

All The Good Ones

EXT. GALLUP, NEW MEXICO - DAY (2004)

OVER BLACK we hear a train rolling in from a distance. We focus in on a young WOMAN (27) driving a blue, newly remodeled, cutlass supreme convertible, but she's too far away to see details. We see unfocused images of flashing rail road lights in a quaint town as she drives closer into view.

The woman is STORY LEONARD, medium brown hair, dark eyes, natural beauty, wears jeans and a plain, pink tank top.

She cruises slowly through the town and hums along to music that plays softly in the background.

The sound of evening traffic is near, tires screech, people walk the streets in blue collar attire.

Street sign reads: 2004 Pumpkin Festival- Friday. Freakiest pumpkin takes home cash prize.

A DASHBOARD JESUS wiggles around, affixed to her dashboard.

The skyline fades and blossoms an array of colors over stacked mountains behind a modest, tasteful community.

She pulls into the parking lot of a small, clean motel and sits in her car facing her room.

Room number reads: Thirty.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM

Story stands in front of a mirror and stares at her reflection.

She splashes water on her face and pats it dry with a hand towel.

She observes the fine wrinkles on her forehead, lifts the skin above her eyes, smooths over her cheeks with her hands, gives a wide smile as she runs her tongue over her teeth.

INT. MOTEL BEDROOM

She stands barefoot on the bed to place one glowing sticker, in the shape of a star, on the ceiling.

Crawls in bed, stares at it.

She closes her eyes.

STORY
(under her breath)
Good night, sweetheart.

INT. MOTEL BEDROOM - MORNING

She opens her eyes, covers her face with a pillow.

The alarm goes off, she hits the snooze button.

EXT. STORY'S CAR - DAY

A cloudy day. Streets are wet.

Story slowly drives away from the motel, snaps random photos from a classic, professional looking camera as she leaves.

She comes to a stop light, and looks at her map.

She takes a right turn on to the main road, speeds up, hits loose gravel and spins out of control.

STORY
Oh my god.

She swerves off to the side, her body jolts, as she comes to an abrupt stop.

Her head falls on the steering wheel.

The sound of the horn is continuous.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. LEONARD HOUSE - DAY (1993)

A yellow, two story, one hundred year old, Sears and Roebuck house sits on a hill in a rural setting, across from the BRENHAM CEMETARY.

INT. STORY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Story (17) sits on the floor, eats chocolate cake, uses her fork to play with the frosting.

A dozen weathered roses sit on her night stand.

Her report card reveals two failing grades.

A water-bed rests on the floor, and a particularly nice, antique, dark cherry, vanity dresser sits pressed up against the wall with a matching chair.

She picks up the phone, then hangs it up, quickly.

She knocks the roses off the night stand with force.

She throws herself on the bed, face first.

O.S. There's a knock at her door.

She sobs with her face in a pillow.

STORY
Go away, please.

INT. OUTSIDE STORY'S BEDROOM DOOR

Story's DAD (40's) black hair, mustache, stands outside of her door dressed in starched wranglers, a button up long sleeve shirt, cowboy boots and cowboy hat.

DAD
Come on, honey. It's not like anyone died.

He knocks again.

DAD (CONT'D)
Alright. I'll be downstairs if you want to talk. I love you.

He walks away.

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Story's mom is MARIE (40's), 5'8, short blonde hair, green eyes, sits down on a bed, shakes one foot, jittery. She wears Lee jeans, a brown belt, a short sleeve tee and tennis shoes.

Dad stands with watery eyes, faces Marie.

MARIE
Did you tell her?

DAD
I tried.

MARIE

You always try. That's the problem.

Marie gets up and turns her body away from him.

DAD

Why do you blame me for everything?

MARIE

Just leave, please.

He grabs a suit case and walks out.

EXT. LEONARD ROOF TOP - DAY

Story smokes a cigarette.

The admires a clear sky full of stars.

The cemetery sits across the graveled road, within her view.

The phone rings, she looks back towards her bedroom.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

BILLY (20), tall, thin, eccentric, blue eyes, with a charming smile, enters a convenience store. He stands in line, pretends to look at lighters. He slips a pack of cigarettes under his sleeve, and buys a lighter from a woman CASHIER, (late 30's) heavy set, big hair.

BILLY

Thanks.

He walks out of the store.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE

A HISPANIC CHILD (3) stands near a car alone, cries for her MOTHER (late 40's), short black hair, chunky build. Billy takes her hand, leads her into the store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE

BILLY

(to child)
Come on. It's OK.

MOTHER

I thought I told you to stay in the car with the doors locked!

CHILD

I'm sorry, mommy. I'm sorry.

MOTHER

Thank you, Mr.

BILLY

No problem, mam.

The Mother picks up the child and Billy leaves.

INT. SCHOOL CLASS ROOM - DAY

A preppy BOY (16) whispers into a pretty GIRL'S (16) ear, they glare at Story.

Story pretends not to notice.

The algebra TEACHER (late 40's) writes homework on the chalk board.

The school bell rings.

The school KIDS (teenagers) leave the room. Story stays seated.

The teacher approaches Story and lays down her test, the grade is thirty seven.

TEACHER

I told you before. I just can't pass you with grades like this.

Story's head falls with disappointment, face is flushed.

STORY

What happens if I fail two classes?

TEACHER

You'll have to do it again.

STORY

Be a junior again?

TEACHER

I don't know what you want me to tell you, Story. There's no special treatment in my classes.

Story gets up with a blank stare, walks out.

INT. BILLY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Billy pulls out a small box hidden behind some bath towels on a shelf, and sits on the toilet.

He looks for a good vein in his arm.

O.S. There is a knock at the door.

He drops a needle.

He impulsively grabs a blow dryer and uses the electrical cord to tie himself off.

BILLY

Damn it.
(Yells out bathroom door)
Key is under mat, Ryan.

He injects himself.

He breathes deeply, his eyes heavy.

RYAN (21), 5'9, brown hair, attractive in a lazy way, stands outside the front door.

RYAN (O.S.)

(yells)
Hey man, it isn't here.

BILLY

I'll be right the...

Billy sinks into the toilet.

His eyes roll around inside of his head.

He manages to lean over the tub to vomit.

EXT. BENJAMIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Story rides down the highway in a newer maroon grand am, with her best friend MICHELE (18), petite and pretty.

MICHELE

I don't know why but I just think
you guys will like each other.

STORY
So he's really tall?

MICHELE
Yeah.

STORY
And cool?

MICHELE
Yeah, seems like he would get along
with anyone. I know he's from
Austin, too, and goes to Blinn
here.

Story shakes her head, looks at the speedometer.

STORY
Geese, Grandma.

Michelle accelerates the gas.

EXT. BILLY'S GARAGE APT. - NIGHT

Billy leans on the exterior of the garage apartment building
and stands next to a small coal grill with his friend, Ryan.

Billy wears long shorts, an over sized T-shirt, and black
combat boots.

Michele and Story pull into the drive way, step out of the
car, walk up to the guys.

BILLY
Billy. And you must be..

Billy extends his arm out to shake Story's hand.

STORY
Story, nice to meet you.

Story extends out her hand. He kisses it, in an inoffensive
way.

BILLY
This is my friend, Ryan, from
Austin.

Billy flicks a cigarette and tracers spread through the air
as he extends his arm.

The orange from the ashes sparkle as it hits the ground, and sends off a tiny fire cracker show. Crackle. Pop. Back to reality.

There's a beeping noise. Michele looks at her pager.

MICHELE

Hey guys. I know we just got here,
but I think Ben needs his car.

STORY

It's cool, go head.

MICHELE

Are you sure?

Story nods her head yes.

MICHELE (CONT'D)

If you need me, just call, OK?

Michele walks to the car.

STORY

I trust 'em, I think.

They smile at one another.

BILLY

(to Ryan and Story)
Come on up.

Ryan, Billy, and Story all travel up the stairs and into the garage apartment.

INT. BILLY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

They enter, Billy first. The space is a small extension of the bedroom. The house though modest, has a creative decor.

INT. BILLY'S KITCHEN

Billy walks into the kitchen, lights the gas stove.

BILLY

Gonna get some heat in here. Sorry,
guys.

INT. BILLY'S LIVING ROOM

Story's eyes move around the room and admire abstract monotypes.

An antique, glass milk bottle sits on his dresser filled with change. She picks it up, looks it over.

STORY

This bottle with the change in here is cool.

BILLY

Thanks. That use to be my grand dad's. Think it's really a milk bottle.

She sets it down.

STORY

I love antique stuff like that.

BILLY

Me, too.

Ryan looks around for his keys.

RYAN

Guys, I don't want to be rude, I gotta get on the road. It's getting late and I gotta long drive.

BILLY

Alright, man.

RYAN

I'll come back in a couple of weeks though.

BILLY

I had fun. Call me later so I know you got back OK.

RYAN

Cool.

Billy and Ryan hug.

STORY

Good to meet you.

RYAN

You too. I'm sure I'll see ya
around.

Ryan winks at Story, grabs a back pack, walks out.

STORY

Bye.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM

Story reaches below a desk and turns on a small electric heater, then lies down on his bed with half of her body still on the floor.

BILLY

You cold? Let me shut that window
all the way.

He grabs a throw blanket and covers Story's legs, shuts the window, walks back in the kitchen.

BILLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Make yourself at home. Turn on the
radio if you want.

STORY

Thanks.

Story reaches down by the bedside and turns on a small, battery operated radio. She messes with it until she finds a clear station. The music is interrupted with a special announcement from a male ANNOUNCER.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

River Phoenix was pronounced dead
at one fifty one am this morning.
Sources say he was partying at a
downtown L.A. Club, the Viper room,
when he suddenly passed out...

Story turns up the radio.

STORY

Are you hearing this?

BILLY (O.S.)

No shit.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

-the autopsy showed lethal levels
of cocaine and morphine.

(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A funeral is scheduled for November
forth. We'll have more details on
that tonight so stay tuned. You're
listening to CTEX one hundred.

The music comes back on. She lowers the volume.

STORY
That's so sad.

BILLY
All the good ones go early, ya
know. Janice, Jim...

STORY
He's so young.

Billy pops his head in the bedroom.

BILLY
I got something all over me. Be
right back.

Billy walks into the bathroom, shuts the door.

INT. BILLY'S BATHROOM

He turns the water on in the sink and lets it run.

Billy looks in the mirror at his worn face. He moves in
closer to look at his eyes, bloodshot.

He tilts his head back and generously pours eye drops into
one eye. The drops slowly splash, visibly absorb, and turn
his eye completely white. He blinks at his reflection, and
both eyes are blue again.

He strips off his jeans, revealing his red boxers.

He quickly grabs a pair of gray sweat pants hanging on the
shower rod, and throws them on.

INT. BILLY'S BEDROOM

He comes out of the bathroom, walks to the foot of the bed
and lights a candle.

BILLY
All clean now.

STORY

So how long have you guys known each other?

BILLY

Forever. He's like a second brother to me.

STORY

He has honest eyes.

He leans forward, playfully looks into her eyes.

BILLY

Really? What kind of eyes do I have?

She looks closer.

STORY

Pretty ones.

He sits down and skillfully leans in to her, pressing softly against her side.

Slowly, she reciprocates the affection by snuggling up close to him and touching his arm.

They face each other. Her eyes begin to glisten and shine. Her hair rises, as if static has lifted it to the ceiling. Billy stares, dazed.

STORY (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

BILLY

Nothing, I was just thinking.

The pattern of her face breaks up into a million tiny pieces, like a puzzle. He can barely hear her voice, and he puts her hand on his heart.

STORY

(faded)
Are you...

Fade to black.

STORY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

OK?

INT. RETIREMENT NURSING HOME - DAY

Marie, casually dressed, teases an OLD WOMAN'S hair (late 80's), who sits in a wheel chair.

PJ (mid 90's), dirty old man, rolls by in his wheel chair pushed by Marie's friend, PEGGY (mid 40's), dark, short hair, who wears comfortable clothes. She stops, stands to his side to help him get up.

PEGGY

There ya go. You got it.

PJ struggles to stand and sits back down.

PJ

It sure was easier to get up when I could see between your legs.

Peggy laughs for a brief moment, pauses.

PEGGY

That's the most exciting thing I've heard in a long time.

MARIE

Hi, Mr. PJ. Are you harassing the ladies again?

PJ

Just observing.

OLD WOMAN

My husband tries to put snakes down me every day!

MARIE

I know, I just hate it when they do that.

RECEPTIONIST (late 30's), heavy woman, wears glasses, delivers flowers to Marie.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Are these for me? Wow.

RECEPTIONIST

There's a note on the side.

Marie reads it out loud.

MARIE

Love, Story. At least I did something right.

OLD WOMAN

You stupid bitch, you stole my flowers!

MARIE

No, mam. I was just lookin' at em.

Marie sets down the flowers.

OLD WOMAN

He's so sweet, isn't he?

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Billy and Story walk on a gravel road, under a full moon. He pulls her into the cemetery.

BILLY

You come out here by yourself a lot?

STORY

Usually me and Michelle do when we're bored. This is the safest place in the world, ya know. Everyone's dead.

Billy stops, pretends to hear something.

BILLY

What was that?

STORY

What?

He grabs her side.

BILLY

(loudly)
Boo!

She jumps, screams, takes off running.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I thought I couldn't scare you!

He runs after her.

They run in the green of the cemetery. He catches up with her and wrestles her down to the ground. He tickles her until she can't stand it.

STORY

OK, OK, OK.

BILLY

(muffled voice)

Why were you running? It's the safest place in the world, remember?

He acts like Count Dracula and pretends to bite her neck.

A police car pulls up, shines its headlights on them.

EXT. LEONARD HOUSE - NIGHT

The police car pulls up with Story and Billy in the back seat.

The COP (late 40's) knocks on the door.

Marie opens the door from a dead sleep, white T-shirt and pink pajama bottoms.

MARIE

Is everything OK?

COP

Mam, I found your daughter and this young man running around in the cemetery.

MARIE

And?

COP

And, it's illegal, mam. After dark.

MARIE

Were they doing anything wrong?

COP

Not that I'm aware of, but...

MARIE

Then don't wake me up, Ronnie. I have to get up early. Some of us work around here.

Marie firmly shuts the door, irritated. The cop turns around and Billy and Story are gone.

INT. LEONARD LIVING ROOM - DAY

A cosy living room with hard wood floors. There's a nativity scene that consists of a hand painted, porcelain baby Jesus, and three wise men that sit on an antique piano.

The old, but modestly updated house is heated by an old wood burning stove. Mixed matched oil paintings hang on the wall. A medium sized, artificial Christmas tree sits adjacent to the couch.

LULA, a black, older lab, lies on the floor.

Story and Billy sit on a small maroon love seat.

Billy places one of Story's hands over her eyes. He reaches around the couch, and reveals a black statue of a woman and man embracing.

BILLY

OK.

STORY

Oh my gosh.

She looks at it closely, runs her fingers over it.

BILLY

When I saw it at the antique shop I had to get it for you.

STORY

I love it.

Story hugs Billy and kisses him on his cheek.

BILLY

One more thing.

STORY

More?

He hands her a gift. She opens it.

STORY (CONT'D)

Sarah McLaughlan?

BILLY

Have you heard her?

STORY

Oh wait, wait, that song,
possession.

BILLY

Yep. And since we can't agree on
music it's a compromise.

STORY

You're so sweet.

He leans forward, kisses her nose, cheek, lips.

BILLY

You're an angel.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I love you.

She gently pulls away.

STORY

I love you too, but how do we know
this is real?

BILLY

Leap of faith, I guess.

Story looks deeply into his eyes and nods her head yes. He
nods his head yes back.

Story's sister, IZZIE (15), curly brown hair, cute and
cheery, walks in the door, with a baby CHIHUAHUA in her
hands.

IZZIE

Look, y'all! She's a gift from
Brant. Isn't she the cutest?

Izzie runs out of the room.

IZZIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mom!

STORY

How sweet.

Story's brother, AEDEN (12), super tall and lanky, shaved
head, walks in the front door.

AEDEN

What's up? Where's mom?

STORY

That way.

She points.

BILLY

What's up man?

Aeden holds the small gift up.

AEDEN

Gotter somethin' for her car.

STORY

What is it?

AEDEN

You'll see, later.

He laughs, speeds past them.

Story playfully throws her head back.

STORY

Ahh. Merry Freakin' Christmas!

INT. LEONARD LIVINGROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Story walks around with a black trash bag, cleans up the Christmas mess, and finds a small, clear bag by the foot of the couch. She examines it closely, confused.

The phone rings. She throws the clear bag away and picks up the receiver.

STORY

Hello.

WILL (O.S.)

Story? Merry Christmas. How are you?

She cups her hands over her face.

WILL (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Look, I know I shouldn't have called but I ...

STORY

So, why did you?

WILL (O.S.)
I can't stop thinking about you.

STORY
I haven't heard from you in two months.

WILL (O.S.)
I never meant to..

STORY
I met someone, Will. And he's staying with me. So don't call me again.

Story hangs up the phone.

INT. BEN'S BEDROOM - DAY

BEN (17), tall, long brown, wavy hair, glasses, sits on a bed with Billy. They pass a joint and drink cheap beer.

BEN
So you really like Story or what?

BILLY
Yeah, man. She's cool.

BEN
Wanna eat some shrooms tonight, dude?

BILLY
Sure. I'll probably have to do twice as many though.

BEN
These are the best ones you'll ever eat, seriously.

Billy looks through his jacket, pulls out an unlabeled bottle of pills.

BILLY
Wanna codeine?

BEN
Uh-yeah. Where'd you get those?

Billy hands Ben one and they wash them down with beer.

BILLY
Her mom's medicine cabinet.

BEN
There's more?

BILLY
Yeah, but I only took a couple. She just had surgery and shit.

BEN
She'd probably never notice if we took more, all messed up like that.

BILLY
Call your friend. Let's eat those things tonight. And don't tell Story.

BEN
Alright.

Ben picks up the phone.

INT. MARIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Marie gets home from work. She walks in and finds Story sitting on her bed. She stares at a muted television set.

Marie sits on the edge of the bed and takes off her shoes.

MARIE
Hey, what are you doing here?

Marie reaches around and rubs her own shoulders.

STORY
How are you feeling?

MARIE
Oh, alright. Just a little achy from standing all day.

STORY
You look tired.

MARIE
Where's Billy?

STORY
Ben's.

MARIE
Why aren't you with him?

STORY
Didn't feel like it.

Story gets up and looks though the VHS tapes on the floor in a box.

Lula lies comfortably on a love seat at the foot of the bed. Story leans over to pet her.

STORY (CONT'D)
Such a good girl. You're so sweet.

MARIE
We're just all gettin' old aren't we? But she's a good one.

STORY
Will called me today.

MARIE
Oh yeah.

STORY
Right after Billy told me he loved me for the first time. What are the freakin' chances of that?

Marie looks out the window.

MARIE
I tell you what. Think it's gonna rain.

Marie washes her pain medication down with water.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Ya know, some days I think I'd have been better off just staying with your father. Have you talked to him lately?

Story shakes her head no.

STORY
I just don't know why he waited to call me now. When I have someone else.

Story lifts up a VHS tape.

STORY (CONT'D)
The Thing Called Love? It's new.

Marie slips out of her clothes and into a long T-shirt.

MARIE
What ever floats your boat.

Marie gets in bed.

Story pops in the movie.

It starts to rain, thunder is loud.

Story takes a peek out the window.

Cloud to ground lightening strikes.

Story jumps in bed, presses play on the remote.

STORY
Michele said this movie is...

Story looks at her mother's face and she's sleeping.

EXT. BEN'S LAWN - NIGHT

Billy lies sprawled out in the grass and stares at the stars. He tries to look at Ben's face but it's blurry. He waves his hand and sees red and orange tracers. The street lights expand into one huge yellow light.

BILLY
Have you ever seen a flower bloom,
man?

A huge, white, fragrant moonflower unfolds and blossoms before their eyes.

BEN
Wow.

BILLY
It's so beautiful.

Billy closes his eyes and an assortment of flashing lights surround him until his face becomes the color of grass, and his jeans melt into the ground, like liquid.

He opens them and a DARK SHADOW hovers over him.

He looks the ghostly figure directly in the face.

It thunders, begins to rain. Big drops of water slowly hit his forehead, run down his face and turn dark blue, almost black.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Ahhhh!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Story's biology TEACHER (late 40's), brown, short hair, wears a light blue sweater and casual slacks, sits in a chair, grades papers. She looks down at the form placed in front of her.

TEACHER

What's this?

STORY

You just sign there.

The teacher skims the paper. Story points to the signature line.

TEACHER

So, what are you going to do now?

STORY

Get a job, I guess.

TEACHER

Oh.

The teacher signs the school release and hands it back to Story.

STORY

(ungratefully)
Thanks.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Billy and Story smoke cigarettes on their lunch break.

Billy wears an HEB vest and jeans.

Story wears a Walmart jacket and jeans.

STORY

Having a good night?

BILLY
Yeah, might get done early.

STORY
So, what'd you and Ben really do?

BILLY
I told you already, babe. We hung
out, drank some beer, time just got
away from me.

STORY
Time always gets away from you.

BILLY
You're beautiful when you're mad,
ya know that?

He tries to touch her. She moves his hand away.

STORY
Stop it. I don't know what you're
doing, but it's not cool. Besides,
it freaks me out when you don't
even call. I can't sleep. I just
lay up all night worried.

BILLY
Time just...

Story places her hand over his mouth.

STORY
-got away from you. I know. Just
call next time.

Story walks off.

BILLY
I will. I promise. I love you.

Story looks back but keeps walking.

Billy flicks his cigarette on the ground, steps on it.

STORY (O.S.)
See ya in the morning.

INT. LEONARD KITCHEN - DAY

Marie stands over the kitchen counter, makes a sandwich.

Story sits at the long, brown, oval, kitchen table.

MARIE

Want me to make you one?

Story shakes her head.

MARIE (CONT'D)

When's the last time you saw him?

STORY

Last night. He was suppose to meet me for coffee this morning and he never showed up.

MARIE

Have you tried Ben's?

STORY

Yes, mother. I tried everyone. Like fifty million times.

MARIE

Maybe we should call his parents.

STORY

I don't know.

MARIE

You know how men are. Maybe he should move out.

INT. STORY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She tries to rest on her water-bed, tosses, turns.

There's a beep.

STORY

Will.

She picks up the phone and dials his number.

STORY (CONT'D)

Yeah.

WILL (O.S.)

How are you?

STORY

Good. Not good.

WILL (O.S.)
What's wrong?

She rolls her neck around.

WILL (CONT'D)
Well, hey, I'm in the area. Wanted
to see if I could stop by.

STORY
No. I don't know, maybe.

WILL (O.S.)
I won't stay long. I just have
something for you.

STORY
OK.

They hang up.

There is a knock at her door.

She opens it to find WILL (20) dressed in a tan sweater,
neatly groomed. He holds a dozen red roses, and a gift.

WILL
Surprise.

STORY
I thought you were in the area, not
outside my door.

WILL
Your mother let me in. Don't be
mad.

He hands her the flowers.

STORY
Thanks. The other ones died a slow
death.

She glares at him.

WILL
What's going on?

Will sets the gift on the bed and notices her blank
expression.

WILL (CONT'D)
Maybe I shouldn't have...

Story leans in, kisses him.

She pushes him on the bed, then locks the door.

WILL (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

STORY
Shh.

She turns on an electric heater, lifts the covers, slides underneath them. She takes off her top, then bottoms. She wears a black bra and pink panties. She helps him take his clothes off, too.

She closes her eyes, and kisses him.

INT. STORY'S BEDROOM - DAY

MARIE
(through the door)
Rise and shine.

Marie knocks at the door.

MARIE (CONT'D)
Story, Billy just called. He's
about to be here with his parents.

Story jumps out of bed, her hair is messy. She throws on her top and pushes Will.

STORY
Oh my god, get up. You have to
leave!

Will smiles, stares at her, doesn't move.

STORY (CONT'D)
Thanks, mom. I'll be down in a sec.

WILL
Good morning, beautiful.

STORY
I'm serious, you have to get
dressed and get outta here. Billy's
on his way over. Please don't let
him see you.

Will's face drops with disappointment.

She rushes to grab his clothes and throws them on the bed.

Story looks out the window.

Will gets up, tries to hug her from behind.

A car pulls up the gravel entrance to the driveway.

STORY (CONT'D)

Hey. Hurry up. Go through the back door downstairs. They'll think your Izzie's friend or something if they see you.

O.S. There's a knock at the door.

STORY (CONT'D)

I'll call you later, OK?

Will reluctantly nods his head and grabs his keys.

STORY (CONT'D)

One second.

EXT. LEONARD YARD - DAY

Marie shows Billy's parents, KATHY and MICHAEL (mid 40's) around the yard. Kathy and Michael are conservatively dressed. Billy follows.

They all walk toward the pool, and Billy sneaks off.

MARIE

We just love it out here.

KATHY

Well, you have a lovely home.

MARIE

Thanks, it's a sears and roebuck. A hundred years old, if you can believe it.

KATHY

Really?

MICHAEL

We really appreciate you letting Billy stay here until his place is ready.

KATHY
I know, you're too kind.

INT. LEONARD KITCHEN - DAY

Billy walks in through the sliding door.

Story sits at the table, arms crossed.

BILLY
Hey.

She stares straight past him.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I know what you're thinking and...

STORY
Leap of faith, huh?

BILLY
-I'm sorry.

STORY
I was so scared. I thought you
coulda been dead or something.

BILLY
I just needed some time to clear my
head.

Story stands.

STORY
Right.

He reaches for her shoulder, she takes a step back, dazed.

STORY (CONT'D)
You promised me.

BILLY
I know it was a dick thing to do,
but I wasn't trying to hurt you.

Story stares off into the air, dazed.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I'll do what ever you want, Story.
Please.

STORY

What I want is a boyfriend who comes home when he says he's going to, and doesn't leave me wondering where he is all night.

BILLY

Look, I brought my parents here to meet you.

STORY

I don't get you.

Story puts her head down, eyes are wet, runs her hands through her hair.

STORY (CONT'D)

How can you do this to me?

BILLY

I know I messed up, but I'm here now. I'm not leaving again.

He wipes away a tear from her face that's mixed with black mascara.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I promise. I'll be better for you.

He gives her a hug and holds tight.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I love you.

She notices his parents walking towards the sliding glass door.

STORY

We'll talk more later. I gotta go clean up.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

An upper class neighborhood. We hear random conversations from groups of people, and see fireworks.

INT. PARTY HOUSE BATHROOM - NIGHT

Billy walks out of a bathroom, zips up his pants. Shortly after, a handsome GUY (20's) walks out, disheveled.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Small crowds of PARTY PEOPLE mingle around kegs, and socialize around a large pool.

Story stands next to Michele, pumps a beer from a keg.

There's a beep, beep, beep. She looks down at her pager.

STORY
Will, again.

MICHELE
Forget him.

Billy walks up. He lights a cigarette, hands it to Story.

STORY
Thanks.

BILLY
This is a nice house.

The countdown to 2004 begins.

PARTY PEOPLE
(yell) 5,4,3,2,1. Happy New Year!

Billy and Story hug, kiss. Billy steps back, begins to strip himself of his clothes.

STORY
(distorted, fading voice)
What are you doing?

Billy's vision becomes blurry.

He walks backwards, closes his eyes.

PARTY PEOPLE (O.S.)
(Cheer) Go, go, go, go, go!

He jumps in the pool.

THREE YEARS LATER. AUSTIN, TEXAS.

INT. RYAN'S EXTRA BEDROOM - NIGHT

Story and Billy lie in bed dressed in night clothes.

BILLY

Go!

Story rolls swiftly over to the right and jumps into the nearby walk in closet.

Billy throws her a walkie talkie.

She holds the walkie up to her mouth.

STORY

Come in. Anyone there?

Billy grabs a bat under the bed, and cautiously enters the hall way.

Story leaps towards the window, and quickly crawls out of it as if she has done it a million times.

EXT. RYAN'S HOUSE

O.S. A door slams.

Story slows down, glances at her watch, and begins to walk with more ease to the front of the house.

INT. RYAN'S FRONT DOOR

Billy opens the door and Story walks in.

BILLY

Time?

She looks at her watch.

STORY

One minute, forty five seconds.

BILLY

That can't be right.

STORY

I'm tired. I wanna go to sleep now, babe.

BILLY

Alright. But when we have our own house we need to be good at this stuff.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

It's not like our other apartment with our friends around all the time. There's crazy people out there.

STORY

Yeah, and we're two of 'em right now.

Story and Billy walk back towards the bedroom with his hand on the small of her back.

RYAN (O.S.)

Everything alright out there?

STORY

Yeah. Sorry, Ryan. Didn't mean to wake you.

INT. RYAN'S EXTRA BEDROOM

Billy disappears into the bathroom, shuts the door.

Story crawls into bed, and stares at the ceiling.

INT. RYAN'S BATHROOM

Billy opens a small bottle of pills and washes a few down with water from the sink.

He looks at his reflection. It begins to resemble the "Scream" painting's silhouette. He quickly looks away.

INT. RYAN'S EXTRA BEDROOM

Glowing stars of all sizes beam from the ceiling.

Billy jumps into bed and under the covers. He tucks his head near her chest.

Stars begin to drift around on the ceiling and travel out of the window, single file. They float up to the sky and insert themselves in to real stars that form the shape of a heart.

BILLY (O.S.)

You're an angel. I love you.

STORY (O.S.)

I love you, too, babe.

EXT. BILLY'S TRUCK - DAY

Story and Billy drive around Austin in his small, white truck looking for their own place to live.

STORY

Look, over there.

She points to an old white house, converted into a duplex.

A MAN (early 40's), dark hair, stands in the front yard having a conversation with two MEN, who walk away and drive off in their car.

EXT. DUPLEX LAWN - DAY

Story and Billy walk up the man.

STORY

Hi, I'm Story, and this is my fiancée, Billy.

They shake hands.

MAN

Nice to meet you.

BILLY

How's it going, man? This place still available?

MAN

Well, there was a couple here just a minute ago and I gave them an application.

STORY

So you'd still consider us?

MAN

How long you two been together?

STORY

Three years.

MAN

The thing I worry about with young people like you is that you'll split up, and the rent won't get paid.

The man looks them both up and down.

MAN (CONT'D)
You guys get along well?

BILLY
Yes, sir.

MAN
Ya seem like nice kids. Ya got
jobs?

STORY
Yes, sir. We actually both start
new ones this week.

The man hands them an application from his back pocket and hands it to Story.

INT. DUPLEX - DAY

Story unlocks the front door, and stands in the living room, stares at the colorful walls.

EXT. DUPLEX LAWN - DAY

Ryan helps them move into their new home. They unload furniture from their vehicles, nothing fancy.

BILLY
(to Ryan) You glad to get rid of
us?

RYAN
I kinda liked the company for a
couple weeks, to be honest. And my
dishes were clean for once. No
thanks to you.

BILLY
Yeah, she's a keeper.

Billy pulls out a flask, takes a swig.

ALLISON (mid 20's), very thin, with dark, short hair, directs movers from her Uhaul into a house, across the street.

RYAN
Check out that chick over there.

Ryan waves, nonchalant.

BILLY
You should go say hi.

RYAN
She is cute. From here, anyhow.

Allison waves back.

Story walks outside.

Billy's brother MATT (early 20's), with brown, shoulder length hair, thin frame, pulls up in an old, blue, beat up truck with DALE (mid 20's), red messy hair, freckles, large, green eyes.

BILLY
Matteo.

MATT
What's up? Good to see you guys.
This is Dale.

BILLY
Hey, don't I know you from...

DALE
-AA? Yeah, man. Crazy.

They shake hands.

BILLY
Billy, good to see ya again.

Billy lights a cigarette.

DALE
You, too.

BILLY
This is my girl, Story.

STORY
How's it going?

Story joins Billy in a smoke break.

STORY (CONT'D)
Small world.

MATT
What can we do to help?

Story points to the vehicle.

STORY

All this stuff has to go in.

Matt begins to unload the futon, Dale helps.

Matt

Talked to Jim today about that job
for ya, bro.

BILLY

Thanks, man.

MATT

Mom's having an art opening on
Saturday. Wants you to come if you
can.

BILLY

Cool.

Ryan lifts the black statue out of his way.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hey man, be careful with that, OK.
It's fragile.

INT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

The livingroom is bright blue and the bedroom, blood red.

In a dark lit room, Story puts the last star on the ceiling,
steps down from the stool and joins Billy, who lies on a
blanket on the floor, surrounded by unopened boxes.

BILLY

I don't want to get old.

STORY

Me neither.

Stars glow on the ceiling.

STORY (CONT'D)

I feel like I'm already thirty.

BILLY

I don't think I'll live to be
thirty.

He turns on his side, faces Story.

STORY

What?

She turns on her side, faces Billy.

BILLY

You know what I was thinking?

She shakes her head no.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You could get your GED and go to college if you want.

STORY

Don't say things like that and then change the subject.

BILLY

I think they have a photography program at ACC.

STORY

I thought you had to have a real diploma.

BILLY

They don't care which one you have, if you pass the tests. I'll go with you up there if you want. Get an application.

STORY

That'd be cool.

O.S. An unattended drip, drop.

BILLY

Is that coming from the bathroom?

STORY

Oh, I can't wait till we're in our big mansion some day, up on a hill somewhere over looking a lake, with tons of animals running around. But ya know, if we never did, that would be OK, too.

He strokes her hair.

BILLY

I'd like to travel. Me and you.
Just jump in the car, and go
somewhere.

STORY

Where?

BILLY

I don't know. Far away. Maybe
Gallup, New Mexico, where I was
born. Then anywhere my truck would
take me.

STORY

I can tell you about how far that
truck would take you.

She points outside, they laugh.

BILLY

Hey.

He hits her with a pillow, playfully tickles her until she
can't stand it.

STORY

OK, OK, OK!

EXT. DUPLEX LAWN - DAY

Billy sits on the grassy ground, sketches.

Allison approaches him, observes his activity. She wears
fashionable jeans, blue top, fitted hoodie.

ALLISON

How cool, an artist as my neighbor.

Billy lifts his head.

BILLY

Oh, hey.

ALLISON

I'm Allison, from across the
street.

She points.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
I saw ya out here, so I thought I
would come formally introduce
myself.

BILLY
Billy. How's it going?

They shake hands.

ALLISON
I saw a girl with you, right?

BILLY
Yeah, that's my girlfriend, Story.

ALLISON
New to Austin?

BILLY
No, my parents live in Westlake.

ALLISON
How cool, my parents live there,
too.

She draws circles in the dirt with her boots.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Hey, you wanna come over and have
some chocolate cake? I just made it
so it's warm.

BILLY
I really got to finish this for
class. Rain check?

ALLISON
Sure. Come over any time for
desert.

Allison smiles, walks off.

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Cans of neutral paint sit on the floor, next to boxes, a
broom, and a mattress on the floor.

They sit on the floor and finish up their hamburgers and
french fries on paper plates.

They squeeze ketchup packs into empty bottles.

BILLY
I like this place.

STORY
I still can't believe he gave it to us that cheap.

BILLY
I know. That girl from across the street stopped by today.

STORY
What'd she say?

BILLY
Just introduced herself. Allison, I think.

Story gives Billy a hand full of ketchup packs.

BILLY (CONT'D)
We need a big dog.

STORY
We need big jobs first.

BILLY
I thought we were starting those. This week.

Story squirts ketchup on Billy.

STORY
Oops.

BILLY
Oh, you're gonna pay for that one.

He wipes it off of himself and smears ketchup on her face.

She licks the side of her cheek with her tongue.

STORY
Ummmmmmmm, it's good. Wanna taste?

They wrestle around on the floor with laughter, and he unsuccessfully attempts to keep her from putting her ketchup filled tongue on his closed mouth.

BILLY
You just wait.

He grabs a napkin and wipes it off his mouth.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I forgot to tell you that I have
that interview tomorrow.

STORY
Aren't your parents still paying
your rent since you're in school?

BILLY
They said if I moved in here, they
wouldn't.

STORY
You mean in here with me?

BILLY
Don't get upset. You know how they
are.

STORY
Yeah, weird. Sorry.

Story looks at him with apologetic eyes, wipes the ketchup
off her face with a napkin.

STORY (CONT'D)
I have an interview, too.

BILLY
Where?

STORY
Downtown in a small office, off
Riverside. A receptionist position.

BILLY
I'm sure you'll get it.

STORY
Thanks.

A quiet moment. He reaches over the condiments and gives her
a kiss.

BILLY
Hey, we're lucky together.

INT. RETIREMENT NURSING HOME - DAY

Marie wears black tights, skirt, matching hair tie, combs an OLD WOMAN'S (80's) hair out, teases it.

OLD WOMAN
I really like your costume.

Marie works, looks at herself in the mirror, laughs.

MARIE
You do huh, thank you.

OLD WOMAN
You're welcome.

Peggy pushes PJ by in his wheel chair.

PEGGY
What's so funny in here?

MARIE
Hey, girl.

PEGGY
Hey. I was thinking, why don't we take a trip to Austin this weekend and visit Story.

MARIE
I can't, darn't. The kids are out of town and I gotta take care of the animals.

PEGGY
I thought ya only had one.

MARIE
No, remember, Izzy got the sweetest little chihuahua a few years ago for Christmas? Sleeps with me, right here.

Marie points to her neck.

MARIE (CONT'D)
So cute. And Lula's on the love seat. Poor thing. She's taking medicine right now for a bad hip. You'd never know it though.

Marie shakes her head.

PJ
You just let me know if you need
some company.

PEGGY
Alright, Mr. PJ. That's enough.

PJ
What'da ya mean? I'm just getting
warmed up.

Peggy pushes him down the hall, shakes her head, waves to
Marie.

INT. WORKSHOP BUILDING - DAY

JIM (early 40's), tall, thin, messy brown hair, and Matt
exchange money. Jim hands Matt a small bag of white powder.

O.S. We hear a knock at the door.

Billy gently cracks the door open, peeks in.

MATT
Just in time, bro. Come on in.

JIM
Hi, Billy. Jim.

Billy and Jim shake hands.

BILLY
Nice to meet you.

JIM
Matt tells me you're the one for
the job.

BILLY
I hope so.

Jim pushes a plate with a line of coc and dollar bill towards
Billy.

JIM
Help yourself.

Billy stares at the plate.

Jim rolls up the dollar bill and hands it to Billy.

BILLY

Thanks.

JIM

We're pretty relaxed around here.
Just get the work done and no harm
in having a little fun on the side.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING ELEVATOR - DAY

Story steps into an elevator, presses number six.

STORY

Common, common!

INT. RIVERSIDE MORTGAGE OFFICE - DAY

Story walks in and is greeted by KAREN (early 20's), red,
long hair.

STORY

Hi, I'm Story, here for an
interview at two, with Bob.

KAREN

If you want to have a seat, someone
will be right with you.

STORY

Thanks.

LEE ANNE (late 20's), blonde shoulder length hair, tall,
broad shoulders, square jaw, walks by Story.

Story crosses her legs and sits up straight.

LEE ANNE

He's just getting off the phone.
Don't be nervous, he's a sap for
pretty girls.

STORY

Thanks.

INT. BOB'S OFFICE - DAY

Story walks into the office and is greeted by Bob. He's
short, stubby, with glasses.

BOB
Hello, hello. Come in, have a seat.

STORY
Thanks.

She sits, fidgets a bit.

BOB
I was looking at your resume. It says here you graduated from high school in Brenham?

STORY
Yes, sir.

BOB
And you have some computer skills.

STORY
Yes sir, I'm a really quick learner.

BOB
You always say sir? You're making me feel old.

STORY
No, sir. Sorry.

Bob smiles, gathers some papers, pulls up a spread sheet on his computer.

BOB
Let me show you what we do here.

LANE (late 20's), tall, mousey guy, with boyish good looks and glasses pops his head in, quietly, waves.

Lane sets papers down on Bob's desk.

BOB (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Lane and Story exchange glances, and he pulls the door shut.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Story pulls her car into the parking garage in her cherry red, basic model, sports car.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

She takes an elevator up to the thirtieth floor, taps her foot, looks at her watch.

INT. AA SUITE - NIGHT

The RECEPTIONIST, a granola, hippy looking young woman, long wavy hair, glasses, quietly sits behind a desk to greet Story, as she rushes in.

STORY

Hi, I'm here to sit with Billy.

RECEPTIONIST.

Jude?

STORY

Yep.

RECEPTIONIST

Let me get his sponsor for you.

The receptionist walks away.

STORY

Okay.

The SPONCOR, (42) neatly dressed, clean cut, wears one earring, enters room.

SPONCOR

You must be Story.

The shake hands.

STORY

Hi, is Billy here?

INT. ALLISON'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Billy rushes to the toilet, and slams the door behind him. He throws up and regurgitation turns into little gold fish that swim around. They begin to jump and dance, taking on a life of their own.

He tries to focus on a burning candle that sits on the top of the toilet. The flame grows larger, and larger.

He looks away.

BILLY

Fuck.

Allison peeks in.

ALLISON (O.S.)

You need another hit?

BILLY

Gimme a minute.

She shuts the door.

INT. AA SUITE - NIGHT

SPONCOR

I'm sorry. We've actually been really worried about him. He hasn't been here in weeks and we can't find a working number for him.

STORY

What?

EXT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Story pulls up to her house.

Billy's truck is parked in front of the house. There's a dead head bumper sticker on the back of it.

She walks up to the door.

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Story stands by the front door and her eyes are drawn to the dim light by the bed.

She glances forward, past the bedroom, and notices that a gas stove top burner is lit in the kitchen.

There is a hollow silence in the home.

STORY

Oh my god.

INT. DUPLEX KITCHEN

Story moves quickly to turn off the unattended stove. Her eyes shift around intensely to confirm there's no one home.

The back door creaks from the wind.

A spoon sits alone in the center of the small kitchen table.

There's a lighter on the window seal.

Story picks up the phone and pages Billy.

Within seconds, Billy enters through the back door in the kitchen.

STORY

Billy.

BILLY

Hey.

Billy's pager goes off.

STORY

It was me. Where were you?

BILLY

Allison's.

STORY

I thought you were suppose to be in your meeting?

BILLY

Sorry, babe. I should have told you.

STORY

What?

BILLY

She came by all crying and shit. She was having a hard time, so I just went over and hung out. I didn't think it would be a big deal.

STORY

I go all the way to your meeting, and I'm freaking out all the way home.

Billy looks down at the floor.

BILLY

I'm sorry.

STORY

I feel so stupid. I just made a fool outta myself over there.

BILLY

No you didn't. I just was sick last week.

STORY

You had a freaking cold.

BILLY

Why are you so upset?

STORY

They said it's been weeks since you've been there, Billy. And why was that stove on?

BILLY

God. I don't know.

Billy takes a cigarette out, lights it.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Look. Someone's following me, OK. I didn't want to make you worry so I didn't mention it.

STORY

What?

BILLY

I swear to god. Look.

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM

Billy points out the window from a blind he has carefully constructed to be bent a certain way, so that he doesn't have to move it to see out.

Through the window, a WHITE VAN turns the corner and continues on down the street.

BILLY

Did you see that?

STORY

The van?

BILLY

Yeah, it's been circling the house all day.

STORY

Stop changing the subject.

BILLY

I just keep seeing it and it's fucking with me.

STORY

Why would it be following you?

BILLY

I don't know.

STORY

What were you doing with Allison?

BILLY

I told you.

STORY

I'm not stupid.

Billy rubs his face in frustration. His eyes are heavy.

BILLY

I don't think you are. Look, she does that throw up thing, OK, she's sick. It grosses me out to be honest, but I didn't want to be a dick. She said she needed to talk to someone.

STORY

You expect me to believe that?

BILLY

Yes, I do. And, someone is following me.

STORY

Unbelievable.

Story takes off her jacket and walks in the bathroom.

INT. DUPLEX BATHROOM

As she walks towards the 40's style tub she sees a black hole in the shower curtain.

STORY

Did you make this hole in my new shower curtain?

Billy enters the bathroom, shaking.

BILLY

I heard someone earlier in the house and I had to burn it with my cigarette. To see out.

She stares down at the floor in disbelief.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What's wrong with you today?

STORY

Me?

Story dashes out of the bathroom. Billy follows.

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM

Story walks around, throws some near by belongings in a clothes basket that rests on the floor.

Billy sits on the futon by the window that has the bent blind.

BILLY

What are you doing?

STORY

I just can't...

She kicks a table that holds the black statue he gave her, and it falls and breaks.

STORY (CONT'D)

Jesus!

Story picks up the basket and her keys.

BILLY

Great.

STORY
-take this anymore.

BILLY
Just calm down, OK.

STORY
You calm down. You calm down!

Story drops the basket, pushes Billy, hits him on the chest repeatedly.

He holds her hands.

STORY (CONT'D)
Stop it. Let me go. You always do
this shit and I'm tired.

She breaks away from him, grabs the basket and keys.

STORY (CONT'D)
You know what I fear the most about
you, Billy? It isn't dying. It's
you living.

Story walks out the front door.

Billy looks through the blinds he previously bent to follow her moves, shakes his legs uncontrollably.

BILLY
(to himself)
Where are you going?

Her car drives off.

BILLY (CONT'D)
(yells out the closed window)
Story! Story!

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Billy sits on the futon, rocks back and forth, crosses his legs, shakes one foot.

Dale knocks at the door.

DALE (O.S.)
Billy, you there?

BILLY
Who is it?

DALE (O.S.)
It's Dale. Can I come in?

BILLY
Sure.

Dale opens the door, walks in.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Hey, man.

DALE
I was at the meeting tonight when
Story came by. I didn't say
anything cause she would have asked
me a million questions. Is
everything alright?

BILLY
She left.

DALE
She upset cause you used?

BILLY
She's upset cause I'm a fuck up.

DALE
Don't be so hard on yourself, man.

BILLY
She's not coming back.

DALE
She'll be back tomorrow, dude.
That's the way chicks are.

Billy covers his face with his hands, distressed.

DALE (CONT'D)
Come here.

Dale pulls Billy into him and gives him a hug.

They sit on the futon.

BILLY
I don't know what's happening.

Billy puts his head down, ashamed.

DALE
Shh. You're OK, man.

Dale puts his hand on Billy's knee, provocatively rubs it, and leans into him.

Billy begins to get an erection and tries to hide it by turning slightly to the side.

BILLY

I'm sorry. I..

Dale places his hand gently over Billy's mouth and rubs his front genitals through his pants. Billy's erection grows with every touch.

Dale seductively pushes him down further on the futon.

Billy closes his eyes and drifts off, moans.

A darkened amusement park is only lit by abandoned festival rides. He travels in a roller coaster, alone, throws his hands into the air. He zooms past Story, who sits tied up in a chair with her mouth duck taped. Lights flicker, he hears laughter.

The roller coaster comes to an abrupt stop.

Billy ejaculates.

Dale looks up at Billy's disturbing facial expressions.

DALE

Was it good?

INT. LEE ANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

LEE ANNE shows Story around her small, two bedroom house. Lee Anne's SON (5) is asleep on the couch, and DAUGHTER (2) sleeps in her bed.

Lee Anne opens a door to a bedroom.

LEE ANNE

You can have his room for now. He always crashes on the couch, anyhow, and she ends up in bed with me.

STORY

Thank you so much. I promise, it'll only be a couple days.

LEE ANNE

Don't worry about it, seriously.

INT. KID'S BEDROOM

Story sets her pillow and blanket down on the single bed, decorated with stuffed animals.

LEE ANNE

Let me know if you need anything,
OK?

Lee Anne begins to shut the door, then peeks back in.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

Oh, and I was suppose to relay to
you that Lane thinks you're cute.

She shuts the door slowly, smiles.

STORY

Thanks.

Story grins, but her hopeful eyes fall when she's alone.

EXT. DUPLEX LAWN - DAY

Billy sits on his front porch sketching.

Allison walks up.

ALLISON

Hey, how's it going?

BILLY

Been better.

ALLISON

I noticed your girlfriend's car
hasn't been here the last couple
days.

BILLY

Yeah.

ALLISON

Listen, I'm sorry about the other
night.

BILLY

Don't worry about it.

ALLISON
I shouldn't have dragged you in to
my...

BILLY
Seriously, it's cool.

Allison turns and walks away.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Hey.

Allison stops but doesn't turn around.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Everyone's got shit they have to
deal with, ya know?

Allison looks back at him.

BILLY (CONT'D)
You'll be okay.

ALLISON
I wish I could say the same for
you.

She walks away.

When Billy looks up, Story stands in front of him.

BILLY
Story!

Billy stands up.

BILLY (CONT'D)
What's going on?

STORY
I'm stayin' with Lee Anne, from
work. I just came by to get a few
things.

BILLY
You wanna go in, talk?

STORY
No.

BILLY
Stay for a while, please.

STORY

Looks like you're making friends
without me.

Billy stands in front of Story to stop her movement.

BILLY

She just stopped by to say hi, and
I told her to leave, OK.

STORY

Good.

BILLY

You think I'm a fuck up.

STORY

Don't do this.

BILLY

You think I can't stop using.

STORY

I don't know what I think anymore.

BILLY

Don't you think I want to? I think
about it every day. It's like a
damn fly zooming around my head.
Every time I try to kill it, I slap
myself in the face.

STORY

I love you, Billy, I really do. But
every time you disappear, or do
something stupid, all I think is
how I'm gonna wake up to a phone
call in the middle of the night one
day and someone's going to tell me
you're dead. But then you come home
and I'm mad. I'm mad because you
left, and I'm mad when you come
back. There's no win for us
anymore.

BILLY

I talked to my sponsor. No bull
shit from now on.

Billy pulls her close, cups her head with his hands.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Look at me. I'm going to make this
better.

She closes her eyes.

He hugs her, she tries to act tough, but breaks down.

She makes eye contact with Allison, who stares at them
through her window.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Please stay. I love you so much.

She hugs him back, tight.

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM - NIGHT

Story lies on the bed.

Billy makes two cups of coffee.

BILLY
Same as always?

STORY
Yeah. Thanks.

O.S. There's a knock at the door.

STORY (CONT'D)
You expecting someone?

BILLY
Not that I know of.

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM

Story answers the door.

RYAN
Hey girl, I thought you were..

STORY
Shocking, isn't it? (Whispers in
his ear) We'll talk later.

They hug, Ryan nods.

RYAN

I was actually visiting Allison and saw the cars outside.

STORY

Really?

RYAN

What's up, man?

Story shoots Billy a look.

BILLY

How's it going?

Billy hands Story her cup of coffee.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Wanna cup a Joe?

RYAN

Nah.

He looks around, pretends not to see the bent blinds.

RYAN (CONT'D)

I just stopped by to see if you guys might wanna have dinner tomorrow night at my house?

STORY

We would, but Billy thawed this huge chicken already.

BILLY

Why don't you just come over here?

STORY

Yeah, there's plenty.

RYAN

Well, I just invited Allison.

STORY

Oh.

BILLY

Then tell her to eat with us too.

STORY

But...

BILLY
You guys been hanging out a lot?

RYAN
Kinda.

BILLY
Cool.

RYAN
We're really not...

BILLY
You don't have to explain anything
me, dude. How's seven work for ya
tomorrow?

Ryan nods.

STORY
Perfect.

RYAN
OK, cool. Well, I'm gonna take off
then and catch up with you cats
tomorrow.

Ryan walks towards the door.

BILLY
Alright, man. Take it easy.

STORY
Night.

Ryan waves, walks out the front door.

RYAN (O.S.)
Late.

STORY
What was that?

BILLY
Babe, if we're going to live here,
you need to see that there is
nothing between us. No-thing. I
love you.

STORY
Fine.

The phone rings, Billy answers it.

BILLY
Hey. Yeah, what's up?

He turns his body away from Story.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Now?

Billy fidgets.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Alright, man. Gimme fifteen
minutes.

STORY
Who's that?

BILLY
Dale. He helped us move, remember?
He needs a ride home.

STORY
Now?

BILLY
That's what I said, but his car got
towed.

Billy stands up, looks for his keys.

STORY
He can't call anyone else?

BILLY
He's stuck at work and it's right
up the street from here. I'll be
right back, promise.

He gives her a peck on the lips, grabs his keys, walks
towards the door.

STORY
Be careful.

INT. BILLY'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Billy sits in the drivers seat and Dale sits in the
passengers seat.

DALE
Thanks for picking me up.

BILLY
No problem, man, where to?

Dale looks down.

DALE
That's not the only reason I
called.

BILLY
What's going on?

DALE
I've been thinking about you ever
since..

BILLY
Story moved back.

DALE
I think I'm in love with you.

Billy looks shocked.

BILLY
Dale.

DALE
You don't have to say anything.

He rests his hand on Billy's leg and starts to rub it.

BILLY
Story's waiting on me.

Billy turns his head away from Dale, sits still.

DALE
Just tell me if you want me to
stop.

BILLY
I want you to...

He begins to strokes Billy's genitals through his pants.

Billy gets an erection, closes his eyes.

Dale turns off Billy's head lights and unzips his pants.

BILLY (CONT'D)
-stop. You gotta stop.

He pushes Dale away.

DALE
I thought you liked me.

BILLY
I do, but you gotta stop, man. What
we did the other night was wrong.
This isn't me.

DALE
Who are you then?

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM - NIGHT

Story lies on the bed, looks at a photography magazine.

The phone rings, she picks it up.

STORY
Hello. This is her.

She sits up.

STORY (CONT'D)
What. Is everybody OK?

Her eyes grow wide with fear.

EXT. LEONARD HOUSE - DAY

Burnt pieces of odds and ends smolder around the place where
Story's house use to stand.

Marie embraces Story from behind.

MARIE
I know it's hard to look at. Izzi
and Aeden are at Aunt Sharon's. Why
don't you drop by and say hi before
you go back?

Story picks up what's left of a blackened perfume bottle and
drops it. Then picks it up again, and holds it tight.

MARIE (CONT'D)
They'd love to see you.

Story nods.

STORY

You could've all died. And Lula.

Story's eyes are wet.

Marie stands still, almost stiff, stares at the ground.

MARIE

I thought I left the door open. I tried to look for your brother and sister first. The smoke was too thick to see up the stairs. So I ran back down, grabbed my purse, shut the door. I thought Lula had gone out, and I shut her in. It was my fault they died. I feel so terrible.

Marie begins to sob.

STORY

Mom, don't. It's not your fault you were thinking about your kids. We're so lucky if you really think about it.

MARIE

I know, you're right. But I still feel bad.

There's a beep, beep, beep.

Story looks down at her pager.

STORY

Billy.

MARIE

Does he know?

STORY

Yeah. He had to work.

Story gets another page. She looks down at it.

They just look at each other.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - LATER THAT EVENING

Story leans against her car and waits. The sun begins to go down.

Will pulls up, gets out of his black sports car, with red leather interior.

It begins to mist, almost sprinkle.

WILL
Like old times, isn't it?

STORY
Our house burned down.

WILL
Are you serious? Is your mom and everybody ok?

STORY
Yeah.

WILL
Why didn't you tell me earlier?
How'd it happen?

STORY
We don't know yet.

WILL
I'm so sorry.

He gives her a hug, but she stands stiff.

WILL (CONT'D)
Where's Billy?

STORY
In Austin. We're still together,
Will.

WILL
So you remind me every time we
meet.

STORY
Well, you should know. I'm not
leavin' him.

WILL
Then why are you here with me?

He steps toward her, barely touches her mouth with his.

STORY
I was in the area.

She smiles and pulls away, puts her head down. He lifts it with his hand.

WILL

Look at me. If you want me, I'm here, OK.

He moves in to kiss her. She backs away.

STORY

I gotta go.

WILL

Stay. You always run from me.

STORY

It was really good to see you.

Story gets in her car and sits there.

Will carves out the words "Don't close your eyes" on her misty windshield with his finger and walks off.

Will leans against his car and watches her drive away.

It begins to rain, hard.

EXT. STORY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Story pulls over on the side of the road to call Billy.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Rain pours down. She covers her head poorly with a magazine and runs to the isolated phone booth.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

STORY

Hey.

BILLY (O.S.)

Where are you?

STORY

On my way home.

BILLY (O.S.)

Are you OK?

STORY

Yeah, I'm...

They're disconnected.

STORY (CONT'D)

Hello. Billy.

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM - NIGHT

A plate of chicken and corn sits on the bed, he pushes the uneaten food aside.

He throws down the phone.

BILLY

Great.

From his bed, he watches a lightening storm through his window. It thunders, rattles the windows.

The lights go out.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Shit.

The flame from his lighter appears, lights up his face.

There's a loud, firm knock at the door, but he doesn't see anyone.

O.S. Knock grows louder.

A lightening bolt strikes and we see a shadow by the door in the shape of a woman.

INT. DUPLEX KITCHEN

He picks up the plate of food, drops it off in the kitchen, and opens the door.

BILLY

What are you doing?

Allison walks in. He follows her to the bedroom.

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM

ALLISON

All the lights went off, I got scared. Do you mind if I chill here?

BILLY

Sure, but Story's on her way home.

ALLISON

Oh, I'm sure it will be back on soon.

She takes off her wet top.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Sorry. It's drenched.

She begins to take off her pants.

ALLISON (CONT'D (CONT'D))

Can I hang these in the bathroom?

Billy tries not to look at her.

BILLY

I thought you had plans with Ryan tonight?

She takes out a lighter and lights two small candles by his bed.

ALLISON

Why didn't you light these?

Billy looks at her, concerned.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

Chill out, OK. I'm not here to rape you. I just get freaked out when it storms. Not to mention sitting alone in the dark.

Billy's hands shake, he opens a dresser drawer and throws her a dry T-shirt and some shorts.

BILLY

Here. Put these on.

Allison sits down on the bed, and ignores his request to put on clothes.

O.S. There's a knock at the door, but they dismiss it.

BILLY (CONT'D)
If someone sees you over here,
they'll get the wrong idea.

ALLISON
Now that's funny.

She lies down on his bed.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
What would the wrong idea be,
Billy? That you're a junkie? I'm a
junkie? That you've been with me
before but you were so fucked up
you can't remember?

BILLY
You know how I feel so why are you
doing this?

ALLISON
Look. I don't like to use alone and
I know you don't either.

She pulls out a bag of white powder.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
Now, I'm going to do a little.
You're welcome to have some, or you
can stand there like a drag and
watch.

Billy stares at the bag.

O.S. The door bell rings.

ALLISON (CONT'D)
You better get that.

He ignores the door, sits on the bed.

INT. STORY'S CAR - NIGHT

She cruises down highway 290, smokes, sings along to JAMES on
the radio.

STORY
(sings) Say something, say
something, anything. I've shown you
everything. Give me a sign.

EXT. HIGHWAY 290 - CONTINUOUS

A long stretch of highway and car lights expand. The road becomes blurry.

Story throws her cigarette out the window. It bursts and skips across the ground, bounces up, tumbles, crashes again, sparks fly through the air and create a fantastic light show.

A semi truck picks up speed to her back left, his blind spot. The truck DRIVER doesn't see her, and starts to change lanes to the right. He hits the tail end of her car, and sends her twirling across the three other lanes of traffic, into a ditch.

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM - NIGHT

Billy and Allison lie in bed, covered only by sheets.

Billy's eyes are wide open, crazy.

The rain stops.

ALLISON

I'll get my stuff later.

Allison gets up quickly, leaves.

Billy's phone rings.

He grabs it, fast.

BILLY

Story. What? I can hardly hear you.

He stands, dresses as he talks.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Are you sure it's the right Story?

He searches frantically for his shoes. Looks under the bed, finds one.

BILLY (CONT'D)

But's she's OK, right?

Finds the other one, puts it on.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Billy rushes through hospital doors and to the front desk. He's greeted by a RECEPTIONIST (late 70's), short gray, curly hair, wears a blue hospital vest, and slacks.

BILLY
I'm looking for Story Leonard.

RECEPTIONIST
OK, honey. What's she in for?

BILLY
She was in an accident. A car accident.

She thumbs through some files.

RECEPTIONIST
Leonard, room thirty.

She smiles, points down the hall.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT'D)
That way, sweetie.

INT. STORY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Story lies quietly on the bed, her eyes closed.

Billy briskly walks in, takes off his jacket, throws it on a chair.

BILLY
Hi angel.

She doesn't move.

BILLY (CONT'D)
It's me, Billy. Can you hear me?

He holds her lifeless hand as she sleeps.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I got here as fast as I could. They said you're gonna be fine, just fine.

He strokes her face, touches her forehead, stares at her.

BILLY (CONT'D)

You deserve so much more than this.

He tries to gather himself.

BILLY (CONT'D)

I'm nothing but a fuck up. But you.
You're everything good.

He rests his head on her side.

INT. STORY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Sun peeks through the windows.

Story opens her eyes. Objects are blurry at first.

She sees a familiar jacket on the chair by her bed.

The NURSE (50's), dirty blonde hair neatly pulled back, and well manicured nails, walks in.

NURSE

How are you feeling this morning?

STORY

The jacket.

NURSE

I'm sorry.

STORY

Who's jacket?

Story points to the chair.

NURSE

There was a young man here to visit
you.

STORY

Billy?

NURSE

Yes, I think that's his name.

STORY

Where is he?

NURSE

Maybe he went for some food? It's
not very good here.

A dozen yellow roses sit by her side, along with one red rose that sits in Billy's antique, glass milk bottle.

STORY

Maybe. Who are these from?

Story points to the yellow roses.

NURSE

It says...

The Nurse opens the card.

NURSE (CONT'D)

-Will. Someone special?

STORY

Was Billy here when they came?

NURSE

Well, they were delivered real early. I really can't say, hun.

INT. RYAN'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

Ryan, Matt and Billy sit around, drink beer.

MATT

You think she's awake now?

Billy doesn't move, stares at the wall.

RYAN

Maybe you should call up there.

MATT

We could all go up there if ya want.

BILLY

She saw Will.

MATT

What?

BILLY

I was at the hospital, and roses were delivered. From him.

Billy rubs his nose, sniffs.

BILLY (CONT'D)

It's worse, ya know, cause she never talks about him.

MATT

How would he know she's in the hospital?

BILLY

I don't think I want to know.

Ryan's phone rings and he picks it up.

RYAN

Yeah. Oh, hey. Where were you last night?

Billy grabs a High Times magazine on the coffee table and pretends to read it.

Matt snorts coc on the other side of the coffee table.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Alright, babe. I'll call ya later.

Ryan hangs up the phone.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Allison. She's not feeling good. Must be something going around.

Billy stands up.

BILLY

I just remembered, I got some stuff to do before Story gets home.

RYAN

I thought we were all hanging out today.

BILLY

I know, but I forgot about something. I'll call you guys later.

Billy sprints out the door.

INT. STORY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Marie stands and looks out the window. She wears blue jeans and a fitted pink top.

MARIE

I can't believe they didn't call me till this morning.

STORY

It's not their fault, mom. I had Billy as a first contact.

Marie looks at the yellow roses, and sees the card from Will, but pretends not to notice.

MARIE

Well, it should be a mandatory thing. My babies in this place all night, alone. You coulda died and I wouldn't have been here.

Marie's hands shake, she grabs tissues out of her purse, wipes her nose.

STORY

Don't be upset, mom. I'm totally fine.

MARIE

Well, where's Billy anyhow?

STORY

He was here all night so I told him to go home, get some rest.

She lifts her arm and rubs the bandages.

Marie tries to smile.

MARIE

I got the check today. For the house insurance. Wasn't as much as we had, but it's enough to build something new. It won't be as big, of course, but it'll work for us two.

STORY

Two?

MARIE

Well, your sister graduates this year, ya know. She probably won't stay that much longer.

Marie takes a check out of her purse.

MARIE (CONT'D)

I want you to have a little of this. Put it in the bank, hold on to it till you need it.

STORY

Mom, you don't have to..

MARIE

I know I don't have to. I want to. I've never been able to give you kids a lot, and this ain't much. But it's something.

She puts the check in a bible, and lays it down by her bedside.

STORY

Thanks, mom.

MARIE

Don't lose this.

Marie bends down and hugs her. Kisses her on the cheek.

STORY

I won't.

INT. DUPLEX - DAY

Billy frantically cleans the house. He sweeps. Throws down the broom.

He rips the sheets off the bed.

Throws Allison's clothes in a trash bag.

He starts to open the windows then shuts them. Opens the back door, throws the trash bag outside and it lands in a puddle of mud.

He takes out a bottle of whiskey and drinks it from the bottle.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Marie helps Story avoid the muddy waters, and get into her blue, 1990, cutlass supreme convertible.

INT. MARIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Marie puts the car in drive, and waits.

MARIE

I was thinking. You're going to need a car while yours is getting fixed. If they can even fix it. With the money and all, I thought I'd get me something new, to start fresh.

STORY

You should, mom.

MARIE

So you can have it.

STORY

What?

MARIE

This car.

STORY

Mother...

MARIE

Just say thank you.

She taps on the dashboard, where her DASHBOARD JESUS sits.

STORY

-thank you. But you worked so hard..

MARIE

Oh, stop it. When someone gives you something, you're suppose to say thank you and take it, or you're working against the universe. Is that what you want?

STORY

No.

They hug.

MARIE

Look, I know I don't tell you kids enough, but I'm proud of ya.

(MORE)

MARIE (CONT'D)

And a mother doesn't need a reason
to be proud, OK?

Story nods, Marie smiles, satisfied.

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM - DAY

Billy paints on a large canvas, color is everywhere, but the house is spotless. Walls are finished, a solid beige, cream trim.

Billy bends over to turn down the music that plays on the radio.

Story walks in.

STORY

You left this.

She tosses her purse and his jacket on the bed. She carefully sets the milk bottle down with the rose still in it.

He jumps up, hugs her.

BILLY

I was at the hospital all night.

STORY

I didn't see you.

BILLY

You never woke up. I started having these crazy thoughts, and had to get outta there.

STORY

You didn't call.

BILLY

I wanted to make sure everything was clean when you..

STORY

That's why you didn't call?

She points to the wall.

STORY (CONT'D)

What's this?

BILLY

I wanted to make everything perfect for you.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

Paint you something beautiful, but
all that comes out of me is this.

She looks at his work. An abstract, dark portrait of a figure
with its head submerged in water.

Story leans in and looks deep into his eyes.

Blood red and brown veins pulsate over his blue, glassy eye
balls.

STORY

Are you high?

BILLY

I thought we could work through
this, but I..

STORY

What?

BILLY

-know if you stay it'll happen
again. No matter how much I don't
want it to.

STORY

Is this about the flowers?

BILLY

No.

STORY

I never did anything with Will, if
that's what you think.

BILLY

Look at me.

He shifts her body towards him.

STORY

We can work through this.

BILLY

I love you...

STORY

I love you, too.

BILLY

-but...

STORY

But what?

BILLY

-I'm not in love with you anymore.

STORY

You're lying. You wanted me to move back here.

Story sits on the bed.

STORY (CONT'D)

It's Allison, isn't it?

BILLY

It's not Allison.

STORY

My house just burned down and...

BILLY

I know, and I'm so sorry.

He puts his head down.

She stares out the window with her back to him.

STORY

-Lula didn't make it.

He tries to touch her shoulder and she moves away.

BILLY

Story.

STORY

I shoulda died, too.

Story picks up her purse.

BILLY

Don't say that.

STORY

If you tell me you love me, and you're just confused or depressed, I'll stay. I'll help you.

He shamefully hangs his head.

STORY (CONT'D)
 I'll have someone pick up my
 things.

In shock, she gets up.

Billy's back slides down the wall, and he buries his head in his knees.

Story stops at the door, her eyes swollen, full of pain.

STORY (CONT'D)
 If I leave now, I'm not comin'
 back.

She walks out of the room.

O.S. A door shuts.

Billy picks up the whiskey bottle and shatters it.

BILLY
 God damn't!

He watches her leave through the window.

INT. RETIREMENT NURSING HOME - DAY

Marie stands, washes a WOMAN'S (late 70's) hair in a black, beauty parlor style sink. The woman's expression is blank, barely responsive.

MARIE
 No use in cryin' over spilt milk,
 right?

The woman stares at the ceiling, expressionless.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 Aeden's so tall now, you should see
 him. Wears a size thirteen shoe. We
 gotta special order 'em.

Marie is choked up, pulls herself together.

MARIE (CONT'D)
 Gotta aim for the top, right?

Marie looks at the woman, she continues to stare at the ceiling.

MARIE (CONT'D)

He always reminds me that it's much too crowded at the bottom.

The woman smiles.

Peggy walks by, stops, notices Marie talking.

PEGGY

Talking to the deaf woman again?

MARIE

She's a good listener.

Peggy walks in the room with a bucket of clean white towels. Marie finishes rinsing her hair. Peggy hands her a towel.

PEGGY

You alright? I've been meaning to ask you if you need anything.

Peggy folds the towels, places them on a shelf.

MARIE

I'm fine.

PEGGY

Look. If you guys need to stay with me a while, you know you're welcome to. Delbert's been a lot better since the surgery. And the kids, they'd understand. Or don't care. I can't tell the difference these days.

MARIE

Oh, I really appreciate the offer, but I think the church housing is fine for now. Plus, it's close to the school.

PEGGY

OK. Well you let me know if you need anything, you hear. You're my best friend. My only one, really.

MARIE

I will.

Peggy begins to walk out.

MARIE (CONT'D)

Peggy.

Peggy stops, turns around.

PEGGY
Yeah.

MARIE
Thanks.

PEGGY
You bet.

INT. LEE ANNE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Story sits at the kitchen table, dipping oreo cookies in milk.

Lee Anne walks in with her daughter and son.

STORY
Hi.

DAUGHTER
Hi.

LEE ANNE
Hey, you got off early today. (to Son) Sweetie, put your sister in some clean clothes, please. And turn on a movie for y'all to watch while I get dinner started.

Her daughter and son go into the bedroom, shut the door.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

STORY
I quit.

LEE ANNE
What?

STORY
I'm sorry, I should have told you.

LEE ANNE
What's going on?

STORY
I applied for another job.

LEE ANNE

Why?

Lee Anne grabs some mac and cheese from the pantry, opens box, lights the stove, boils water.

STORY

I gotta make more money.

LEE ANNE

I hear that.

STORY

Billy and I broke up, again.

LEE ANNE

You OK?

STORY

I think so.

LEE ANNE

Lane will love to hear this.

INT. LEE ANNE'S LIVINGROOM

Lee Anne stands in front of a full length mirror, observes the back of her legs.

LEE ANNE

Cottage cheese.

Story pushes the cookies away from her, and stands in front of the mirror, looks at her legs, too. She wears a blue skirt and white blouse.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

It's what you'll have if you don't stop eating that way.

STORY

I never even thought of that.

LEE ANNE

I'm getting fat.

STORY

No you're not.

LEE ANNE

Girl, I use to be so thin before I had the kids.

(MORE)

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

The only way I could loose weight was speed. Have you tried it?

STORY

No.

LEE ANNE

It's not like coc, where you do a line and you want more an hour later. With this, you're not tired for hours. I've cleaned my house like you wouldn't believe on this stuff, and the best part is you don't get hungry.

Lee Anne rummages through a kitchen cabinet.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

Wanna try some?

STORY

I don't know.

Lee Anne pulls out a small bag hidden behind canned goods and pours a little on a plate.

She dumps the macaroni in the water, turns it down.

She proceeds to roll up a dollar bill.

Story stares at the plate.

LEE ANNE

You've never seen this before?

Story shrugs her shoulders.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

I only do it every once in a while, myself.

Lee Anne sits at the table, and pushes a tiny bit on a plate towards Story.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

Go head. Just try it.

TWO MONTHS LATER.

INT. MALE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

STERNO, head waitress, early 20's, tall, broad shoulders, short, strawberry red hair serves cocktails.

STERNO
(to guy) Two dollars.

A guy hands her a five dollar bill.

GUY
Keep the change, sweetheart.

STERNO
Thanks, baby.

Story stands on the side, by the bar, watches.

A GUY walks by and pretends to bump into her so he can feel her butt.

Story pretends to smile.

STERNO (CONT'D)
You ready to try it?

STORY
I don't know. I'm so nervous.

STERNO
After you do it once, you'll see
how easy it is. Easy money, baby.

Story stands, frozen.

STERNO (CONT'D)
Come on, sweetheart. You walk with
me and watch.

STORY
OK.

Story follows Sterno to a table. Sterno takes an order, then proceeds to the bathroom.

INT. STRIP CLUB BATHROOM

STORY
Don't cha have to get the drink?

STERNO

Yeah, but he can wait. Friend of mine. I don't know why I didn't think of this earlier.

STORY

Of what?

She pulls out a bag of white powder.

Story shrugs her shoulders.

STERNO

Come on. It'll make you brave.

Sterno winks, opens the bathroom stall door. Story follows her in.

INT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Billy sits in a corner and catches a glimpse of himself in an oval mirror across the room. Disoriented, his eyes spin around as the walls change colors, purple, black, red.

BILLY

AH!

O.S. There's a knock at the door.

He enters the bathroom, shuts the door, locks it.

He waits for the knocking to stop, peeks out.

He tip toes to the phone, picks up the receiver and dials out.

INT. STRIP CLUB BATHROOM - NIGHT

Sterno leans her head back, sniffs.

Story's pager beeps and she looks down at it.

STORY

Shit.

STERNO

What's up?

STORY

I'm really sorry. I'll be right back.

STERNO
That's OK, sweetheart.

She leaves the stall.

INT. STRIP CLUB HALLWAY

Story calls Billy from a pay phone.

STORY
Hey.

BILLY (O.S.)
Story? I'm so glad you called.

STORY
I'm working, Billy. What do you want?

BILLY (O.S.)
Think you could come by?

STORY
I just said I'm working.

BILLY (O.S.)
Please?

STORY
Where are you?

BILLY (O.S.)
At home. I keep hearing someone talk but I can't see anything.

STORY
I can't believe..

BILLY (O.S.)
I feel like I'm loosing my mind. I don't know who else to call.

STORY
OK. Don't go anywhere.

She hangs up.

STORY (CONT'D)
Damn't.

INT. DUPLEX - NIGHT

Billy crawls into bed, pulls the covers over him, tight.

From his window, he sees a GIRL walk down the street. Billy squints to identify her but only sees her from behind. She disappears into a white van, and it drives off.

He closes his eyes, tries to sleep.

O.S. A door opens.

Billy can barely open his eyes, his vision is blurry.

BILLY

Story?

He shakes his head, and Story becomes clear.

STORY

Billy.

Billy jolts up to a sitting position.

BILLY

Thank god.

STORY

You look terrible.

She looks closely in his eyes and observes the bags under them.

BILLY

I'm so glad you're here.

STORY

You're all sweaty.

She goes into the bathroom, comes back with a washcloth, and wipes his face.

STORY (CONT'D)

What's going on?

BILLY

I don't know. I've been having these visions.

STORY

Of what?

BILLY
I think I...

There's a knock at the door.

Story opens it to find Allison, worn, messy.

STORY
What's going on?

ALLISON
Is Billy here?

STORY
He's sleeping.

ALLISON
Can you have him call me?

Story shuts the door, returns to the bed.

BILLY
Who was that?

STORY
No one.

Story lifts the blankets, gets under the covers with him.

STORY (CONT'D)
What did you take?

BILLY
I can't remember.

STORY
Great.

She throws her head back.

BILLY
I'm just..

STORY
You're just tired.

BILLY
-afraid to sleep.

STORY
Don't be. I'm not going anywhere.

She cuddles up to him, holds him tight.

STORY (CONT'D)
Close your eyes.

She rocks him back and forth in her arms.

STORY (CONT'D)
(softly whispers)
You're okay now. You're okay.

INT. DUPLEX - CONTINUOUS

Story and Billy sleep.

Billy wakes up, shakes Story.

STORY
What is it?

BILLY
I'm sorry.

STORY
For what?

BILLY
Everything.

STORY
Don't worry about it.

Story pretends to sleep. Billy kisses her lips. She kisses him back, slowly.

He rolls on top of her, and they bury themselves deep in the covers.

Clothes are thrown on the floor.

BILLY
I love you so much.

INT. DUPLEX - MORNING

Billy wakes up, alone. The sun shines brightly through the blinds, birds sing.

There's a note by the bed. He reads it out loud.

BILLY
To keep you company.

He looks around the room and spots a brown, female, LAB puppy. She sits in the corner, stares at him.

BILLY (CONT'D)

What.

The puppy runs up to him, jumps on the bed, licks his face. Billy pets her, loves on her.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Hi sweetie.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Story walks, tilts her face up toward the sun, closes her eyes.

A BOY (7), gentle demeanor, sits alone on a bench. He reads a comic book.

Story approaches the bench.

STORY

Hi. What'cha reading?

BOY

Batman and Robin.

STORY

You alone?

The boy shakes his head no.

STORY (CONT'D)

What'cha waiting for?

BOY

My mom.

STORY

Where is she?

He points to a cemetery across the street.

A YOUNG WOMAN (late 20's), puts flowers on a grave. She prays.

STORY (CONT'D)

(to herself)
She's so young.

Story stares, intensely, and tries to make out the woman's face.

STORY (CONT'D)

Bye.

She walks off, waves at the boy. He waves back, and continues to read.

INT. RYAN'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

Billy and Ryan hang out with the lab puppy, LUCY.

They sit on a couch, smoke weed out of a colorful bong.

RYAN

So she just left him?

BILLY

Her. She left her. Lucy.

RYAN

She's sweet. Does this mean you two are...

BILLY

I don't know, man. You know how we are.

RYAN

I hear ya.

Lucy, with a sweet, playful demeanor, jumps on the couch and stretches across both of them.

Billy pats Lucy on her back side.

Ryan laughs, stoned. Blows smoke in Lucy's face.

BILLY

Hey man, get outta here. Don't mess with my girl.

Billy hits him on the shoulder.

Lucy excitedly bites at the smoke.

INT. LEE ANNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Story and Lee Anne lie in bed, wearing boxers and T-shirts.

STORY

I saw Billy.

LEE ANNE

I thought you guys broke up.

STORY

We did.

LEE ANNE

You gotta let him go, girl. Or
he'll keep doing that shit to you.

Lee Anne turns toward Story.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

Thom did it to me a dozen times. I
just don't want you to get hurt
again.

STORY

I know.

LEE ANNE

We should go out.

STORY

Where?

LEE ANNE

Get up.

Lee Anne jumps out of bed and extends her hand.

STORY

Now? I can't..

Lee Anne pulls her out of bed.

LEE ANNE

You can, and you will. Now get
dressed. The kids are at Thom's, so
we have no excuses.

She turns on the light and starts to look through her closet
for clothes.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

Wear this.

She throws her a little fitted, sleeveless, black dress.

STORY
You're crazy.

EXT. SWINGERS CLUB - NIGHT

Story and Lee Anne walk towards the building, knocked out gorgeous.

STORY
What is this?

LEE ANNE
Don't freak out. It's a swingers club, but one night a week, you don't need a man to get in. Oh, and it's BYOB.

Lee Anne reaches inside of her big black purse and pulls out two flasks.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)
I know you like crown.

STORY
Thanks, I think.

INT. SWINGERS CLUB - NIGHT

Story and Lee Anne pay to enter the club. A GUY (late 20's), tall, handsome, stamps their hands and they walk in.

STORY
Thanks.

A Caucasian WOMAN (early 40's), with short blonde hair dances topless in front of a Hispanic MAN (late 40's), cheesy outfit, on the dance floor.

A handsome African American GUY (20's), 5'9, black, long dreads, approaches them.

GUY
You ladies care to join us?

Story looks at Lee Anne, concerned.

LEE ANNE
Sure.

He leads them to a table filled with obvious male strippers.

The MEN are wear fitted clothing, leaving little to the imagination.

Story grabs her flask out of Lee Anne's purse and takes a stiff drink.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ryan and Billy attend a party with several PARTY-GOERS, who walk in and out of kitchen, drink beer, smoke pot.

Ryan divides coc into multiple rows on the counter.

Billy wears stylish cowboy boots, fitted pants, a short sleeved shirt, untucked, and a trendy, silver necklace.

Billy kneels down to pet Lucy. TARA, (20's), long dark hair, great body, tries to seduce Billy. She wears a black revealing top over a red lacy bra, short skirt, tall, black stripper heals.

Tara leans down by Billy, overtly shows cleavage.

TARA

(to Billy)

So what do you do for fun, Billy?

BILLY

I dunno. Fun stuff, I guess.

RYAN

He's a recreational guy.

BILLY

Yeah.

TARA

You wanna try some of this?

Tara pulls a small bag of pills out of her red laced bra.

TARA (CONT'D)

You won't find this anywhere else.

Billy pops open a beer.

RYAN

I'll do it.

TARA

I've only got two. (To Billy) One for me, and one for you.

BILLY

I ...

Billy grabs the bag away from her. Walks towards the bathroom.

She follows him in, closes the door, winks at Ryan.

TARA

Sorry, baby. Maybe next time.

Lucy lies content on the kitchen floor, sniffs smoke.

INT. SWINGERS CLUB BATHROOM - NIGHT

Story and Lee Anne reapply lip stick in front of a mirror.

STORY

Did you see that one guy, with the wrap around thing on? Oh my god.

LEE ANNE

I know, girl. What were you doing in the corner that fine black guy?

STORY

You saw that? He tried to kiss me!

Lee Anne walks into the bathroom stall.

LEE ANNE

Lock the door.

Story locks it.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)

Come here. You want some?

STORY

Sure.

INT. APARTMENT LIVINGROOM - NIGHT

Billy lies on the couch among PARTY-GOERS, and Tara forces herself on top of him.

RYAN

Girl, what are you doing?

TARA

I think Billy would tell me if he wanted me to stop, right Billy?

Billy's eyes roll in the back of his head. He tries to focus.

People move in slow motion and cigarette smoke fogs up the room.

People slur, spit flies from their mouths as they talk.

RYAN

Hey man.

Ryan pushes on his leg.

BILLY

What's up?

TARA

You're just jealous.

RYAN

Of what?

Tara gets up, throws herself in Ryan's face.

TARA

You want some love too, sweetheart?

Tara tries to kiss Ryan, he backs away.

Tara's friend, MARCIE (early 30's), black guy dressed in drag, big earrings, tight dress, holds an unlit women's cigar, overhears their conversation.

MARCIE

Is something wrong?

RYAN

Yeah, your friend is on ex, and wants to screw everyone tonight.

TARA

Party pooper.

RYAN

She won't leave my friend, Billy..

He looks at the couch. Billy is gone.

Ryan runs to the bathroom door.

RYAN (CONT'D)
 -alone. Hey man, you in there?

Bangs on the door. Two skinny and pale GUYS (20's), shaved heads, walk out of the bathroom with glassy eyes.

RYAN (CONT'D)
 See, y'all already ran him off.

MARCIE
 Y'all? What the hell did I do?

TARA
 (to Marcie)
 You're beautiful.

MARCIE
 Girl, you are waisted. Come sit down and behave.

Marie pulls Tara down to rest on the couch.

Ryan leaves the apartment.

RYAN (O.S.)
 Billy!

EXT. STRANGER'S YARD - NIGHT

Billy stumbles into a stranger's neatly manicured, front yard, disoriented.

A large carved pumpkin sits on the porch, faces him.

He knocks on the door.

BILLY
 (yells)
 Hey, I need some water.

He sits in a chair by their front door, limp body.

He gets up, pounds on the door harder, and outside lights come on.

The yard is compiled of fat cedar trees and colorful flowers.

BILLY (CONT'D)
 I need some water, please.

His face is red with frustration, and hair messy.

He walks into the middle of the yard, and strips himself down to boxers.

The beige home suddenly becomes blue and gray, and the grass fills with water. His body sinks.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Somebody, help me!

The tree trunks bend, branches touch the water. They're submerged into a lake.

Rain falls heavily, and falling debris turns into birds that fly away.

He curls up into a fetal position on a boat in the water, and experiences breathlessness.

He fantasizes about a white flower blooming, relaxes, and smiles.

Grass grows rapidly and effortlessly around the flower.

He turns on to his back and Story grabs his hand. She lies beside him, they look at one another under a sky full of glowing stars.

The stars transform into police lights that shine brightly in the yard. Two POLICE MEN check his pulse.

An EMS VEHICLE pulls up next to a FIRE TRUCK, and several PEOPLE rush towards Billy and surround him.

INT. LEE ANNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Story and Lee Anne stumble through the front door.

STORY
What time is it?

LEE ANNE
Late.

There's a beep, beep, beep.

LEE ANNE (CONT'D)
What's that?

Story looks down at her pager.

STORY
My pager.

INT. LEE ANNE'S BEDROOM

They take off their clothes, put on pj's.

LEE ANNE
Who calls you this late, anyhow?

STORY
I don't know the number.

LEE ANNE
Oh my gosh, did you see that alien
looking thing on the dance floor
tonight?

Lee Anne tries to dance like him, uses sharp, mechanical
movements.

STORY
The one with the limp, ha. And the
strange neck.

Story tilts her head and imitates the person, too.

Story crawls in bed. Lee Anne follows.

STORY (CONT'D)
I actually had fun tonight.

LEE ANNE
Me, too.

Lee Anne turns out the light.

INT. LEE ANNE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Story's pager goes off, wakes them up.

The girls look rough, squinty eyes.

STORY
I slept with my contacts, again.

Story feels around for her pager, grabs the phone.

STORY (CONT'D)
What time is it?

LEE ANNE
I need some ice water.

STORY
It's the same number, weird.

LEE ANNE
It's ten thirty.

Story dials the number.

STORY
Ryan?

STORY (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

STORY (CONT'D)
Is this some kind of a joke?

Story listens for a moment, drops the phone.

Lee Anne picks up the phone.

LEE ANNE
Hello?

There's no one on the other line.

Story cries, uncontrollably.

She stands up, throws her purse against the wall, and the insides spill out, everywhere.

She tries to catch her breath.

Lee Anne tries to touch her, comfort her, but she pulls away.

Story dives across the bed for the phone.

STORY
I gotta call his parents. There must be a mistake.

Lee Anne grabs the phone, they stare at one another.

LEE ANNE
I'm sorry.

Story's body goes limp, she slides down to the floor and covers her face with her hands.

EXT. AUSTIN MEMORIAL PARK CEMETERY - DAY

A cloudy day hangs over the outside service.

Michele, Ben, Jim, Matt, Kathy, Michael, Allison, Ryan, Dale, Lee Anne, and Story are among the crowd that sit in attendance.

Kathy, Michael and Matt sit together, weep, comfort each other.

Allison holds Ryan's hand.

Story stands next to Michele and Lee Anne, stares at the coffin.

STORY
(whispers)
That's not him.

Story walks away from the service.

MICHELE
Story.

LEE ANNE
Let her go.

Michelle looks back, watches Story walk away.

Story's walk turns into a steady run.

Ryan sees her, drops Allison's hand, and runs after her.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

O.S. Story throws up. Coughs.

RYAN
Everything alright in there?

Story walks out of bathroom, crawls on the bed.

Story and Ryan, wear post funeral attire, lie on top of the covers, next to one another in bed.

Ryan lights two cigarettes, hands one to Story.

Story shakes her head, he puts one out.

STORY
Where's Lucy?

RYAN
His parent's house.

Story breathes a sigh of relief with her hand on her chest.

STORY

If I ask you somethin' will you
tell me the truth?

RYAN

Yeah.

STORY

Did he ever talk about me?

RYAN

All the time.

STORY

Are you just sayin' that to make me
feel good?

RYAN

No. He'd always say he missed you
and I'd tell him, no ya don't, shut
up, now let's go out.

STORY

Why?

RYAN

He was trying to get over you. I
knew if you guys kept seeing one
another the same thing would
happen, over and over again. That's
how it always was.

STORY

You're right.

Story turns toward Ryan, puts out his cigarette.

Story leans into him, closes her eyes, touches his lips with
her fingers, and he stops her.

RYAN

What are you doing?

Allison catches a glimpse of them from the window, and walks
away.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You're upset.

She closes her eyes and presses her lips against his. He
considerately pulls away.

Her eyes are wet.

STORY
It's just that...

RYAN
I know. Come here.

He wraps his arms around her.

STORY
You're...

Tears stroll down her face.

RYAN
Shh.

STORY
-the closest thing...

She pulls away.

STORY (CONT'D)
I should go.

RYAN
No. Just stay a while. Please.

Ryan tries to hide his tears.

INT. DUPLEX LIVINGROOM - DAY

A cloudy day.

The house is bare, too clean.

Story shivers, rubs her arms.

INT. DUPLEX BEDROOM

She walks in the bedroom, stands by the bed, sits down, sees a penny on the floor, picks it up, puts it in the milk bottle.

A portrait hangs on the wall covered by a white sheet.

She uncovers it to reveal a flawless, abstract, close-up portrait of Lucy printed on canvas, and stretched around a wooden frame.

STORY

Lucy.

She lightly runs her hand along the edges of it, takes it down, looks over the details, turns it over.

INSERT: BACK OF PAINTING READS - TO MY DEAREST ANGEL, I LOVE YOU. BILLY

She sets it down on the bed.

INT. DUPLEX KITCHEN

She opens the fridge to find only dog food and bottled water.

She glances down at the small kitchen table and spots a small bag of powder on the window seal.

She grabs a knife from a drawer.

She picks it up, pours it out on the table, divides it into multiple rows with the knife.

She unravels a dollar bill from her pocket and begins to roll it up like a straw.

She starts to snort the cocaine with the dollar bill, but stops when she looks up through the window and sees a family of FIVE boarding the WHITE VAN across the street. A WOMAN with a BABY strapped in her arms, helps the smaller CHILDREN in first.

She stands, quickly grabs a napkin on the counter and places it on top of the cocaine.

From the kitchen window, she notices the shed door is open.

INT. SHED

She enters the shed and sees a brown, thin T-shirt draped over something, and uncovers it.

The black statue sits, glued back together.

Beneath it is a note, she drops to her knees to read it out loud.

STORY

Meet me out there. Love, Billy.

She places her body over the statue, with her head down and hugs it.

She uses the shirt to wipe her stream of tears, buries her face in it, smells it.

STORY (CONT'D)

I don't know a life without you.

EXT. STORY'S CAR - DAY

The sun peeks out of the clouds.

She buckles herself in her blue, cutlass convertible.

The statue is buckled in the passengers seat.

She takes the house key off her chain, and throws it out the window. It lands in a puddle of mud, sinks.

She drives away from the house.

BACK TO PRESENT:

EXT. GALLUP, NEW MEXICO - DAY

We focus in on a Route 66 sign.

INT. STORY'S CAR - DAY

The car sits still, and Story opens her eyes, runs her hands over her face, and back through her hair.

She squints and focuses in on her DASHBOARD JESUS, "Enlightenment, on a spring."

A MAN (mid 60's), wears overalls, bit of a stomach, with patches of gray and dark hair mixed together, pulls over in a white ford pickup, parks directly behind her.

He walks up to her car, leans in to the drivers side, and a cheap cigar hangs from his mouth.

MAN

Mam, you alright? Looks like you had quite a little spin there.

STORY

Yeah. I'm fine.

The man puffs on the cigar, examines her carefully.

MAN

You sure you're gonna be OK? Looks like you been here a while.

She looks at the man with a half smile.

STORY

I'm sure.

He shrugs his shoulders.

MAN

OK, well you be safe, ya hear. Sun's goin' down. There's crazy people out there.

EXT. GALLUP, NEW MEXICO - CONTINUOUS

The man walks slowly back to his truck.

Story turns her head around, faces the man.

STORY

Wait!

The man stops, looks back at her.

STORY (CONT'D)

Thank you. For asking.

He smiles, satisfied, keeps walking.

He gets in his truck and drives away. He has a dead head sticker on his bumper.

She steps out of the car, walks a minute to observe the beautiful isolated dessert land.

She lets the wind carry the ashes away from the antique milk bottle until they're all gone and gently allows the bottle to fall from her fingers.

INT. STORY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Story closes the car door, tilts her head slightly back to feel the sun on her face, closes her eyes for just a moment, then looks straight ahead and starts the engine.

EXT. GALLUP, NEW MEXICO - CONTINUOUS

Story drives away on a lonesome highway, uses one hand to steer the wheel, and colorful layers of the horizon decorate the sky behind her, in the shape of a rainbow.

STORY (V.O.)

Billy always told me that when I died the world would stop, think about what it'd lost, what it'd gained. "An angel," he'd say. And people wondered why I stayed.. the answer was always too wide, too obvious, too simple...because he did.

FADE TO BLACK.