortured mother.

MARIA
I’m gonna try harder, baby. I promise.

Alex falls into her arms and they both cry.

INT. ALEX’S CAR – NIGHT

Alex is on his cell phone, driving.

MICHAEL
(over phone)
....what do you want me to do?

ALEX
Something. It’s getting worse.

MICHAEL
I’ve told you I don’t want to get involved, son.

ALEX
Do you think it’s just gonna go away if you ignore it long enough?

MICHAEL
Of course not.

ALEX
This is your responsibility too. I can’t do it alone.
MICHAEL
Can we please talk about this another time?

ALEX
No, I’m gonna be at your place in five minutes.

INT. MICHAEL’S CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

From the leather sofa and love seat to the 50-inch plasma on the wall, the decor screams upscale contemporary.

Alex slouches on the sofa.

MICHAEL
(o.s.)
Something to drink? A beer?

ALEX
I guess.

Michael enters.

MICHAEL
(handing the beer bottle)
Don’t tell your mother.

ALEX
It’s the least of her worries.
Trust me.

MICHAEL
That bad?

ALEX
That bad.

Michael sits on the love seat facing his son.

MICHAEL
What the hell do you want me to do?

ALEX
You need to come back home. She’s not well.

MICHAEL
You know I can’t do that, son. I left the situation because it was killing me. It was killing us both. What good is it to have two completely miserable people-
ALEX
Ya know, that makes you sound like a total dick.

MICHAEL
I know and I know it all happened so fast, but after six months of--

ALEX
Six months of what? Mourning? Depression? She lost her fuckin’ son. What the hell did you expect? Did you think she was gonna be sad for a few weeks and be fine.

MICHAEL
Of course not. Listen, I kill myself everyday just thinking about what I’ve done to you guys, but you haven’t a clue what it feels like to wake up every morning and realize that things are never gonna be the same.

ALEX
How can you say that shit to me with a straight face? You don’t think I know what it feels like? Am I not going through this too?

MICHAEL
Maybe that came out wrong. What I meant to say is that your mother is not the same person anymore. She’s not even there. She’s like a hollow shell. I can’t live like that.

ALEX
Did you even care?

MICHAEL
How can you ask me that?

ALEX
Just answer the question, Dad. Did you even give a shit?

MICHAEL
Of course I did. How can you say that?
ALEX
Look, I know you two weren’t the best of friends, but he was your son. You’re acting like this had no effect on you whatsoever.

MICHAEL
It does effect me, son, but I still need to keep going. The bills still have to get paid and the beat goes on.

ALEX
So that’s it? The beat goes on? Where did you get that? On a goddamn bumper sticker?

MICHAEL
Son, you know what I mean.

ALEX
You know what? Just fuckin’ stop.

Alex rises.

MICHAEL
Alex!

ALEX
Thanks for the beer.

He storms out.

MICHAEL
ALEX! I LOVED HIM TOO, GODDAMNIT!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex is at his locker with Kevin.

ALEX
I so don’t want to be here today.

KEVIN
Tell me about it. That’s pretty much how I feel everyday.

Alex rummages through his backpack.

ALEX
FUCK! I can’t find my goddamn Psych book!
He slams the locker door backward and it swings back shut.

ALEX
FUCK!

KEVIN
Dude, calm down, you can borrow mine.

Katherine walks by grabbing Alex’s attention.

KATHERINE
Everything alright there....

ALEX
....Alex.

KATHERINE
Of course, Alex, the town gossip.

He smiles.

KATHERINE
Better hurry. You’re gonna be late.

Alex and Kevin exchange looks as she passes.

KEVIN
(impressed)
Who the fuck was that?

ALEX
She’s my sub for Psych.

KEVIN
Get the fuck out! She’s hot!

ALEX
(deep breath)
Tell me about it.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM

Katherine stands at the front and addresses the class.

Alex sits at his desk. He never takes his eyes off her. The words leaving her lips might as well be light years away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Alex walks to his car.
Mallory appears behind him and taps his shoulder.

MALLORY
Hey.

ALEX
(turns)
Hey, you.

MALLORY
Can you do me a huge favor?

ALEX
Sure.

MALLORY
I need a ride home.

ALEX
Where’s Kevin?

MALLORY
He has wrestling.

ALEX
I never understood the appeal of rubbing up against other guys for sport.

MALLORY
To each his own.

She laughs.

INT. ALEX’S CAR – DAY
Alex drives and Mallory sits shotgun.

MALLORY
So....have you talked to Kaitlin?

ALEX
Nope. She called me a few nights ago but I never got back to her.

MALLORY
If you don’t like her, you should probably just tell her.

ALEX
No, it’s not that. I’ve just had a lot going on.
MALLORY
Are you okay?

ALEX
Yeah....well....yeah....I’ll be fine.

MALLORY
(light sarcasm)
That was convincing.

ALEX
What?

MALLORY
Do you want to talk about it?

ALEX
Not really....just....ya know....family issues and whatnot.

MALLORY
I can be a pretty good listener.

ALEX
(hesitant)
Yeah....I’ll handle it....but thanks.

MALLORY
You’ll be alright, Alex.

She puts her hand on his leg. He glances down at her hand.

ALEX
Which house is yours again?

MALLORY
(pointing out the window)
I’m right there.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY
Alex’s car pulls into Mallory’s driveway.

INT. ALEX’S CAR - DAY

MALLORY
Here we are.

ALEX
Yep.
MALLORY
Thanks again for the ride.

She leans in and kisses him on the cheek. He smiles nervously.

MALLORY
If you ever need to talk, I’m here.

She gets out.

INT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Could be a BARNES & NOBLE or a BORDERS from the look of the layout.

Alex sits at a table in the coffee shop area watching a solo acoustic guitarist perform.

He glances up and sees Katherine browsing the magazines. He swallows hard.

ALEX
(to himself)
Shit.

He taps his fingers anxiously on the table.

TAP, TAP, TAP

Katherine picks up a magazine and flips through it.

TAP, TAP, TAP

She adjusts her black framed eye-glasses.

TAP, TAP, TAP

Alex rises from his seat and approaches the magazines. He enters the same aisle as her turning to the opposite side.

He pretends to be browsing as well and floats in her direction.

She doesn’t notice at first, but then....

KATHERINE
Alex, right?

ALEX
(falsely surprised)
Oh Hey! What are you doing here?
KATHERINE
(indifferent)
I live around here. Are you stalking me or something?

ALEX
(frazzled)
What...Of course not...I...

KATHERINE
Can’t take a joke, there, kid?

He laughs.

ALEX
That’s funny. So rare that you see a teacher....

KATHERINE
....outside the classroom. I know. They don’t let us out much. We’re usually grading papers, making lesson plans, plotting against our students.

He laughs again.

KATHERINE
Well, what brings you here?

ALEX
Uh....nothing....well....I just came to see (pointing to guitarist) This guy play.

KATHERINE
Into music?

ALEX
Yeah, I’d probably go insane without it.

KATHERINE
Do you play anything?

ALEX
I play guitar, but not very well. I’m better at the recorder. It’s easier.

Katherine smiles.
ALEX
That was a....uh....joke.

KATHERINE
Yeah, I know.

ALEX
Good.

KATHERINE
Are you in a band or anything?

ALEX
Nah.

Awkward silence.

ALEX
So, you live around here?

KATHERINE
Yep. A few blocks down. I don’t get out too much since I just moved here. I don’t really know anyone. I figured I might as well hang out at the good ol’ bookstore.

ALEX
Sounds exciting.

KATHERINE
It is really. To be honest....
(whispering)
I really hate reading.

ALEX
But, you’re a teacher.

KATHERINE
I know. Don’t tell anyone.

Just then, the guitarist walks passed.

GUITARIST
(waiving)
Alex!

ALEX
Nice set.

KATHERINE
(to Alex)
Aren’t we popular?
INT. BOOKSTORE - LATER

MONTAGE - ALEX AND KATHERINE HANGING OUT

They talk, they laugh, they drink coffee.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Alex and Katherine walk to their cars.

KATHERINE
Thanks for keeping me company. A definite change of pace. Good times.

ALEX
Yep.

KATHERINE
Probably better you didn’t share this with anyone. Might raise some eyebrows.

ALEX
Don’t worry. I won’t.

They stop at her car.

KATHERINE
Here’s me.

ALEX
Well, I guess....

KATHERINE
....I will see ya in class? That sounded weird.

He laughs.

ALEX
Yeah, see ya in class.

Silence.

KATHERINE
Goodnight Alex.

ALEX
Night.

She gets into her car and drives away.
INT. DAVIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex enters to Maria asleep on the couch. The television is on.

ON TV: Daniel as a child

    MARIA
    (o.s.)
    Say “Hi Daddy”.

Little Daniel shakes his head.

    MARIA
    C’mon say it. Say “hi” to your daddy.

    DANIEL
    Hi Daddy!

BACK TO SCENE

Alex frowns at the television. He grabs the remote and switches it off.

He throws a blanket over his mother and kisses her on the forehead.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Alex brushes his teeth. He takes a sip of water, swooshes it around, and spits.

He opens the medicine cabinet over the sink to put his toothbrush away. He shuts the cabinet and studies his reflection in the mirror.

He turns to exit and sees....

YOUNG DANIEL from the video. His face is covered in blood with a smile stretched from ear to ear.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex opens his eyes. He’s drenched in sweat.

INT. DR. PRUITT’S OFFICE - DAY

Alex rubs his eyes in exhaustion.
ALEX
Is there something you can give me? Some pills or something?

PRUITT
Alex, you know I can’t prescribe medication.

ALEX
I know, but I’m sure you know people who do.

PRUITT
Like a drug dealer?

ALEX
You know what I mean. I haven’t had a decent night’s sleep in fucking months. Just refer me to someone else.

PRUITT
I don’t think meds are the answer.

ALEX
What is it with you? You don’t know what this is like?

PRUITT
Alex, we need to get to the root of these problems in order to fully understand them.

ALEX
I don’t care about that. I want to stop having these fucking nightmares. I can’t take it anymore.

PRUITT
Listen to me, kid. They are only dreams. They cannot hurt you. You need to understand--

ALEX
What is there to understand? You want to get to the root of my problems? Here’s an outline. My brother’s dead, my father could care less, my mother’s going insane, I can’t sleep, I can’t think--
PRUITT
Calm down a minute.

ALEX
(head in hands)
FUCK!

Pruitt walks over and puts his hand on Alex’s shoulder.

PRUITT
Listen to me, kid. You’re gonna get through this. It can’t last forever. I promise. We will get through this.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Alex exits the bathroom and sees Kevin and Mallory down the hall. They’re arguing. He cannot hear what they’re saying. Kevin grabs Mallory’s arm violently.

Alex approaches his friends.

MALLORY
(to Kevin)
DON’T TOUCH ME!

KEVIN
Would you just hear me out?

She yanks her arm from his grasp and storms off.

Alex walks up.

KEVIN
Is it me or are all chicks out of their fucking minds?

ALEX
What is it now?

KEVIN
I guess she heard that I was fucking around with some sophomore.

ALEX
Who?

KEVIN
Jenny...uh...dude...I don’t know. Her last name sounds nothing like it’s spelled.
ALEX
I think I know who you’re talking about. Doesn’t she have herpes?

KEVIN
(startled)
Does she?

ALEX
Does it matter?

KEVIN
No...I was just--

ALEX
You totally did mess around with her!

KEVIN
Dude, I couldn’t help myself. She gives like the most amazing head.

ALEX
You asshole!

KEVIN
What?

ALEX
What about Mallory?

KEVIN
Well, if I knew she was gonna find out, I would’ve never done it.

ALEX
It’s high school, man. Your brain is leaking if you didn’t think she would find out.

Kevin gazes down the hall in regret.

KEVIN
(shaking his head)
Shit. You think I should go after her?

ALEX
(shrugs)
I don’t know, dude. Give her some time.

KEVIN
Right.
They walk.

KEVIN
How’s things going with you? You look like shit runover twice.

ALEX
Thanks for that. I haven’t slept in like six years.

KEVIN
Drag. Take some sleeping pills.

ALEX
I’ve tried. They don’t work.

KEVIN
Drink a bottle of whiskey. Duffy can get you some.

ALEX
Then I’ll have to add alcoholism to the long list of bullshit I have to deal with.

KEVIN
Just trying to help.

ALEX
I guess.

KEVIN
How’s your mom?

ALEX
Long story. Not good. She’s out of her damn mind.

KEVIN
Sorry, bro. Can’t help you there.

ALEX
(light sarcasm)
Thanks for your concern. I do have a bit of interesting information, but you can’t say shit to anyone.

KEVIN
Come on, man, who would I tell?

ALEX
Just saying. So you remember that new sub?
KEVIN
The hot one?

Alex nods.

ALEX
Well, I sorta hung out with her.

KEVIN
Fuck off!

ALEX
I’m serious. I ran into her at the bookstore. I guess she lives around there.

KEVIN
Get the fuck out! Are you serious?

ALEX
Have you known me to be a liar?

KEVIN
That is unbelievable. You lucky bastard.

ALEX
You’re tellin’ me.

KEVIN
Did anything happen?

ALEX

KEVIN
Think you have a shot?

ALEX
It’s so not like that.

KEVIN
That kid in Florida did it. And people wanna know how teachers can reach out to their students. I think we found the answer.

ALEX
I told you it’s not like that. She was just bored, man. No more no less.
They stop outside a classroom.

KEVIN
That’s badass, bro. I guess I’ll catch ya later.

Alex keeps walking and stops.

ALEX
(turning back)
Dude!

Kevin looks out the doorway.

ALEX
Don’t say anything.

KEVIN
I won’t.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

The bell rings to end class. Students hurry out the door.

Alex follows.

KATHERINE
(o.s.)
Alex!

He turns.

ALEX
What’s up?

KATHERINE
You mind closing that door?

He walks over and pulls the door shut then makes his way to her desk. Katherine glances down, nervously.

KATHERINE
Now, this might come off weird....but....

Alex bites his bottom lip in anticipation.

KATHERINE
....ya know....forget it.

ALEX
No...come on...what did you have to say?
KATHERINE
It’s nothing...really...nevermind.

ALEX
(smiling)
Come on, I can take it. Which test did I fail?

Katherine rubs her forehead, embarrassed.

KATHERINE
It’s not that...here it goes...Are you busy tonight?

INT. COFFEE SHOP – NIGHT

The decor is modern with classical music sweeping throughout. Alex and Katherine sit at a table in the far back corner of the shop.

KATHERINE
I’m serious. My cousin had to take me to prom.

ALEX
(laughing)
No way in hell. If you’re trying to sell the “ugly duckling” story, I ain’t buying it.

KATHERINE
You don’t believe me? Wanna see a picture?

ALEX
Maybe we should take a raincheck on that one.

KATHERINE
(taken aback)
Why?

ALEX
Well, I would rather remember you like this.

KATHERINE
Remember me? Going somewhere?

ALEX
Nah.
KATHERINE
(offended)
You ass!

He smiles.

ALEX
I’m messing with you. Of course I want to see a picture. I’m sure you were cute.

KATHERINE
Aren’t you charming.

ALEX
It certainly appears so.

They both laugh.

KATHERINE
So, what’s your story?

ALEX
Not much of one to tell.

KATHERINE
Come on, there has to be something. Quiet in class, but super outgoing outside? What’s the mystery?

ALEX
Maybe another time.

KATHERINE
What? Are you embarrassed?

ALEX
No....no....I would rather keep certain things to myself.

They fall silent.

Katherine swallows, glancing down at the table.

KATHERINE
I didn’t mean to pry.

ALEX
Don’t worry about it. There’s just some things I’d rather not talk about.

Alex turns his gloomy gaze to the window.
KATHERINE
You alright?

ALEX
Yeah.

She puts her hand on his. He looks at her with a reluctant smile.

KATHERINE
You can trust me.

Alex’s phone vibrates in his pocket.

ALEX
Hold that thought.

He answers it.

ALEX
Hello?

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kevin paces around the room. Alex sits on the sofa.

KEVIN
What the fuck am I gonna do?

ALEX
I don’t know what to say, man. I’m sorry.

KEVIN
You’re not helping.

ALEX
What do you want me to say? You’ll be fine? She’s a fucking bitch and you don’t need her?

KEVIN
Do you think there’s someone else?

ALEX
What? No, of course not. She doesn’t strike me as that kind of girl.

KEVIN
FUCK! It’s gonna be okay, right? Just level with me.
ALEX
It’s not gonna be okay right now. It hurts and that sucks, but you’ll get over it. That’s life, man.

KEVIN
I have to call her.

He takes his phone out.

ALEX
No. You have to leave it alone for now. Calling her is just gonna make you look psychotic.

KEVIN
Should I e-mail her?

ALEX
Dude, don’t contact her at all.

KEVIN
There has to be something I can say.

ALEX
Trust me. There isn’t.

KEVIN
Why?

ALEX
Well, she broke it off. She obviously doesn’t wanna be with you.

KEVIN
That’s a fucked up thing to say.

ALEX
I didn’t say it. She did.

KEVIN
Asshole! I already know that.

ALEX
What is it with you? You asked for my help.

KEVIN
Well, you’re not helping.
ALEX
Do you wanna make things worse?
That’s exactly what you’re gonna do
if you call her.

KEVIN
This sucks!

ALEX
I know, man.

KEVIN
Goddamnit!

Kevin sits on the couch.

KEVIN
Fuck, dude, where the hell were you
anyway?

ALEX
You wouldn’t believe me if I told
you.

KEVIN
The teacher?

Alex nods.

KEVIN
You lucky son of a bitch.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - DAY
The faint sound of a door bell. Alex opens his eyes.
The doorbell chimes again.
He grabs his cell to see the time.

ALEX
(yelling)
Mom! You gonna get that?
The doorbell rings again.
He gets out of bed.

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE - DAY
Michael stands outside on the front porch. Alex opens the
door.
MICHAEL
I forgot my key.

ALEX
Strange how you keep showing up here.

MICHAEL
Is she up?

Alex stands for a moment glaring at his father.

MICHAEL
Can I come in?

ALEX
(steps aside)
It’s your house.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY
Alex and Michael stand at the foot of the stairway.

ALEX
I think she’s still in bed.

MICHAEL
It’s eleven.

ALEX
Guess there ain’t much to wake up for.

MICHAEL
(frustrated)
Can you please just wake her up?

Alex runs up the steps.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY
Alex approaches Maria’s bedroom door.
He knocks.

ALEX
Mom?
No answer.
He knocks again.
ALEX
Mom, you up?

He opens the door and enters.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - MARIA’S BEDROOM - DAY

Maria is in bed with the covers pulled up to her chest. Alex walks across the room to the open window and shuts it.

ALEX
It’s freezing in here.

He walks over to Maria.

ALEX
Dad’s downstairs and I....

She stares at him. Mouth slightly open. Nothing more than a frozen statue.

ALEX
Mom?

He steps closer.

CRACK!

ALEX
(looks down)
Shit.

He lifts his bare foot. Beneath it lies a broken medicine container.

He goes pale.

ALEX
(eyes wide)
Oh shit....mom....mom....Oh god!

He falls to the floor in tears.

ALEX
(sobbing hysterically)
Mom....oh God....Mommy....I wasn’t ready for this.

He shakes her.

ALEX
MOOOOOM! PLEASE! MOM! DON’T DO THIS TO ME!
She lies there lifeless.

**ALEX**
DAAAAAAAAAD!

Michael rushes into the room and sees his dead wife. Alex remains on the floor sobbing.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

A large group of people have gathered to pay their respects. Among them are Kevin, Mallory, Michael, and various others.

Alex stares at the coffin as it’s lowered into the ground.

**INT. DAVIS HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

Alex sits at the table staring out the window. Michael leans against the counter.

**MICHAEL**
You can stay with me for a while if you want to.

Alex rolls his eyes.

**MICHAEL**
You’re not staying here by yourself.

**ALEX**
I’ve managed for the last six months.

**MICHAEL**
I don’t think you should--

**ALEX**
Look who decided to step up and do some parenting.

**MICHAEL**
You better watch your fucking mouth, you little shit. Have some fucking respect.

**ALEX**
(under his breath)
For who?

Suddenly, Michael grabs Alex by his shirt and pushes him up against the wall.
MICHAEL
Listen to me, goddamnit. I am your father and you will respect me. I understand that you’re upset--

Alex pulls away.

ALEX
What the fuck are you gonna do?

MICHAEL
You’re coming home with me!

ALEX
The hell I am. I’m staying right here!

MICHAEL
How do you plan on supporting yourself? Answer me that!

ALEX
What is this your moment to be the cliche deadbeat dad? You gonna preach on about how much I need you?

MICHAEL
This is not my fault.

ALEX
Then whose fault is it? Mine? Danny’s? Mom’s? You may as well have pulled the fucking trigger.

MICHAEL
YOU MOTHERFUCKER!

Michael lunges at his son, once again. Alex backs away.

ALEX
I am not going anywhere with you. The least you can do is walk away and accept that.

MICHAEL
You can’t blame me forever.

ALEX
For as long as you live.

MICHAEL
You might not want to admit it, but you need me.
ALEX
I don’t need anything from you. I can split whenever I want to. I lost my mother. Do you think anyone in their right mind is gonna deny me a place to stay?

Michael is speechless.

ALEX
See you in hell.

He leaves.

INT. KATHERINE’S APARTMENT – NIGHT
Katherine is seated on the sofa sipping a glass of wine. Alex is on the floor beside her.

KATHERINE
I’m no good in these situations. I never know what to say.

ALEX
You don’t have to say anything.

KATHERINE
I feel pretty useless.

ALEX
Don’t worry about it. Thanks for being here.

KATHERINE
No problem at all.

ALEX
I feel like this is all a dream. Like all of this is happening in my head and I’ll wake up, eventually.

KATHERINE
I’m so sorry, Alex.

ALEX
The funny thing is, I don’t feel that upset about it. I almost feel relieved.

KATHERINE
Relieved?
ALEX
I mean, I feel like she was suffering so much that this might...well...this might be better for her.

Katherine is silent.

KATHERINE
What are you gonna do?

ALEX
I don’t know. I haven’t had much time to think about it.

KATHERINE
Where are you gonna live?

ALEX
I think I’m gonna stay at my house.

KATHERINE
Alone?

ALEX
Why not? I’ve pretty much been alone for the last year.

KATHERINE
What are you talking about?

Alex turns to her and takes a deep breath.

ALEX
I never told you this....

KATHERINE
What?

ALEX
Remember when I said there were things about my past that I don’t really like to talk about?

KATHERINE
Yes.

ALEX
Well, the reason I never told you what those things were is because I didn’t want you to feel sorry for me.
KATHERINE
I’m confused.

ALEX
Well...last year...my...my brother was murdered.

KATHERINE
Oh my God!

ALEX
I was there when it happened. Well, I was knocked out cold. He was dead by the time I came to.

KATHERINE
Jesus! What happened?

ALEX
These guys...we were in a restaurant parking lot late at night. We got in a fight with these guys. They never stopped hitting him.

Katherine remains quiet.

ALEX
I don’t like talking about it because I’m still having trouble. I still feel like I could’ve done something.

KATHERINE
I had no idea. That’s awful. Did they ever catch the guys who did it?

ALEX
Yeah, they caught ‘em, but it doesn’t make things any less painful.

KATHERINE
I can imagine.

ALEX
Ever since he died, my family has never been the same. I mean, my dad split six months later. He couldn’t take it. He just left us at the house.

Katherine puts her hands on his shoulders as he cries.
ALEX
God, what am I gonna do?

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Still dressed in a shirt and tie, Alex lays on his bed staring blankly at the ceiling.

The room is dark with the exception of a bedside lamp.

Alex widens his eyes, fighting sleep.

The eerie creak of the bedroom door opening slowly.

Fear washes over Alex’s face as he rises in bed.

His eyes focus in disbelief at the sight of....

Maria, donning a black gown, beckoning him. She looks radiant, beautiful, and full of life. A completely different person than before.

ALEX
Mom?

She smiles.

MARIA
(angelic tone)
Don’t be afraid.

Alex remains frozen as his mother continues to beckon him.

MARIA
There’s nothing to be afraid of anymore.

Tears roll down his cheeks as he gets out of bed and approaches the apparation.

MARIA
I want to show you something.

She turns and glides out of the room.

Alex follows closely behind.

A faint growl is heard.

Alex glances back at his bed to see himself asleep with a horned demon-like creature perched on his chest. The creature stares back at him with a slight twist of its neck.
Alex exits the room completely unaffected.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT
Maria floats down the hall with Alex closely behind.

MARIAMARIA
It’s not too far now.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - DANIEL’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Maria makes her way across the room to the window.
Alex stops in the doorway.
Daniel stands across from him with a sinister smile.

DANIEL
We’ve been waiting....

ALEX
Danny?

DANIEL
....we’ve both been waiting for you.

Maria appears behind Daniel, placing her hands softly on his shoulders.

ALEX
I don’t understand.

BANG! The door slams shut behind Alex.

MARIAMARIA
Why so sad?

ALEX
What the hell is going on?

DANIEL
Aren’t you happy to see us?

ALEX
Of course I am.

MARIAMARIA
Stay with us, son, stay with us.
ALEX
I can’t. I can’t stay here. It’s not time yet.

Alex turns to the door and twists the knob, but it’s locked.

He looks back at Maria and Daniel. Their eyes are glazed over in white. They are both pale and zombie-like. Big grins stretch across their faces.

DANIEL
Stay with us, Alex, stay with us.

Alex is panting. His breath turns to vapor. He violently shakes the doorknob.

ALEX
I can’t. I have to go. Why are you doing this?

DANIEL
It should’ve been you.

Alex lets out a horrific scream.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The loud ringing of a cell phone. Alex jumps up in bed.

ALEX
(to himself)
Jesus.

The cell continues to ring. The illuminated caller ID reads: MALLORY

EXT. DAVIS HOUSE - NIGHT

Mallory’s car sits in the driveway with the engine running. Alex steps out the front door and walks over.

INT. MALLORY’S CAR - NIGHT

Alex gets in. Mallory smiles.

MALLORY
Sorry for just stopping by like this.
ALEX
No worries. I was having trouble sleeping.

MALLORY
I can imagine.

Alex stares out the passenger window.

MALLORY
I’m really sorry about, well, your mom and everything.

He forces a smile.

MALLORY
What are you gonna do now?

ALEX
My plan is to make it through graduation and get as far away from this place as possible.

MALLORY
Tell me about it. Where you planning on going?

ALEX
Don’t know. Anywhere.

MALLORY
(giggling)
Wanna take me with you?

Alex chuckles.

ALEX
Sure. If you don’t mind living out of seedy motels and pulling armed robberies to make ends meet.

They both laugh.

ALEX
(sighs)
What a fucking day.

Mallory frowns.

ALEX
What’s on your mind, kiddo?
MALLORY
Geez, where to begin. Have you talked to Kevin?

ALEX
Not since earlier.

MALLORY
He’s really starting to worry me.

ALEX
How so?

MALLORY
Do you think he would do something? I mean, to hurt himself?

ALEX
If you asked me a few years ago, I would’ve said not a chance in hell. With the way things are going these days, your guess is as good as mine.

MALLORY
Not exactly the answer I was looking for.

ALEX
I’m sorry to come off so cynical, but it just feels like anything is possible lately. Things are falling apart.

MALLORY
He’s been saying some really weird things lately. Scary things.

ALEX
I didn’t know you two were on speaking terms.

MALLORY
Only through text.

ALEX
What’s he been saying?

MALLORY
I don’t know. Just weird things.

ALEX
Like?
MALLORY
Well, he’s been hinting around the idea that he isn’t gonna make it.

Alex rubs his forehead in frustration.

ALEX
Great....well....I don’t know what to say to that.

MALLORY
Me either. It’s just really starting to scare me, ya know. I don’t want him to hurt himself over me. It’s so not worth it. Maybe I shouldn’t have broken up with him.

ALEX
That’s stupid. Why?

MALLORY
He would be fine if we were still together.

ALEX
But, you wouldn’t. What’s the point?

MALLORY
If it’s ultimately gonna save his life. Why should I care?

ALEX
You can’t live a lie to make someone else happy.

MALLORY
I guess you’re right, but I don’t want to be responsible for taking one either.

ALEX
Look, I’ll talk to him to see where he’s at.

MALLORY
Don’t tell him I was here or told you any of this.

ALEX
I won’t.

MALLORY
Thanks. It really means a lot.
Alex smiles.

ALEX
I’m gonna go back in and attempt to get some sleep.

MALLORY
Okay.

He opens the door to get out.

MALLORY
Alex?

He turns back.

MALLORY
Thanks for everything.

ALEX
No problem.

EXT. BAXTER HOUSE - DAY
Alex’s car pulls into the driveway. He gets out and walks toward the front door.

INT. BAXTER HOUSE - BASEMENT - DAY
Loud rock music fills the basement.
Kevin is doing bench presses.
Alex shuffles down the stairs.

ALEX
(shouting)
Hey!

Kevin continues doing reps.
Alex walks over to a stereo beside the bench and turns the volume down.
Kevin drops the pole on the metal stands.

KEVIN
(sitting up)
What are you doing here?
ALEX
Bored. Figured I’d see what you were up to.

Kevin wipes the sweat from his red face with a towel.

KEVIN
When you coming back to school?

ALEX
Who knows. That’s the last thing on my mind.

KEVIN
How you been?

Alex shrugs.

ALEX
You?

KEVIN
Been better. We don’t have to talk about it, man. I’m sure you’re sick of telling the story.

ALEX
I guess. Everyone expects me to say something, ya know.

KEVIN
No point in that unless you wanna pour salt in the wound.

Alex nods in agreement.

ALEX
It’s exhausting.

KEVIN
I’m sure it is, dude, I’m sure it is.

ALEX
How’s your situation?

KEVIN
I don’t know, man. I fucked up. I finally fucked it all up. She ain’t comin’ back.

ALEX
You don’t really know that.
KEVIN
I’m pretty sure.

Alex sighs.

KEVIN
What? She won’t return my calls or texts. She can’t even return a fucking email. How easy is that? A fucking email?

ALEX
Like I said, man, you need to give her some time to miss you. If it’s meant to be, it’s meant to be.

KEVIN
That’s what everyone keeps telling me.

ALEX
Look at it this way. If you let her go now and move on, you will never have to go through any new pain because of her again. If you decide to work things out, you run the risk of being back in the same place.

Kevin looks shocked.

KEVIN
Is that supposed to be comforting.

ALEX
I guess. What else do you want me to say?

KEVIN
Nothing. I’d rather you just shut the fuck up.

ALEX
Why are you being a dick?

KEVIN
How the fuck is that cunt just gonna change the way she feels like that?

ALEX
It happens. That’s life.
KEVIN
Bullshit. What the hell are you? An inspirational speaker?

ALEX
I can’t talk to you.

Alex turns to leave.

KEVIN
You don’t know how this feels.

He stops in his tracks.

ALEX
Look at you. You’re bitching about a fucking girl. What the fuck is the matter with you? You think you have it that bad? You think you have issues? My mother is dead. My brother, dead. And you want sympathy for a fucking breakup? You have a fucking family and you take it for granted, you selfish prick. You’re eighteen. There will be other girls and other opportunities. My family is fucking destroyed and nothing is gonna change that.

KEVIN
Dude, you know I didn’t mean it that way.

ALEX
Well, it sure as hell came off that way.

KEVIN
Alex, I’m sorry.

Kevin looks to the ceiling.

ALEX
Grow the fuck up, man.

Alex storms out.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL – HALLWAY – DAY

The bell rings. Students rush out of classrooms.
INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Katherine is cleaning the dry-erase board.

ALEX
(o.s.)
Hey.

She turns to the doorway.

KATHERINE
(surprised)
I didn’t expect you back so soon.

ALEX
Sitting around my house alone? Not the best idea.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY

Isolated. Classes have ended for the day.

Alex and Katherine walk, oddly separated.

KATHERINE
How are things?

ALEX
Pretty much the same. I guess I can’t really expect any dramatic changes in a few weeks.

KATHERINE
I see.

ALEX
Look, I’m gonna be brutally honest with you. The only reason I came back here was to see you.

KATHERINE
Okay.

ALEX
I know that sounds really weird, but I can’t stop thinking about you.

KATHERINE
Do you really think this is the best place to be talking about this?
ALEX 
I know, but I had to say something.

KATHERINE 
Can we discuss this later?

INT. KATHERINE’S BUILDING - MAIN HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alex walks down the long corridor with his hands in his pockets.

He stops outside #202.

He knocks. The door opens and Katherine stands there.

They look at each other for a moment.

KATHERINE 
Find the place okay?

ALEX 
I have been here before.

KATHERINE 
I know. Just wanted to break the silence. Come on in.

INT. KATHERINE’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katherine moves into the kitchen as Alex follows behind her.

KATHERINE 
Want something to drink?

ALEX 
I’m good.

Alex makes his way into the living area and sits down on the couch.

ALEX 
(surveying the scene) 
You renting or....

KATHERINE 
(o.s.) 
...you know you don’t have to be so awkward. You’re starting to freak me out a little.

ALEX 
Sorry.
Katherine enters with a glass of wine in hand. She takes a seat beside him.

KATHERINE
(smiling)
You okay?

ALEX
Fine.

She places her glass down on a nearby table.

KATHERINE
So....what did you have to tell me?

ALEX
You know, it’s really not a big deal. We can just talk about it later. It was more of an impulse thing than anyth--

Katherine leans in and kisses him softly. She makes it last forever.

INT. KATHERINE’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

They move into the bedroom and continue making out heavily.

Katherine pulls her shirt over her head, revealing a black bra. She falls back onto the bed.

Alex gets on top of her as she pulls his shirt off.

They continue to kiss passionately.

Alex unzips her jeans and pulls them off. She wraps her bare legs around his waist.

He softly kisses her neck as she lets out shrieks of pleasure.

INT. PRUITT’S OFFICE - DAY

Pruitt sits in a chair with his legs crossed. His hands are folded and resting on his lap.

Alex looks at him with a smirk.

PRUITT
Let me see if I can get this straight in my head.

(MORE)
You are sleeping with a teacher from your high school.

Alex continues to smirk.

ALEX
Yes.

PRUITT
I’m speechless. I, honestly, don’t know what to say. Are you crazy?

ALEX
I thought therapists weren’t supposed to use that word.

PRUITT
I’m sorry, but I don’t know what else to say.

ALEX
Well, she’s actually a sub.

PRUITT
Oh, in that case, congratulations. Give yourself a round of applause.

Pruitt stands up and paces around the room. Alex remains silent.

PRUITT
Now, let me ask you this. Do you think that’s a good idea?

Alex shrugs.

PRUITT
How old are you?

ALEX
Eighteen.

PRUITT
I guess you’ve got that covered.

ALEX
If I wasn’t, what would you do? Report us?

PRUITT
To be honest, I probably wouldn’t, given your current situation. I think we both know you have enough on your plate.

(MORE)
I don’t, however, think this is a good idea. As a matter of fact, this is a terrible idea.

ALEX
What? Why?

PRUITT
Well, first thing is that she can lose her job and never be hired as a teacher in this or any other state.

ALEX
That’s only if someone finds out.

PRUITT
Someone always finds out.

ALEX
Not always.

PRUITT
Most of the time. Don’t you watch the news, kid? It happens more than you think.

ALEX
So if no one finds out, we should be fine, right?

PRUITT
You’re playing with fire. Have you told anyone else about this?

ALEX
No.

PRUITT
Good....Good....keep it that way.

Pruitt take his seat.

PRUITT
How are things at home?

ALEX
Getting by. I don’t spend too much time there since this whole thing happened.

PRUITT
How convenient.
ALEX
You gonna let me finish?

PRUITT
Sorry. Go ahead.

ALEX
I haven’t had much time to think about things. It’s a nice break.

PRUITT
What about your father? Have you spoken to him?

ALEX
Not since the funeral.

PRUITT
Any plans to make amends?

ALEX
I really don’t know. I guess we’ll see.

INT. ALEX’S CAR - DAY

Alex drives with Mallory in the passenger seat.

MALLORY
This sucks. I have a huge test today and I’m not even close to prepared.

ALEX
That does suck.

MALLORY
Thanks for the support.

ALEX
I was just agreeing with you. Cut the class. Take it tomorrow.

MALLORY
Are you kidding me? I would so get caught.

ALEX
Pretend your sick. I got it! Tell the teacher you are having your period and it’s soaking through your jeans. He’ll definitely let you go then.
MALLORY
That’s gross.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY
Alex and Mallory approach the building.

MALLORY
I have a really weird favor to ask you.

ALEX
Weird like the Twilight Zone or weird like you caught your folks having sex?

MALLORY
What are you talking about?

ALEX
Nothing.

MALLORY
Just regular weird, I guess.

ALEX
Shoot.

MALLORY
Okay, well, my parents are going to Ithaca for the weekend to visit my sister and I was wondering if you can stay the night at my house while they’re gone.

ALEX
You’re right. That is weird.

MALLORY
Shut up! Why?

ALEX
Just an odd request.

MALLORY
Look, it’s not like I’m gonna rape you. I just get really freaked out when I stay in my house alone at night. Kevin used to do it, but–

ALEX
I know. Yeah, fine, I’ll stay.
MALLORY
You will?

ALEX
Yeah.

She kisses him on the cheek.

MALLORY
You’re the best!

INT. KATHERINE’S APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT

Alex and Katherine lay in bed beneath the covers.

ALEX
I feel like this is a dream. Being here with you. How did this happen?

KATHERINE
I keep asking myself the same thing. It’s easier not to think about it. No point in trying to wrap your head around something that makes no sense.

ALEX
No sense?

KATHERINE
Do you think it does?

ALEX
What?

KATHERINE
Make sense.

ALEX
Can’t say I do.

KATHERINE
I guess this is what happens when you feel lost. You open yourself up to anything. No matter how crazy it might seem.

They fall silent for a moment.

ALEX
You feel lost?
KATHERINE
Not anymore. I did. When I first got here. It’s a long way from home. No familiar faces, no family, no friends. You wander from day to day in search of something meaningful.

ALEX
Would you say you found it? Something meaningful.

KATHERINE
You’re such a sweetheart.

ALEX
I know how you feel. It’s like that everyday for me. Just waiting for something to happen to make all of this worthwhile.

KATHERINE
You know we can get in a lot of trouble for this? I can lose my job. Be shunned from society.

ALEX
I know, but I don’t see it panning out that way. I think we’ll be fine.

KATHERINE
Do you?

ALEX
Yes. We’ll be okay.

KATHERINE
I hope you’re right.

They kiss.

EXT. BANYON HOUSE - DUSK

The sun is just starting to set behind Mallory’s house when Alex’s car pulls into the driveway.

INT. BANYON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex sits on the floor while Mallory lays on the couch.

The television illuminates them in the otherwise dark room.
Alex looks like he’s fighting sleep.

MALLORY
You tired?

ALEX
A little. You?

MALLORY
Not really. The weekend is my time to shine.

ALEX
Looks like we’re pretty lame. Being a Friday night and all. We should be partying.

MALLORY
I got some wine. Wanna get ripped?

ALEX
Could be a bad idea. We’d end up sleeping in the same bed, people would start talking, not good for keeping up appearances.

She smiles.

MALLORY
Starting to sound like fun.

ALEX
(changing the subject)
Any word from your estranged ex-boyfriend?

MALLORY
Nope. Thank God. I was starting to make myself sick over it.

ALEX
Yeah, we haven’t really been on speaking terms lately either.

MALLORY
Probably a good thing. He has a lot of issues to straighten out.

ALEX
I guess I should probably give him a call to see how he’s doing. That would be the right thing to do.
MALLORY
Suit yourself.

EXT. BANYON HOUSE - NIGHT
A car rolls by slowly and stops.

INT. CAR - NIGHT
Kevin is in the driver’s seat. He glares at Alex’s car in the driveway.

He speeds off.

INT. DAVIS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM
Alex is sitting on the sofa with an old photo album.

He flips through the dozens of old family photos. He stops on a page with a shot of his entire family.

He studies the photo for a moment.

He shuts the album and hangs his head.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY
Katherine sits at her desk tending to papers.

The students are focused on the exams in front of them.

Alex cannot keep his eyes open. His head keeps falling as he drifts in and out of sleep.

There is a loud knock at the door.

Startled, Katherine looks up.

KATHERINE
(to class)
Excuse me for a moment.

She rises and approaches the door.

Alex watches her leave the classroom. He gets up from his desk and walks over to the door.

He can see Katherine and the principal speaking to each other through a small window.
Katherine shakes her head in disagreement at the principal. Her eyes meet Alex’s for a moment.

He drops his head.

EXT. KATHERINE’S BUILDING - NIGHT

Katherine sits on the stoop at the foot of her building. Her eyes are red and she looks exhausted.

When she sees Alex coming, she stands.

ALEX
(off look)
What are we gonna do?

She looks down at the pavement trying to fight back tears.

ALEX
Say something.

KATHERINE
What do you want me to say? Everything is fine?

ALEX
How did they find out?

KATHERINE
I don’t know. Don’t you think I’ve went over that a million times in my head? I thought you said it was gonna be okay. I thought we were gonna be fine.

ALEX
I’m sorry, I--

KATHERINE
Sorry, Alex? Sorry? Being sorry isn’t gonna fix this. They want to investigate me. I could lose my job.

ALEX
How could they have found out? I mean, I thought we were being safe.

KATHERINE
Not safe enough, I guess.
ALEX
It’s impossible. I mean, do they have any evidence? Anyone who might have seen us together?

KATHERINE
I don’t know. As far as I know, it’s a rumor.

ALEX
A rumor? So they don’t have anything to pin on us?

KATHERINE
I said I don’t know. From what I was told, they don’t.

Alex sits down beside her.

KATHERINE
Who did you tell?

ALEX
Are you kidding? I didn’t tell anyone.

KATHERINE
Well somebody found out!

ALEX
Somebody? Who?

KATHERINE
I said I don’t know.

ALEX
Well, let’s not get ahead of ourselves. Like you said, it’s just a rumor. We have to be more careful. Maybe we should go inside.

KATHERINE
No.

ALEX
Why?

KATHERINE
(cries)
I can’t do this.

ALEX
What are you talking about?
KATHERINE
I can’t see you anymore, Alex. It’s too risky.

ALEX
What? We can get through this.

KATHERINE
What are you talking about? Get through this? My God, this was all a huge mistake.

ALEX
How can you say that?

KATHERINE
I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean for any of this to happen. Things just got way out of control. I don’t know what else to--

ALEX
Don’t say it. Just forget it. I don’t want to hear how sorry you are. What the fuck did you think was gonna happen?

KATHERINE
I don’t know. Not this.

ALEX
I guess we were both wrong.

Alex gets up and walks away.

KATHERINE
(calling out)
I never meant to hurt you!

He doesn’t turn around.

EXT. BAXTER HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Alex stands outside the front door, hesitating. He rings the doorbell.

The porch light comes on and the door opens revealing Kevin. He looks sickly. His eyes are red and droopy. He hasn’t shaved in weeks.

They stare at each other without saying a single word.

Kevin moves aside and motions for Alex to come in.
INT. BAXTER HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kevin comes down the creaking steps with Alex close behind. He walks over to an old refrigerator and pulls the door open.

KEVIN
Wanna beer?

Alex glares at him.

Kevin shrugs and gets one for himself. He slams the door shut and makes his way to a dirty old couch.

KEVIN
(sitting)
So do you have something to say or are you gonna stare at me all night?

ALEX
Why did you do it?

Kevin lights a cigarette and takes a drag.

KEVIN
That’s a very good question. Let me ask you this. Why were you at Mallory’s house at three in the morning?

ALEX
What difference does it make?

KEVIN
Well, last I checked, friends don’t fuck around with other friend’s girlfriends.

ALEX
She’s not your girlfriend anymore.

KEVIN
Dually noted.

ALEX
Nothing happened.

KEVIN
Now that there almost sounded convincing.

He takes a long swig off his beer.
ALEX  
Have I ever lied to you?

KEVIN  
People change.

ALEX  
Apparently.

KEVIN  
Don’t gimme that bullhit, man. You know what you did. Don’t try to come off like a victim.

ALEX  
I told you nothing happened. If you don’t believe me--

KEVIN  
I don’t fucking believe you. What do you think? I’m an idiot? I know she’s always had some little crush on you.

Alex is quiet.

KEVIN  
(off look)  
See, you knew it too. Don’t think for a second I haven’t picked up on that shit.

ALEX  
What the hell do you want me to do?

KEVIN  
Stay the hell away from her!

ALEX  
I can’t do that. She’s my friend.

KEVIN  
I don’t give a shit!

ALEX  
I don’t need this right now, man. If you want to hate me, that’s fine. I just want you to know that I never did anything with her.

KEVIN  
What happened to you, dude?
ALEX
To me? What the hell are you talking about?

KEVIN
I thought I could trust you, man.

ALEX
Have you been listening to a single word I’ve said?

KEVIN
Just get out, man. Nothing you say is going to convince me. I can’t fuckin’ believe you.

ALEX
Do whatever it is you want to do. Just know this; you never deserved someone as great as Mallory. You had the chance to make things work and you didn’t. That is and will always be your fault.

He turns and walks up the steps.

INT. PRUITT’S OFFICE – DAY

The last session.

ALEX
I don’t know what else to say.

PRUITT
I don’t expect you to have an answer for everything. That’s why we have this time. To figure things out together.

ALEX
I go over this in my head. Over and over again. All day. Everyday. I want to know why all of this happened. I want to know what the hell I am here for. What purpose do I serve? There has to be a reason, right? There has to be some kind of answer.

PRUITT
I like to think there is, but I don’t see you figuring it all out right now.
ALEX
What did I do? I know it sounds stupid, but I can’t think of anything else. What the hell did I do to deserve this?

PRUITT
There isn’t anything you did, Alex. If you think there is an outside force that’s against you, there isn’t.

ALEX
Then why is this happening to me? Why did this happen to our family?

PRUITT
I can’t answer that. I wish I could. Sometimes these things happen to make people stronger. On the other hand, there could be a deeper and more complex meaning.

ALEX
Like what?

PRUITT
Maybe this was all part of the plan we spoke about. Maybe all this did, in fact, happen for reason. I can’t tell you what that reason is, but one day it will become clearer to you.

ALEX
(chuckling)
For someone who is supposed to help, you don’t have many answers.

PRUITT
Well, I think some of the questions you are asking are rhetorical.

ALEX
I know. They are.

Alex cries.

ALEX
It hurts....God....it hurts.

PRUITT
I know, son, I know.
INT. DAVIS HOUSE - ALEX'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alex lays in bed with his face buried in a pillow.

A knock at the door.

MALLORY
(o.s.)
Alex? You there? Your front door was open.

He gets out of bed and opens the door.

MALLORY
Hey.

ALEX
Hey.

MALLORY
You feel like some company?

ALEX
Sure.

Alex jumps back into bed. Mallory sits at the edge.

MALLORY
How've you been?

He shrugs.

MALLORY
Did I come at a bad time? I can leave.

ALEX
No. Stay.

MALLORY
Look, I’m sorry I got you mixed up in all this. I never wanted anything to come between you and Kevin.

ALEX
It’s okay. I think it was probably meant to happen a long time ago.

MALLORY
Maybe.

ALEX
Have you heard from him?
MALLORY
No.

ALEX
Probably better that way.

MALLORY
You know, I don’t even understand why I was with him for so long. He wasn’t really that great of a guy.

ALEX
Security. Comfort. I mean you guys were together for a long time.

MALLORY
I guess.

ALEX
I don’t know. Maybe feelings are all bullshit.

MALLORY
What makes you say that?

ALEX
Feelings? What’s the point? I can understand happiness, but sorrow and pain? What the hell is that?

MALLORY
If there wasn’t sorrow and pain, we wouldn’t know what it feels like to be happy. Would we?

ALEX
I guess not.

MALLORY
Sorry. I guess I’m the wrong person to get intellectual with.

ALEX
You’re not an idiot.

MALLORY
I never said I was.

ALEX
But you think it. I can tell. Probably why you stayed with Kevin for so long. You thought you were worthless and couldn’t do any better.
Mallory is silent for a moment.

ALEX
What do you think?

MALLORY
I didn’t ever see it that way.

ALEX
It’s just my observation. You should think about that and get back to me.

MALLORY
What makes you so smart?

ALEX
I’m not.

MALLORY
You seem like you have it all figured out.

ALEX
I don’t, believe me, I wish I did.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Michael stands at the foot of his wife’s grave. Beside it, is Daniel’s.

Alex walks up and stands beside him.

MICHAEL
You know, I’ve been here so many times and never ran into you.

ALEX
Dumb luck.

MICHAEL
Nope. I always wanted to.

Alex squints as he gazes at the sunset in the distance.

MICHAEL
I would’ve done a million things different.

Tears well in his eyes.
Michael cries.

Alex puts his arm around his father.

**ALEX**

I know. I know.

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**INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY**

Alex and Mallory walk side by side.

**MALLORY**

There is no way I’m gonna pass that exam. It’s gonna take a miracle.

**ALEX**

You know, you always say that and it always ends up fine. When was the last time you even got a “B”?

**MALLORY**

I can’t remember, but I know it wasn’t too long ago.

**ALEX**

I doubt that.

**MALLORY**

For real. I’m not as smart as I look.

**ALEX**


**MALLORY**

You ass.

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**EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY**

They walk to Alex’s car.
INT. ALEX’S CAR – DAY

MALLORY
So what’s the plan for the weekend?

ALEX
No idea. Isn’t it a little early to be thinking about the weekend?

MALLORY
I don’t know. Thursday. Seems like the right time.

ALEX
Wanna have dinner?

MALLORY
Are you asking me out on a date?

ALEX
What? No.

MALLORY
Such a disappointment.

They laugh.

MALLORY
Oh my god! Did you hear there was a rumor going around that Miss Taylor was messing around with one of her students?

ALEX
Yeah, I think I did hear something about that.

MALLORY
Isn’t that absolutely crazy?

ALEX
Pretty strange.

MALLORY
I know. She’s absolutely gorgeous. She can have anyone. Why settle for a high school guy?

Alex smiles.

EXT. BANYON HOUSE – DRIVEWAY – NIGHT

Alex’s car stops in the driveway.
INT. ALEX’S CAR – DAY

MALLORY
Wanna come in for a bit?

ALEX
I really should take off. These exams are gonna kill me.

MALLORY
Bummer.

ALEX
I’ll give you a call later though. Maybe we can grab some coffee.

MALLORY
Is that a date?

ALEX
Sure.

MALLORY
Ha! I knew I’d get one someday.

She exits the car.

Alex waits till she gets inside.

He starts backing out of the driveway, but notices she left her handbag in the car.

He parks, grabs the bag, and gets out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY – DAY

Alex walks up the driveway.

INT. BANYON HOUSE – FRONT ENTRYWAY – DAY

Alex enters.

ALEX
You left your....

He looks up and his mouth falls open.

Kevin stands facing him with a gun.

Mallory is beside Alex against the wall. She is crying.
MALLORY
(sobbing)
Please.

ALEX
Don’t do this. It’s not worth it, man.

KEVIN
(crying)
I’m so sorry. It hurts so bad. I can’t take it...it hurts too fucking bad.

MALLORY
Kevin...please...don’t--

He fires a single shot hitting Mallory in the head. She falls backwards.

Alex dives to the floor to catch her.

Another shot is heard.

The gun falls out of Kevin’s hand and hits the floor. His body follows.

Alex cradles Mallory in his arms as he bursts into tears.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY
A graduation ceremony. Students give speeches.

Alex sits in his seat as the students rise and throw their caps in the air.

Michael watches from the stands and smiles.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY
Several students hurry to their family members.

Alex and Michael walk.

Alex notices Katherine leaning against his car.

ALEX
(to Michael)
I’ll catch up to you.

MICHAEL
You sure?
ALEX
Yeah, I’ll walk.

MICHAEL
See you at home, son.

Katherine approaches Alex.

Michael gets into Alex’s car and drives off.

KATHERINE
You made it.

ALEX
It appears so.

KATHERINE
Congratulations.

ALEX
Thanks. It means a lot.

KATHERINE
So what next?

ALEX
I don’t know. I guess we’ll have to wait and see.

KATHERINE
No big university in your future?

ALEX
Don’t think so. Not really my thing.

She smiles.

ALEX
What about you? Any chance of a permanent job here?

KATHERINE
They offered once the smoke cleared.

ALEX
Really?

KATHERINE
I didn’t take it. I don’t think teaching is really my thing.

He stares at Katherine, refreshed.
ALEX
Well, I gotta get....

KATHERINE
....going? Yeah, me too.

ALEX
My dad’s waiting.

KATHERINE
It was really nice seeing you, Alex.

ALEX
Great seeing you too.

She kisses him on the cheek.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Alex packs boxes into his car. Michael walks up and drops another box in the backseat.

MICHAEL
That’s all of it?

ALEX
All I’m gonna need.

He pats his son on the back.

MICHAEL
Sure you don’t want me to meet you in a couple days?

ALEX
I think I’m gonna be okay. I’ll call you.

MICHAEL
I’ll be there in a flash.

ALEX
I know. Thanks.

They hug.

MICHAEL
Take care of yourself, son.

ALEX
I will. You do the same.
He takes one last look at his neighborhood and gets in his car.

EXT. SUBURBAN HIGHWAY - DUSK
Alex’s car drives as the sun is starting to set.

INT. ALEX’S CAR - DUSK
He focuses on the road ahead.

FADE TO BLACK.