

NOISE COMPLAINT

Written by

Chris Shamburger

cshamburger@live.com

FADE IN:

INT. ROCK CLIMBING GYM - DAY

Climbing walls align the back of the edifice. A four-sided, forty-foot rock pillar stands in the middle.

COLE (late 20s) stands at the base of the rock wall. Handsome and athletic with a 100-watt smile, he's the kind of guy who makes "gym rat" seem like a compliment.

COLE
Come on! You're doing great!

He looks up at KADEN, same age, who clings to a rock hold just a few feet from the top of the pillar. Kaden's hardly out of shape, but still out of breath and out of his element.

KADEN
This was a horrible idea!

COLE
Just keep going!

Kaden regards the three-story drop. He takes a deep breath. Reaches to the next hold. Grabs it.

Kaden closes his eyes. Blindly feels for another hold with his foot. Finds one. Puts his weight on it.

But his shoe slips right off.

CRACK! Kaden's helmet hits the wall. He hugs the rope.

COLE
Relax! Get your footing!

Sweat slithers down Kaden's brow. He licks his lips. Tries again. Finds the hold this time and pushes his body up.

COLE
There you go! You got it!

Kaden continues to climb. Determined. Cole proudly watches as Kaden finally makes it to the top.

COLE
Nice job! Come on down!

Kaden lets go of the hold. Lets his body drop. The auto-belay device triggers with a LURCHING, DELAYED TUG, then begins lowering him to the ground.

COLE
How'd that feel?

KADEN
Painful.

Kaden's feet touch the ground. He rubs his pained hip.

COLE
Told you to start doing pull-ups.

KADEN
No. The rope wouldn't catch.

COLE
Auto-belays just take a second.

KADEN
This was more than a second.

Kaden doesn't look very comforted. Cole senses it.

COLE
Let's switch.

KADEN
No, we don't have --

But Cole's already exchanging their clips.

COLE
-- You know you're getting pretty good at this. What do you say we make things interesting?

KADEN
You're not taking your clothes off.

Kaden grabs a water bottle and hydrates.

COLE
I was thinking about a bet.

KADEN
OK. I bet you're going to say something stupid.

COLE
If I reach the top first, you have to get a tattoo.

KADEN
I win my bet.

COLE

My name. On your arm. And it can't
be in some skin tone. Permanent
black ink.

KADEN

My job would love that.

COLE

Just do what every other nurse does
and wear long sleeves.

KADEN

So you think I'm going to lose.

COLE

Hey, if you win, I'll give you
whatever you want.

Kaden's face suddenly turns serious.

KADEN

I think we both know what I want,
Cole.

They stare at each other for a beat, but Cole doesn't
respond.

KADEN

That's what I thought.

Kaden puts his helmet back on when --

COLE

OK.

Kaden stops. Their eyes meet again.

KADEN

Yeah?

COLE

Yeah.

They smile at each other. Kaden a little more than Cole.

KADEN

OK then. Ready on three?

They both click their helmets and get into position.

COLE

Ready.

KADEN
You count.

COLE
One. Two. --

But Kaden suddenly takes off, climbing as fast as he can.

Cole smirks, impressed, and casually gives chase.

Kaden grabs and pulls. Steps wide and pushes up. Forty feet of rock wall quickly dwindling down to just a few yards.

In the blink of an eye, Kaden's at the last hold. He reaches up to grab it, but there's something sitting on top of the hold that Kaden doesn't notice.

A small black box.

Kaden blindly knocks the box off the hold, sees it falling, and aimlessly scoops it out of the air.

Kaden finds a stopping point. Catches his breath and opens the box with one hand.

It's a ring.

COLE
What do you think?

Kaden looks down. Cole's just below him, that electric smile glowing.

KADEN
You lost.

Cole reaches up. Takes the ring and puts it on Kaden's finger.

COLE
No I didn't.

They smile at each other.

BOOM! Darkness consumes the room. As if every light in the facility blew at once.

KADEN
Cole?

Somewhere above, one remaining light serves as a spotlight.

KADEN
What's happening?

COLE
I don't know...

Then a sound. Like a bolt unscrewing. Followed by the twisting and turning of climbing ropes, as if they're being stretched beyond their means.

COLE
Kaden...

Things begin to slow down, almost dreamlike, sounds and voices becoming distant and muffled.

COLE
I think something's wro--

Cole's hold suddenly TEARS FROM THE WALL. He falls, the auto-belay device FAILING TO CATCH HIM.

Kaden instinctively reaches down to grab Cole, but their fingers slip through each other.

KADEN
Cole!!!

Cole's terrified eyes catch the light as he reaches up, his mouth open in a breathless scream as his body falls away, out of the light and into the empty pit of darkness.

SMASH CUT TO:

KADEN

His eyes opening. Vacant. Expressionless.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Kaden in his bed, a sliver of moonlight on his face.

He turns over. Finds himself alone, but he doesn't look surprised. He's been through this many times before.

Kaden regards the nondescript bedroom. Empty dresser. Bare night stand. Stacks of moving boxes in the corner.

Kaden climbs out of bed. Goes over to one of the boxes, pulls the tape back with a loud RRRRRIIPPP, and takes a picture frame out of the box.

He admires the photo of himself and Cole standing together at the rock climbing gym. Their final photo together.

The bedroom door opens.

Kaden's sister, PAIGE (mid-30s), pokes her head in, flicks on the light. The two hardly favor each other, but their bond is stronger than their resemblance.

PAIGE
You okay?

Kaden sets the frame on the night stand.

KADEN
Fine.

PAIGE
It's three in the morning.

Kaden nods knowingly.

PAIGE
Big day tomorrow. Try to get some sleep.

Paige gives a smile, turns out the light, and closes the door.

Kaden slips back under the covers. He admires the picture on the night stand. Somehow it's better not being in the box.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Rays of sunshine fall on seven stories of brick and glass. It's an inner city apartment building that just barely qualifies as a high rise.

An almost-empty moving truck sits against the curb.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden sits in front of a box. He opens the already-torn flaps and takes out the picture from last night, but now it has a noticeable crack up the middle of the glass.

Kaden runs his index finger over the imperfection.

PAIGE (O.S.)
Movers are done.

Paige stands in the doorway, hands behind her back.

PAIGE
Need anything?

Kaden shakes his head no and continues to unpack.

PAIGE

So before you get too committed to unpacking, I was thinking we could settle the obvious "first night, new place" dilemma.

Kaden raises a brow. Paige holds up two restaurant fliers.

PAIGE

Pizza or Chinese?

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kaden and Paige sit in front of the coffee table and eat pizza straight from the box.

THUMP!

A noise from the apartment above them. Paige makes a face, resumes eating her pizza when --

THUMP! THUMP! The sounds repeat, resembling heavy footsteps.

PAIGE

Of course your neighbors would be clog dancers.

KADEN

It's the first night.

Kaden's phone rings. The ID says DO NOT ANSWER.

Paige shoots Kaden a look. He shakes his head no, but Paige gets to it first and answers anyway.

PAIGE

(to phone)
Hey, Dad.

Kaden lowers his head. Paige observes him, disappointed.

PAIGE

(to phone)
No, he's in the bathroom. Oh, yeah, he's fine. Probably just chronic diarrhea.

Kaden shoots her a look -- *really?*

BOOM! The sounds upstairs upgrade to heavy vibrations.

PAIGE
(to phone, wrapping up)
I'll tell him you called...again.
Bye, Dad.

She hangs up.

KADEN
Why did you do that?

PAIGE
What, are you just never gonna talk
to him again? You know he lives in
the city, too.

BOOOOOM! The vibration RATTLES the windows.

PAIGE
Jesus.

Kaden and Paige crane their heads to the noise, following it around the room, settling their gaze on the chandelier in the dining area. It rocks like a cradle.

PAIGE
Call the noise complaint line.

Paige gets up. Goes to the kitchen.

KADEN
It stopped.

PAIGE
Yeah, because some Johnny Depp
wannabe just put his wife's head
through the wall. What's the
number?

Paige plucks a leasing office magnet from the fridge.

KADEN
Don't call.

PAIGE
You gotta play hardball or people
will walk all over you. Which is
literally the case here.

KADEN
If it gets that bad, I'll go up and
talk to them myself.

Paige dials.

KADEN

Paige!

PAIGE

Relax. It's anonymous.

Kaden throws his head back.

PAIGE

(to phone)

Hi! I'm in unit...

Paige looks to Kaden for an answer. When he doesn't give one, she opens the welcome packet on the counter and checks the number.

PAIGE

(to phone)

...unit six one three, and it sounds like Randy Barnes is trying for another gold medal upstairs.

KADEN

Randy Barnes?

PAIGE

The shot put guy.

She imitates the sport, poorly.

KADEN

They're not gonna know who that is!

PAIGE

He has a world record!

(to phone)

Yeah, I'm here. So can you get them to keep it down? Great, thanks.

Paige hangs up.

PAIGE

They're sending a courtesy officer.

She displays her hands proudly as if to say "you're welcome."

KADEN

That wasn't very anonymous.

PAIGE

They won't say it was you.

KADEN
They won't have to. It's called
deductive reasoning.

Paige shrugs, grabs the empty pizza box.

PAIGE
You should call Dad.

Kaden closes his eyes. Paige is full of bad ideas tonight.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lights out. Paige snores on the couch.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden sleeps soundly in bed.

A figure climbs into the bed with him, but it's too dark to see who it is. Kaden stirs.

KADEN
Cole?

COLE
Yeah, it's me.

The figure wraps his arm around Kaden's waist.

KADEN
You left.

COLE
It's okay. I'm home now.

Kaden struggles to speak.

KADEN
I -- I missed you.

COLE
I know. I'm right here.

Kaden squeezes the figure's hand and closes his eyes.

KADEN
Don't leave me, OK?

BOOM!

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kaden's eyes FLICK open. Still in bed.

He takes a calming breath and turns over. Still alone.

He looks at the rock climbing photo of himself and Cole, now out of its broken frame and taped to the headboard.

BOOM! BOOM!

A sound ECHOES. Somewhere upstairs. Kaden gets up.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT

Kaden walks through the living room. Takes a moment to fix Paige's blanket. She's out like a light.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Kaden opens his door and sticks his head out. There's a metal half-turn staircase on the right.

Kaden suddenly hears the THUMPING OF FOOTSTEPS as they come down the stairs. He quickly retreats back into his apartment.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT

Kaden closes the front door, just in time to see a COURTESY OFFICER walk past the peephole.

Kaden locks the door. He tilts his head back and follows the sound of FOOTFALLS across the upstairs apartment as they go from the living room to the back bedroom.

Then there's SILENCE.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kaden unboxes his stuff. Pictures. Books. Blu-rays.

He rakes a knife over a new box and smiles when he sees what's inside.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Kaden actively plays RalliSport Challenge on an original Xbox console. He shifts his body with the turns of his onscreen counterpart.

As his vehicle nears the finish line, Kaden releases his thumb from the accelerator button.

His vehicle slows down. Comes to a stop just before the finish line.

Kaden stares unblinking. As if waiting for something he knows is going to happen.

Then it does. Another vehicle, almost transparent in appearance, races past and wins the game.

Kaden smiles.

KADEN
Good game, babe.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - LITTLE LATER

Kaden collapses an empty cardboard box and takes it to the front door.

He opens it, jumps back when he sees a teenage boy, TREVOR, standing there with his fist in the air. Strong features. Broad shoulders. He's sixteen going on twenty-one.

TREVOR
Sorry man! I was about to knock.
I'm your neighbor. Trevor.

Trevor nervously rubs the back of his low taper fade haircut, then extends his hand. Kaden relaxes and puts the box down.

KADEN
Kaden.

They shake hands.

TREVOR
Sorry if I scared you.

KADEN
That's okay. Which unit are you in?

TREVOR
The one above you.

Kaden's face drops. *Crap.*

KADEN
Listen, about the noise complaint --

TREVOR

-- I just wanted to apologize for last night. My mom's not in the best shape right now. She had one of her seizures, and I was trying to move stuff away so she wouldn't get hurt. It probably sounded crazy to you.

KADEN

Is she okay?

TREVOR

Oh, yeah. They're not as bad as they used to be. But you can never be too safe, ya know?

Kaden nods with a small smile.

TREVOR

Is that an original Xbox!?

Trevor helps himself into the apartment. Plops down on the couch. Kaden, a little taken aback, closes the door.

KADEN

Uh, yeah. You play?

TREVOR

I used to have one but lost it in a fire. Nothing beats the originals. What's your favorite game?

KADEN

Never really thought about it. It wasn't mine.

TREVOR

You don't even realize how boss this is.

Trevor looks like a kid in a candy store. Kaden smirks.

KADEN

Well maybe when I'm all settled in, you can come down and play.

TREVOR

Really? That'd be awesome!

Trevor gives a sincere smile. He's cute. Puberty's done well for him.

TREVOR

Well I gotta head up. Sorry again
for last night. I promise we'll
keep it down.

Trevor opens the door and slips out, crosses paths with Paige
who juggles two drinks and a bag of fast food.

PAIGE

Fast food my ass!

Paige enters and throws it all on the counter.

PAIGE

Who was that?

KADEN

Randy Barnes.

Paige scrunches her face, confused. Kaden pops a fry into his
mouth and grins.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Kaden loads some things into the back of Paige's SUV.

PAIGE

When's your first day?

KADEN

Tomorrow.

PAIGE

How you getting there?

KADEN

Probably the Marta. Until I can
afford a car.

He closes the hatchback.

PAIGE

You sure you don't need me to stay
a little longer?

KADEN

I'll be fine.

They hug and don't let go.

KADEN

Thank you for everything.

Paige closes her eyes. Tries to keep it together.

PAIGE
I'm just an hour away.

KADEN
Don't remind me.

Paige gives him a loving slug to the shoulder, then gets in the vehicle. Kaden shuts her door and waves her off.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - DAY - MONTAGE

- Kaden hangs a picture on the wall.
- Kaden puts clothes in his dresser drawers.
- Kaden decorates the surface of the dresser, then attempts to plug a lamp into the outlet above it. The teeth of the plug won't fit.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - LITTLE LATER

Kaden stands in a growing line at the leasing office desk. A frazzled EMPLOYEE sits alone on the other side. She finishes with one tenant and waves Kaden forward.

KADEN
Busy today?

EMPLOYEE
Our property manager didn't show up.

She gestures to the picture of the PROPERTY MANAGER (50s) on the far wall, his name, JOHN TREYKER, typed underneath.

EMPLOYEE
What can I do for you?

KADEN
Just needed to turn in my move-in inspection.

The employee skims the inspection.

EMPLOYEE
The outlet in the bedroom doesn't work?

KADEN
It's like something's jammed in it.

EMPLOYEE

Weird. I'll get maintenance to check it out.

KADEN

Thanks.

Kaden leaves, glancing at the picture of the property manager one last time.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Kaden and a supervising nurse, MARY (40s), big-boned, navigate the colorful corridors of the pediatric wing.

MARY

You'll find we're pretty similar to Jefferson. It'll be just like riding a bike.

Mary observes Kaden, as if trying to place him.

MARY

Virgo, right?

KADEN

Yeah.

MARY

I can tell. You think a lot. I can see it in your eyes. I'm a Gemini. Know what that means?

KADEN

You notice when people think a lot?

MARY

It means I got a birthday this week. Write it down somewhere.

Kaden smiles. They stop at the receptionist's desk where Mary grabs a clipboard.

MARY

I'm gonna start you off easy. Vitals in room twelve.

Mary hands the clipboard to Kaden. He takes it with a reserved smile.

MARY

Have fun.

Kaden goes on his way.

Mary circles to the back of the desk where an attractive male nurse, SHAWN (early 30s), scruffy but well-groomed, chews on his bottom lip. He inquisitively watches Kaden.

SHAWN
Who's the new guy?

MARY
Kaden. He seems nice.

She gives Shawn a look, as if to say "unlike you."

SHAWN
I'm nice.

Mary rolls her eyes. Shawn goes back to staring.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM

Kaden enters the patient's room. Closes the door behind him and goes to wash his hands.

KADEN
Good morning, Mr. Mitchum.

TREVOR (O.S.)
Hey, neighbor.

Kaden turns. Trevor sits on the exam table.

KADEN
Hey. Trevor.

TREVOR
I didn't know you were a nurse.

KADEN
I didn't know you were my patient.

Kaden dries his hands and looks at the clipboard.

Trevor James Mitchum

b. 8/30/2002.

KADEN
You by yourself?

TREVOR
My friend's out in the car. My mom's not allowed to drive.

KADEN
How's she doing?

TREVOR
Better. She really just wants to be
alone.

Kaden gives Trevor a look over. Notices a blue Myrtle Beach
hat on his head.

KADEN
OK, Trevor, I'm gonna start by
getting your blood pressure. Can
you roll up your sleeve for me?

Not missing a beat, Trevor removes his hat, then takes his
shirt *completely off*. Chiseled pecs. Washboard abs. Not the
body Kaden was expecting to see on a sixteen-year-old.

Kaden tries not to stare. Trevor notices.

TREVOR
What?

KADEN
I just needed the sleeve.

TREVOR
I'm an over-achiever.

Kaden grabs the blood pressure cuff and wraps it around
Trevor's arm. He squeezes the bulb.

KADEN
So what grade are you in?

TREVOR
I'll be a junior. Gonna play
lacrosse this year.

KADEN
I played in high school.

TREVOR
Get outta here! What position?

KADEN
Attacker.

TREVOR
That's what I'll be!

Kaden smiles. Concentrates on the task. Trevor stares
intently at him.

TREVOR
I haven't bothered you since that
night, have I?

KADEN
Not at all.

TREVOR
I just -- nevermind.

KADEN
What?

TREVOR
I just don't want you to hate me.

KADEN
You don't have to worry about that.

Kaden smiles. Removes the cuff.

KADEN
One-thirteen over seventy.

Kaden grabs a thermometer.

KADEN
Open for me.

Trevor smoothly parts his lips, allows Kaden to place the
thermometer under his tongue. The device BEEPS.

KADEN
Ninety-nine point five.

TREVOR
I run hot.

KADEN
I guess you do.

Kaden grabs a stethoscope.

KADEN
Now I'm gonna listen to your
breathing and get your pulse.

Kaden places the stethoscope on Trevor's chest and two
fingers on his wrist.

Trevor intently watches Kaden with fluid interest.

Trevor's chest rises and falls with each breath. Kaden moves
the stethoscope to the right. Trevor FLINCHES.

KADEN
You okay?

TREVOR
It's cold.

KADEN
You run hot, remember?

Kaden puts the stethoscope away.

KADEN
And we're done. You can put your
shirt back on.

TREVOR
That was fast.

KADEN
I'm sure you don't want me taking
up what's left of your summer.

TREVOR
I don't mind.

Kaden smirks. He heads for the door and tosses Trevor's hat
back to him as he goes.

KADEN
Nice hat.

Trevor catches it and grins ear to ear.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Kaden arrives home, throws his keys on the accent table by
the front door.

His phone CHIMES. Incoming call -- DO NOT ANSWER.

Kaden denies the call. Goes to the fridge and grabs a bottle
of wine. He opens it.

His phone chirps again. VOICEMAIL. Kaden plays it. The voice
of his father, DAVID, echoes on speakerphone.

DAVID (V.O.)
Hey, son. I've been trying to reach
you for a while now. I guess I
don't need to tell you that.

Kaden pours the wine into a glass. Almost to the rim.

DAVID (V.O.)
 I know you're angry with me, and that's okay. I'm angry with me, too. But I want you to know I still love you. And I miss you. Please call me.

Kaden takes a very generous gulp.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The wine glass is almost empty.

There's a knock on the door. Kaden rises from the couch and sluggishly goes over to it. He opens the door, sobers up quickly when he sees --

TREVOR, HIS NOSE GUSHING BLOOD.

KADEN
 Trevor! What happened!?

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Kaden tends to Trevor's bloody nose.

TREVOR
 I'm sorry. I didn't want to upset my mom but didn't know where else to go. I figured since you're a nurse...

KADEN
 You're lucky. It's not broken. You said your friend did this to you?

Trevor nods, embarrassed.

KADEN
 Some friend.

TREVOR
 It's my fault.
 (struggling)
 I...I told him I liked him.

Kaden stands up.

KADEN
 I'm gonna get you a clean shirt.

Kaden heads for the bedroom. Trevor removes his blood-splattered shirt.

TREVOR

My mom said to just tell him how I feel. No harm in letting someone know you like them, right? But you can see how that went.

Kaden returns with a clean button-up.

KADEN

I think I'd be flattered to hear someone liked me.

Trevor grabs the shirt, sees the ring on Kaden's finger.

TREVOR

You married?

KADEN

No. Engaged. Was engaged.

TREVOR

Was?

Kaden wills himself to answer.

KADEN

My fiance passed away.

TREVOR

I'm sorry.

There's an uncomfortable silence.

TREVOR

How'd he die?

KADEN

I never said it was a he.

TREVOR

Oh, uh -- I saw a bunch of pictures the other day. I just assumed.

Trevor gestures to the photo frames on the bookcase, then acknowledges Kaden's stoic face.

KADEN

We were rock climbing. One of those indoor gyms, ya know?

TREVOR
What happened?

MEMORY FLASH:

Kaden's hand slips through Cole's. Cole plummets forty feet.

BACK TO PRESENT:

KADEN
His auto-belay failed.

TREVOR
I'm sorry. You don't have to talk about it.

KADEN
No, I should, actually. I know I have to move on. It's just taking that first step.

Kaden nervously laughs.

KADEN
I can't even beat him on the Xbox.

Trevor raises a brow.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Kaden and Trevor sit on the couch. Kaden plays the racing game, just as before. Trevor watches, almost as if he's taking notes.

KADEN
When you set a time record, your vehicle stays in the game. Kind of like a ghost.

TREVOR
Yeah, and it stays there until someone else beats it.

KADEN
Right. Cole holds the record. That's him right there.

Kaden points to the translucent vehicle.

KADEN
I actually can beat him, but I can't get myself to cross the finish line first.

(MORE)

KADEN (CONT'D)

Because I know if I do, he's gone forever. Just this little piece of him makes me feel a little less alone, you know?

Kaden shuts the game off. Takes his final sip of wine.

Trevor sympathetically puts his hand on Kaden's knee.

TREVOR

You're not alone, Kaden.

Trevor suddenly leans in and kisses Kaden. Kaden sits back.

KADEN

Wh--what are you doing?

TREVOR

I thought you wanted me to.

KADEN

No.

TREVOR

Are you sure about that?

Trevor makes another move. Kaden blocks him this time.

KADEN

Trevor, stop!

TREVOR

Come on, just let it happen--

Trevor tries a final time, but Kaden stands up and moves away from him. Trevor shakes his head.

TREVOR

I don't get it. What happened to being flattered someone liked you?

KADEN

I am flattered, but you're barely sixteen. I'm about to be thirty. I'm practically twice your age!

TREVOR

I'm not counting.

KADEN

I am! Look, you're a sweet kid, Trevor. Any guy or girl would be lucky to have you.

(MORE)

KADEN (CONT'D)

But even if our age gap wasn't a factor here, I'm going through the worst thing that's ever happened to me. And being with someone else right now just isn't in the cards for me.

Trevor sits thoughtfully for a moment, then stands up and grabs his bloody shirt.

TREVOR

Thanks for fixing me up.

KADEN

Trevor--

But Trevor's already out the door.

Kaden puts his hands on his hips and closes his eyes -- *WTF just happened?*

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Kaden attempts to examine a SHRIEKING four-year-old GIRL. The GIRL'S MOM tries to keep her still on the exam table.

GIRL'S MOM

(soothing)

It's okay, sweetie... he just wants to look at you, that's all...

But the girl continues to WAIL. Kaden pulls out a stuffed animal and hands it to her.

KADEN

Here, why don't you hold onto my friend Berry?

The girl snatches the bear and hurls it like a football.

Kaden and the mom exchange defeated looks.

GIRL'S MOM

I've never seen her like this.

Shawn enters the room, closes the door.

SHAWN

What's going on? I can hear her from my room.

KADEN

She doesn't like shots.

SHAWN
Is she getting one?

KADEN
No, but she won't believe me.

Shawn goes to the mother.

SHAWN
What's her name?

GIRL'S MOM
Elsa.

SHAWN
Of course.

Shawn bends down, looks the girl dead in the eye.

SHAWN
Hey. Elsa. My name's Shawn. Share
your eyes with me. Right here.

The sniveling girl takes a breath. Looks at Shawn but
continues to cry.

SHAWN
You know those shots that really
hurt?

The girl gives a slight nod.

SHAWN
The doctor only gives those shots
to girls who scream.

Shawn gestures to the door.

SHAWN
I saw him coming down the hall when
I came in. So unless you want him
to hear you and give you a shot,
I'd stop screaming.

He winks.

The tear-stricken girl goes silent. Like magic.

Shawn picks up the teddy bear and hands it to her. She takes
it in her arms without hesitation.

Kaden quickly embraces the opportunity and continues the
examination. The girl's mom collapses into a chair and takes
a relieved, long overdue breath.

INT. HOSPITAL - LITTLE LATER

Shawn stands at the receptionist's desk filling out paperwork. Kaden joins him.

KADEN

Thank you.

Shawn just smiles.

KADEN

I really didn't know what to do. I guess I'm still getting on my feet.

SHAWN

No big deal.

KADEN

It was for me. I owe you one.

SHAWN

In that case...

Shawn grabs a flier from a stack on the desk and hands it to Kaden -- *GWINNETT COUNTY CARNIVAL! THIS WEEKEND ONLY!*

SHAWN

...I like funnel cakes.

Shawn smiles and walks off.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Kaden exits his apartment. Closes the door.

Trevor and his friend, STERLING (16), long hair, skater boy type, descend the stairs from the next floor up.

Kaden and Trevor catch each other's gaze.

TREVOR

(to Sterling)

I'll meet you downstairs.

STERLING

Whatever.

Sterling continues on. Trevor steps closer to Kaden.

KADEN

I see you and your friend made up. What's his name?

TREVOR
Sterling. Listen, Kaden, I'm really embarrassed about what happened the other night. I don't want what I did to change the way you feel about me.

Kaden readies his key.

TREVOR
The truth is... I thought maybe I had a chance with you. Pretty stupid, huh?

Trevor lowers his head. Humiliated. Kaden stays silent.

TREVOR
I'd like it if we could be friends.

Trevor waits for Kaden to say something. He doesn't.

TREVOR
Can we be friends?

It takes a second, but Kaden nods.

KADEN
Friends.

Trevor reluctantly turns for the stairs.

TREVOR
I guess I'll see you around.

Kaden locks the door.

EXT. CARNIVAL - NIGHT

Kaden and Shawn navigate the fairgrounds and share a funnel cake.

SHAWN
When's the last time you had one of these?

KADEN
Probably when Facebook still required a college email.

SHAWN
Did they have funnel cakes back then?

Shawn smiles coyly.

SHAWN

I have to say you impressed me.

KADEN

How's that?

SHAWN

Well, don't get too upset, but Mary told me a little bit about what you went through before coming here. I guess I didn't think you'd show up.

They walk past a rock climbing wall where a couple of PRE-TEENS race to the top. Kaden looks down, pained, then hands the funnel cake to Shawn.

KADEN

Here. You can finish it.

SHAWN

Not hungry?

Kaden shakes his head.

KADEN

Is there a restroom?

Shawn points. Kaden excuses himself.

INT. CARNIVAL RESTROOM

Kaden stands in the last stall. He leans over the toilet like he's about to hurl.

KADEN

(sotto)

You're okay...

OUTSIDE THE STALL

A hand presses against the door. Feeling it.

INSIDE THE STALL

Kaden shuts his eyes. Fights the nausea. Finally overcomes it and opens the door to reveal --

An empty bathroom.

EXT. CARNIVAL

Kaden comes out of the restroom and joins Shawn.

KADEN
So what's next?

SHAWN
That depends. You scared of heights?

Shawn gestures to the brightly lit ferris wheel. They make their way there.

Neither of them see Trevor standing in the shadows, watching them with a fire in his belly.

INT. FERRIS WHEEL CAB - LITTLE LATER

Kaden and Shawn sit across from each other, mid-conversation. Kaden appears a little uncomfortable this high up.

SHAWN
It took me a while to figure things out, but once I did, I didn't know why I had waited so long. It was the best choice I ever made.

Kaden keeps his focus on the cab's floor.

SHAWN
What about you? How did your family take it?

KADEN
My mom and sister were always cool.

SHAWN
And your dad? Is he still around?

KADEN
He's around. And he always seemed okay with it until...

Kaden takes a second. Fights through the pain.

KADEN
...until Cole died. My dad didn't come to the funeral.

Shawn's eyes soften.

SHAWN
Did he say why?

KADEN
I haven't spoken to him in six months. He texts and calls, but I don't need an explanation. I already know.

The cab reaches the top of the wheel and stops.

KADEN
I don't like to talk about this. I feel guilty just being here.

SHAWN
Here with me?

KADEN
Here without him.

Kaden finally takes his eyes off the floor and looks out of the cab.

KADEN
It should've been me.

EXT. CARNIVAL - MOMENTS LATER

Trevor observes Kaden and Shawn from the base of the ferris wheel, his eyes green with envy.

Trevor stalks to the game booths. Slams a few bills down on the SHOOTING GALLERY counter. The GAME ATTENDANT hands him the disc gun.

A polite MOTHER and her five-year-old SON approach Trevor.

MOTHER
Excuse me. My son was next.

The kid smiles at him. Trevor stares daggers.

TREVOR
So?

MOTHER
So maybe you can let him have his turn. It'll only take a second.

The mother nods encouragingly.

Trevor grins and bends down to the son's level. He holds the disc gun out in front of him, barrel facing the child, finger on the trigger. He glares with cold, menacing eyes.

TREVOR

Go ahead. Take it from me.

Trevor's voice is fucking terrifying. The son shrinks back to his mother's leg, scared out of his mind.

TREVOR

Then get the fuck out of here.

Trevor rises. The mother stares at him in disgust.

MOTHER

What is wrong with you?

TREVOR

Not my fault your kid's a pussy.

The mother's had enough. She shields her child's ears and leads him away.

Trevor turns his gaze to the shooting gallery targets. His eyes narrow as he raises the disc gun.

BANG! A direct hit. A target FALLS.

BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!

Four more shots. Four precise hits.

Trevor aims for the final target. Stares at it like it's something -- or someone -- else.

BANG!

The last target falls off the shelf and SHATTERS.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Shawn's car pulls up to the curb.

INT. SHAWN'S CAR

Shawn shuts off the engine. They both unclick their seat belts.

SHAWN

Want me to walk you up?

Kaden gives a small laugh.

SHAWN
That was a line, wasn't it?

Kaden nods. Shawn smirks.

KADEN
Thanks for driving.

SHAWN
I had a really good time.

Kaden opens his door.

KADEN
See you at work, Shawn.

Kaden leaves. Shawn can't get rid of the smile on his face.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kaden goes to his apartment. Sees a BLUE TEDDY BEAR sitting upright against his door. He picks it up.

TREVOR (O.S.)
I won that for you.

Kaden turns, startled to see Trevor sitting on the stairs.

KADEN
Hey. Trevor.

TREVOR
Have fun? It looked like you did.
Your friend, too.

KADEN
That was somebody from work.

Trevor stands up and takes a step forward.

TREVOR
I thought you were going through
the worst thing that's ever
happened to you. I thought being
with someone wasn't in the cards
for you.

KADEN
Did -- did you follow me?

TREVOR

Maybe that was all just an excuse to avoid me. Maybe what you really meant was I'm not in the cards.

Trevor steps so close, his lips are practically touching Kaden's ear.

TREVOR

But I know that's not true. I've seen the way you look at me. Ever since I sat on that table. Your eyes taking in every inch of my body. Your hands on my skin. You got scared feeling the way you did, and that's why you said those things about wanting to be alone. You tried to resist the impulse to do more with me because of your fear. You're resisting right now, aren't you?

Kaden stands speechless, totally blind-sided. He swallows the lump in his throat.

TREVOR

You can deny it. Say you want to be alone. But nothing you say will convince me. Because the fact is, you still haven't opened that door.

Trevor smiles.

TREVOR

It's unlocked.

Trevor leaves. Kaden is too stunned to move.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kaden lies in bed. He stares wide-eyed at the ceiling. Listens intently for a noise from the upstairs apartment, but it's QUIET.

Kaden turns over. Looks at the blue stuffed bear sitting on the dresser. It's almost creepy the way it stares back.

Kaden reaches out and knocks the bear to the floor. He rolls onto his side and closes his eyes.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Kaden sleeps.

The bedroom door slowly opens. A dark shadow spills over the floor.

The silhouette of a figure enters the room and climbs into the bed. Kaden stirs.

KADEN

Cole?

Kaden's about to turn over when the figure puts its arm around Kaden's waist, its hand reaching under the sheets and into the band of Kaden's boxer briefs.

KADEN

Cole...

The figure SHUSHES him.

Kaden wets his lips. Squeezes his eyes a little tighter.

There's movement under the sheets. Slow but rhythmic strokes.

Kaden doesn't fight it. He parts his lips, his short breaths coinciding with each hidden movement of the figure's hand.

Kaden grips the pillow. He bites his lip. Tilts his head back. A feeling he hasn't experienced in a long time.

The strokes come faster. So do Kaden's breaths.

Kaden inhales a final gulp of air, just as the figure's face finally comes into the light --

IT'S TREVOR.

Kaden BOLTS UP. Sweat dripping. Chest rising and falling as he tries to see into the pitch dark. He flicks on a lamp.

The bed, and the room, are empty.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - THE NEXT DAY

Kaden's father, DAVID, early 60s, stands at the leasing office desk with the frazzled employee, who seems to have calmed down a bit since the last time we saw her.

DAVID

Look, my daughter told me he moved here. She just didn't give me the apartment number.

EMPLOYEE

I'm sorry, sir, it's against policy to disclose that information without the resident's consent.

The employee opens a binder containing tenant information.

EMPLOYEE

If you'd like, I can call to have him meet you in the lobby.

DAVID

(under his breath)
But he'll never meet me.

David looks defeated. The employee smiles sympathetically.

EMPLOYEE

Why don't I just leave a message for him? What did you say your name was?

DAVID

That's okay.

David pats the desk and makes his way to the exit.

Trevor sits on one of the lobby sofas, observing the entire scene with quiet complacency. He watches David leave, then turns his attention to the binder on the desk.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Kaden's phone RINGS. He rolls over in bed, half-asleep, and checks the call through squinted eyes. An unsaved number. He taps the green button.

KADEN

(to phone; groggy)
Hello?

TREVOR (V.O.)

(from phone)
Hey handsome.

KADEN

Trevor?

TREVOR (V.O.)

I was thinking about taking you up
on your offer. You down for some
Xbox?

Kaden sighs. Rubs the bridge of his nose.

KADEN

How did you get my number?

TREVOR (V.O.)

Come on. You're settled in. We both
saw that last night. Whattaya say?

KADEN

Don't call me again.

Kaden hangs up.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Kaden showers. His phone CHIRPS on the sink. Kaden reaches
out from behind the curtain and grabs it. Checks the message.

I can hear u in the shower

A second text follows:

want some company?

Kaden's about to put the phone down when a final message
appears. Kaden opens the attachment.

It's a mirror selfie of Trevor wearing only a towel, the
outline of his dick showing through the fabric.

INT. MARTA STATION (NORTH SPRINGS) - DAY

Kaden, in his scrubs, waits with a dozen people for the red
line. There's a present in his hands.

He looks over at a MISSING PERSON flier taped to a column.
It's a photo of John Treyker, the property manager.

The train enters the station and opens its doors. The crowd
steps forward and enters quickly, including Kaden.

INT. MARTA TRAIN

Kaden sits near the front of the train. As it begins its journey, Kaden looks back, sees Trevor taking a seat near the rear of the train.

Kaden turns back around and sinks into his seat. He buries his face into the gift.

INT. MARTA STATION (MEDICAL CENTER) - LITTLE LATER

The red line pulls into the station.

INT. MARTA TRAIN

Kaden and a few passengers stand up as the train comes to a stop. Kaden quickly bum-rushes to the front and leaves first.

Trevor casually follows behind him.

EXT. CITY - DAY

Kaden walks down the street. Senses Trevor a few paces behind. Kaden keeps a good thirty-foot distance between them when Trevor suddenly veers off down another path.

Kaden takes a relieved breath and continues on.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER

Kaden drops the wrapped present on the receptionist's desk.

KADEN
Happy birthday.

Behind the desk, an all-smiling Mary screams with joy and takes the present.

MARY
Do I open it now or at dinner
tonight?

Kaden stares blankly.

MARY
Don't tell me you're not coming.

KADEN
I'm just not sure yet.

MARY

Well use your God-given sense of reasoning and make sure!

KADEN

Mary--

MARY

Shawn will be there! I can have him pick you up.

Kaden glares. Mary shrugs, hands a file to Kaden.

MARY

Here. There's a patient in room six.

KADEN

Another screaming toddler?

MARY

It's a walk-in. They requested you.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM

Kaden enters. Trevor sits on the exam table.

TREVOR

Hey, neighbor.

KADEN

What are you doing here?

TREVOR

I've had a headache all morning. Probably because this guy wouldn't text me back.

Trevor stares accusingly. Kaden shuts the door.

TREVOR

Closed door. I like where this is going.

KADEN

I told you not to message me.

TREVOR

No, you said not to call you.

KADEN

You had no right contacting me at all. You could get me into a lot of trouble.

TREVOR

Only if somebody found out. I can keep a secret if you can.

KADEN

There are no secrets to keep.

TREVOR

Not yet.

KADEN

Not ever! And you can't show up like this just to see me. This is my job.

TREVOR

I told you I had a headache.

They stare at each other. An intense silence.

Trevor grabs the blood pressure cuff, holds it out for Kaden to grab.

TREVOR

You don't mind, right?

Kaden opens his mouth to say something, but then closes it and begrudgingly takes the cuff from Trevor. Kaden opens the door and then secures the cuff to Trevor's arm.

TREVOR

Don't you want me to roll up my sleeve?

Kaden ignores him and rapidly squeezes the bulb. The cuff TIGHTENS. Maybe too tight. Trevor FLINCHES.

Kaden rips off the cuff and throws it on the counter. He grabs the thermometer.

Trevor smoothly parts his lips. Kaden shoves the thermometer in. Trevor nearly gags.

Kaden removes the BEEPING thermometer and grabs the stethoscope.

TREVOR

Are you this rough with all of your second visits?

Kaden puts the stethoscope in his ears.

TREVOR

I think I know what's bothering you. You're upset about the Xbox thing.

Kaden stops dead in his tracks.

TREVOR

I figured you wouldn't mind since you said I could come down and play it. I mean, you didn't exactly say no when I asked.

KADEN

You were in my apartment?

TREVOR

I told Sterling not to reset the game but he wouldn't listen.

Kaden slowly backs away, his face turning white.

TREVOR

But maybe it'll be a good thing for you, Kaden. Maybe it'll help you move on to something better.

Kaden doesn't stick around to give Trevor a reaction. He simply walks out.

INT. HOSPITAL

Kaden goes to the receptionist's desk. Drops Trevor's file in front of Mary.

KADEN

Mary, if this patient comes in again, have someone else deal with him.

MARY

Only if you say you're coming to dinner.

KADEN

Done.

Kaden turns to leave.

MARY

Is everything okay?

He doesn't hear her. Mary watches him go, concern slowly creeping in.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Kaden plays the racing game on the Xbox.

His vehicle reaches the end of the course. Kaden lets off the accelerator. Waits at the finish line. And waits.

But Cole's vehicle never appears.

Panic sets in. Kaden's pained eyes dart from one side of the screen to the other, but his ghost isn't there.

Kaden's face drops. Hopeless and empty. He bursts into tears.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden lies in bed. Eyes red and heavy, his hand holding his phone on the empty bed space where Cole should be.

On his phone, Kaden scrolls through Cole's Facebook profile pictures. He stops on one of the two of them together.

KNOCK KNOCK

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT

Kaden goes to the front door. Reaches for the knob. He hesitates, then looks up at the ceiling. No noise from above.

The knocks on the door come again. Louder. Harder.

Kaden closes his eyes, musters an encouraging breath, and opens the door.

It's Shawn.

SHAWN

Hey!

KADEN

Shawn. What are you doing here?

SHAWN

Matchmaker Mary insisted I pick you up. You ready?

Kaden stares like a deer in headlights.

SHAWN
Dinner? Mary's birthday?

KADEN
Oh. Right.

Kaden grabs his keys and lets himself out.

SHAWN
I'll take that as a yes.

Shawn follows. The door closes. Our focus drifts to Kaden's phone still on the bed, the picture of Kaden and Cole staring back at us.

INT. SHAWN'S CAR - LATER

Kaden stares vacantly out the window. Shawn observes.

SHAWN
I heard you left in a hurry.

Kaden doesn't respond. Shawn drops the question.

SHAWN
I gotta make a stop really quick.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Shawn's car pulls into the driveway of a Craftsman home.

Shawn exits the vehicle and goes into the house.

INT/EXT. SHAWN'S CAR

Kaden sits alone. Looks out the window. Sees a FATHER and TEENAGE SON playing basketball under a flood light in the next driveway.

Kaden looks back at the house. Shawn walks out carrying a child's car seat. A bouncy four-year-old boy, DILLON, follows after him.

Shawn sets the car seat down, gives the kid a warm hug when --

BAM! A rogue basketball SMACKS into Kaden's window, scares the crap out of him.

The father retrieves the ball and gives an apologetic wave.

Shawn ushers Dillon back inside, sets the car seat into the back of his vehicle, and returns to the driver's seat.

SHAWN
Sorry about that.

KADEN
Was that your nephew?

SHAWN
No. My son. I forgot I have to pick him up from day care tomorrow.

Kaden stares, dumbfounded.

SHAWN
I told you it took me a while to figure things out.

Kaden smiles, looks at Shawn in a way he hasn't before.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - MONTAGE

- Kaden and Shawn sit together at Mary's table.
- Mary opens a gift. Howls with laughter. It's an adult coloring book for women reaching menopause.
- Smiles and laughter go around.
- Under the table, Shawn gently puts his hand on Kaden's knee. Kaden doesn't move it away.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Shawn's car sits out front, headlights on.

INT. SHAWN'S CAR

Kaden undoes his seatbelt. Shawn keeps his on.

SHAWN
I won't ask to walk you up this time. Scout's honor.

Kaden flashes a smile that quickly disappears when he sees Trevor and Sterling walk past the passenger window. Trevor acknowledges them with a grin.

KADEN
Will you walk me up?

Shawn gleams.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Kaden and Shawn come up the stairs. They stop when they see David standing in front of Kaden's door. He turns to them.

DAVID

Kaden.

Kaden ushers Shawn to the door.

KADEN

I'll meet you inside.

Shawn goes into the apartment.

DAVID

It's good to see you, son.

KADEN

What are you doing here?

DAVID

You texted me.

David pulls out his phone. Turns the screen over.

DAVID

You know I wouldn't just show up.

KADEN

No. You wouldn't.

Kaden's cold stare could peel flesh.

DAVID

There's a reason I did what I did, Kaden. It doesn't make it right, but maybe it will help you understand --

KADEN

Understand what? Why my father wasn't there for me when I really needed him?

Kaden opens the door.

DAVID

Kaden, I struggled with this for a long time but I think it's important you know the truth.

KADEN

The truth is that Cole wasn't the only person I lost that day.

David lowers his head.

KADEN

I've made my peace with it. You should, too.

Kaden enters his apartment and slams the door.

David stands alone. Despondent. Beaten.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Shawn sits on the couch. Kaden begins searching the apartment for something.

SHAWN

Was that your dad?

Kaden doesn't answer and continues his search.

SHAWN

What are you looking for?

KADEN

My phone.

SHAWN

Want me to call it?

Shawn pulls out his phone. Taps the screen. They wait.

When the ring finally comes, both boys look at each other in disbelief and then crane their heads to the ceiling.

The ringing is coming from the small AIR VENT at the top of the wall... from the apartment above them.

SHAWN

You don't happen to rent more than one apartment, do you?

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Shawn follows Kaden out of the apartment and up the stairs.

KADEN

Remember those guys when we pulled up? The one in the blue hat?

SHAWN

Why would he take your phone?

They reach the top of the landing. Kaden knocks on the door, but there's no answer.

Kaden checks the doorknob. Unlocked.

SHAWN

Whoa, you can't go in there.

KADEN

Keep calling it until I answer.

Kaden enters. Shawn rolls his eyes in defeat and hits redial.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT

Kaden quietly shuts the door. Locks it. He looks around. It's dark except for the single table lamp next to the sofa.

The RINGING continues. More prominent than before. Coming from the end of the hall.

Kaden follows the sound. Steps carefully. The floors CREAK beneath his weight.

The ringing STOPS. Kaden freezes. Did someone answer it?

An uncomfortable moment of stillness when --

The RINGING comes again. Kaden follows the sound to the bluish glow emanating from the last room.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - SAME

Trevor and Sterling walk in from outside. Trevor holds the door for a visibly upset David, who keeps his head down as he exits. Trevor watches him with a self-assured sneer.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Shawn paces in front of the door, phone to ear. He looks over the banister rail.

Trevor and Sterling come up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden slowly pushes on the half-closed door. The only light in the room comes from the phone RINGING on the bed.

Kaden goes over to the phone. Snatches it up and answers.

KADEN
(to phone)
Hey, I got it.

SHAWN (V.O.)
(from phone; hushed)
Kaden, they're coming back!

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Shawn runs down the stairs.

SHAWN
(hushed; to phone)
Get out of there, now!

Shawn slips into Kaden's apartment, just as Trevor and Sterling step up to the next landing.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden shoves the phone in his pocket. Half-walks/half-runs to the door and closes it the way it was before.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT

Kaden silently creeps to the living room. Pauses when he sees a framed picture on the wall, the glass cracked so severely, you can't even see the photo behind it.

CLICK! The dead-bolt turns on the front door.

Kaden GASPS, quietly rushes back into the bedroom.

The front door opens. Trevor and Sterling step inside.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden looks for a place to hide. Settles on the closet with the sliding door. He carefully steps in and closes the door, leaving a small slit to allow him to see into the bedroom.

Trevor and Sterling come into the room. Sterling drops a book bag to the floor with a heavy THUD.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT

Shawn hears the THUD from upstairs. He looks around, contemplating. His eyes settle on the smoke detector.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Sterling goes through the book bag. Removes a pair of lacrosse gloves.

Trevor surveys the bed.

TREVOR
Is my phone in that bag?

Sterling checks the bag.

STERLING
No. I thought you left it here.

TREVOR
Let me call it.

Trevor grabs Sterling's iPhone from him.

IN THE CLOSET

Kaden's eyes bulge. He quickly pulls out his phone to silence it.

IN THE BEDROOM

Sterling and Trevor listen for a ring. It never comes.

STERLING
Must be on silent.

Trevor tightens his eyes. Like he knows something's up.

Trevor starts to look around. Behind furniture. Under the bed. Then his gaze drifts to the closet door. He makes his way there.

IN THE CLOSET

Kaden slumps against the back wall. Trevor's silhouette blocks the bedroom light as his fingers curl around the edge of the door.

BEEEEEEEEEP!!! BEEEEEEEEEP!!!

IN THE BEDROOM

Trevor and Sterling spin around and cover their ears.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Shawn stands next to the stairs, his hand clasped to the PULLED FIRE ALARM.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Dozens of residents, most in their night clothes, make their way out the front doors and across the street.

A fire truck pulls up to the curb.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Trevor and Sterling leave the room.

After a moment, Kaden carefully slides the closet door open. He's about to step out when he sees something on the floor.

It's a name pin that says: "JOHN TREYKER - PROPERTY MANAGER."

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

The last of the tenants migrate to the sidewalk. Among them is Kaden, who joins Shawn under a streetlight.

They look at the firefighters entering the building, then Shawn looks at Kaden with an apologetic smile.

INT. BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kaden and Shawn sit together. A WAITRESS sets two drinks in front of them.

SHAWN
I didn't know what to do. I
panicked.

KADEN
I'm not mad at you.

Shawn takes a drink.

SHAWN
So this kid...

KADEN
Trevor.

SHAWN
So Trevor snuck in and stole your
phone. Maybe he was trying to sell
it.

Kaden shakes his head, unconvinced.

SHAWN
Then what was he doing?

Kaden silently stirs his drink and doesn't answer.

SHAWN
You're not telling me something.

KADEN
That was my dad outside the
apartment earlier. First time I've
seen him in --

SHAWN
-- Six months. You told me.

KADEN
Right. I told you.

Kaden leans in.

KADEN
I never told that to Trevor. So how
did he find out we weren't
speaking?

SHAWN
You think he messaged your dad?

KADEN
I know he did. Because this isn't
the first thing he's done to me.

SHAWN

What do you mean?

Kaden licks his lips. Chooses his words carefully.

KADEN

Last week, Trevor made a move on me, and I shot him down. And ever since, he's been doing these things trying to provoke me.

SHAWN

What kind of things?

KADEN

Calling me. Sending me messages. Showing up where he's not wanted. And tonight wasn't the first time he's come into my apartment when I wasn't there.

SHAWN

How is he getting in?

KADEN

I don't know.

Kaden slumps back. Mentally drained.

KADEN

What do I do, Shawn?

SHAWN

Well, for one thing, I'd get the locks changed.

KADEN

And?

SHAWN

I don't know what to tell you. I mean, if you feel like this kid is deliberately interrupting your life, go to the police and get a restraining order.

KADEN

Against a sixteen-year-old?

SHAWN

It's not unheard of.

Shawn leans in.

SHAWN

When I was in first grade, I didn't share a fruit roll-up with this kid in my class, and he stabbed himself in the hand with a pencil and said I did it to him. Six or sixteen, some people do crazy shit like that no matter how old they are.

Kaden's eyes widen, a realization sinking in.

KADEN

(hushed)

Or they give themselves a bloody nose.

Shawn picks up his drink -- *or that*.

KADEN

So a restraining order. That would be your next move?

SHAWN

If I thought I was in danger. Do you feel like you're in danger?

Kaden shakes his head, unsure.

SHAWN

Maybe there's somebody else who could put a stop to it. Somebody besides the police.

KADEN

Who'd you have in mind?

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

Kaden stares out his living room window, the sound of a POWER DRILL just out of sight.

Through the window, six stories below, Trevor leaves the apartment building and continues down the sidewalk.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Kaden walks out of his apartment where a LOCKSMITH changes his front door locks.

KADEN

I'm stepping out for a sec.

The locksmith nods.

Kaden heads upstairs to Trevor's door. He knocks, then nervously picks at his thumbnail as he waits for an answer. When there isn't one, he knocks again.

No response. Kaden turns to leave.

The door suddenly opens to a woman with flowing auburn hair, her cheeks and nose glittered with freckles. This is HELEN (40s), the southern Georgia-bell type.

KADEN

Uh, hi. I live downstairs. My name's --

HELEN

-- Kaden! Oh yes, Trevor's told me all about you.

KADEN

Yeah, I bet. Can we talk?

INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT

Helen welcomes Kaden inside. She immediately goes to the window and opens the curtains to let some light in.

HELEN

Sorry. I keep the drapes closed to keep the cool in. Gotta love that Georgia sun. Have a seat.

Kaden sits on the couch next to the window.

HELEN

Can I get you anything? Coke?

KADEN

I can only stay a minute.

Helen grabs a Coke for herself and sits in a chair across from Kaden.

HELEN

I'm Helen. *Mom*. I have to apologize for not introducing myself sooner. It's been an...*interesting* week.

KADEN

That's okay. Trevor told me you weren't feeling well.

HELEN

Oh, no. We just got back into town.
My sister remarried. Total
Bridezilla. I think I'd rather be
sick in bed, honestly.

KADEN

Trevor said you were having
seizures.

HELEN

No. Not that I can recall.

Helen smiles uncomfortably.

HELEN

Teenage boys. They say the damndest
things. So I hear you're a nurse?

KADEN

Yes. I actually fixed up Trevor's
nose the other day.

(off Helen's blank stare)

After his friend punched him? He
must've told you about it.

HELEN

He didn't say anything to me. Gosh,
kids can be so cruel, can't they?

Kaden's eyes dance, calculating. Helen seems unphased.

KADEN

Helen, I actually came up here to
talk about your son.

Helen perks up.

HELEN

What about him?

KADEN

I don't want to alarm you, but he
came into my apartment when I
wasn't home. Without my permission.

HELEN

Did he take something? I can
replace whatever it is --

KADEN

-- No, that's not necessary. But
he's actually done it twice now.

(MORE)

KADEN (CONT'D)

I just wanted to know if this sort of behavior was typical of him.

Helen shifts her weight. Fakes a smile.

HELEN

He's a good kid. He really is. Smart. Loving. But ever since his father and I started having problems...

Helen's gaze goes to the window and stays there.

HELEN

I think that's why he's been acting out. He even made a scene at the wedding. Sometimes I try to cover for him because I feel partly responsible. I just wish I knew what to do.

Helen's eyes go back to Kaden.

HELEN

But what I can do is have a talk with him and keep a closer eye.

KADEN

I appreciate that, Helen.

Kaden rises and heads for the door. Helen follows when Kaden abruptly turns around.

KADEN

When did you say you got back from the wedding?

HELEN

Um, three days ago, I think?

KADEN

I thought I heard someone up here last Saturday.

HELEN

That was probably John.

KADEN

The property manager?

HELEN

Mmhmm. He comes by to feed our fish whenever we go out of town. Sweetest man.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

We were so sad to hear about what happened. I'm hoping for the best.

Kaden opens the door.

KADEN

Thanks again for talking with me.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Kaden walks down the steps to his apartment. Finds Trevor sitting on the bottom step. Kaden hesitates to descend, but gathers the strength to continue past him.

The locksmith gathers his things and hands a set of keys to Kaden.

LOCKSMITH

You're all set.

The locksmith leaves. Trevor stands and approaches Kaden.

TREVOR

What were you doing up there?

Kaden ignores him. Tries the key in the lock.

TREVOR

I told you my mom wanted to be alone.

Kaden faces Trevor.

KADEN

You also told me she was having seizures.

TREVOR

She was.

Kaden shakes his head in disbelief. Tries the key again.

TREVOR

She's just too embarrassed to tell you the truth. Wouldn't you be?

Kaden drops the keys. Trevor observes him.

TREVOR

Did I do something?

KADEN

Besides erase Cole from my game?

TREVOR

I told you, that was Sterling.

KADEN

Then how about breaking into my apartment? Stealing my phone? Or texting my dad and telling him where I lived?

TREVOR

I was doing you a favor. Is it really so bad I tried to get you guys talking again?

KADEN

I don't even know how you found out about it, but if I don't want somebody in my life, I don't include them. I'm surprised you haven't figured that out yet.

TREVOR

Don't act like you don't want me in your life.

KADEN

I'm not acting.

Kaden opens the door and steps into his apartment.

TREVOR

You can't avoid me, Kaden.

Kaden slams the door. Leaves Trevor FUMING.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOCKER ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Kaden sits on a wooden bench, on his phone.

KADEN

(to phone)

I filed a noise complaint last week. I was wondering if you could tell me the name of the officer who responded to my call. I just have a few questions.

Shawn enters. Opens his locker.

KADE

(to phone)

Michael Peldon? When can I expect to hear from him? OK, thanks.

Kaden puts his phone away.

SHAWN
You're still here?

KADEN
Just...didn't want to go home.

Shawn grabs his keys and closes the locker.

KADEN
You leaving?

SHAWN
Early day. Gotta pick up the kid,
remember?

KADEN
Oh. Right.

SHAWN
Wanna come?

INT. SHAWN'S CAR - LITTLE LATER

Shawn drives. Kaden rides passenger.

SHAWN
So you think they're both lying.

KADEN
Neither of their stories checks
out. If they never left town, then
his mom was actually home the night
of the noise complaint and she did
have a seizure. But she said they
didn't get back till three days
ago, so I wouldn't have been able
to meet Trevor the next morning.

SHAWN
Maybe he has a twin. Like some "Man
in the Iron Mask" cover-up.

KADEN
Either Trevor came back before his
mom said he did, or he never went
with her in the first place.

SHAWN
But why would she lie?

KADEN
She said it herself. She protects
him.

Kaden produces the property manager's name tag.

KADEN
I found this in Trevor's closet.

SHAWN
(reading)
John Treyker.

KADEN
Helen said this guy would come in
and feed their fish whenever they
went away.

SHAWN
So there ya go. Find this guy and
talk to him. He'll clear up any
confusion.

KADEN
He's missing, Shawn.

Shawn can only stare, incredulous.

SHAWN
This is getting a little too real.

INT. DAY CARE - LITTLE LATER

Shawn leads Kaden into the day care lobby. Shawn signs on a clipboard as the owner leads Dillon out to them.

DILLON
Daddy!

SHAWN
Hey buddy!

Dillon jumps into Shawn's arms for a hug. They spin around. Shawn's eyes settle on Kaden. He puts the kid down.

SHAWN
Dillon, I want you to meet someone.
This is Kaden. He's gonna have
dinner with us.

Dillon extends his hand. A natural gentleman. Kaden shakes it.

KADEN
Nice to meet you, Dillon.

DILLON
Do you have any games on your
phone?

Kaden and Shawn exchange grins.

INT. SHAWN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kaden and Dillon sit on the couch together. Dillon plays the latest Angry Birds game on Kaden's phone when he begins to nod off.

Kaden takes the phone before it slips from his fingers. He grabs a throw blanket and drapes it over Dillon.

Shawn observes this gesture from the doorway, a wine glass in his hand.

SHAWN
He likes you.

KADEN
He likes my phone.

SHAWN
No. It's you.

Shawn sits next to Kaden on the couch. Offers him the wine.

KADEN
That's okay.

Shawn keeps it for himself. Motions to Dillon.

SHAWN
Did you and Cole want kids?

KADEN
I don't know. We both worked with
them so it seemed inevitable.

SHAWN
What did he do?

KADEN
Personal training, but he did some
substitute teaching on the side.
(under his breath)
Among other things.

Shawn narrows his eyes. Kaden takes a deep breath.

KADEN

A couple months before the accident, I noticed him acting really weird. Like his mind was always somewhere else. And when I looked at his phone, I found texts from this guy.

SHAWN

Kaden, you don't have to --

KADEN

-- His name was Simon. I didn't know him. I still don't. But when I asked Cole about him, he told me it was one time, and he didn't initiate it. And all I could think was, if it was only one time, why would he keep his number saved?

Kaden shifts uncomfortably. He eyes the wine glass.

KADEN

I've never told anyone this. I guess after Cole died, I didn't want to change anyone's perception of who they thought he was. Maybe that's why I'm telling you, since you didn't know him.

Shawn is speechless. He offers Kaden the wine, and Kaden takes it this time.

KADEN

I hated what he did. But I never stopped loving him.

Kaden takes a swig from the glass, then looks down at Dillon. Knocked out, dreaming innocent dreams.

KADEN

Probably should've kept him up.

SHAWN

Yeah. It's gonna be a bitch getting him in the car to take you home.

Kaden opens his mouth to speak. Hesitates. Then finally:

KADEN

What if I stayed here?

Shawn can't believe his ears, but smiles just the same.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

David sits at his computer. He finishes typing an email, moves the mouse up to the contact line, then jerks his head to a **THUD** coming from the end of the hall.

David stands up. Walks into the hall and leans over the bannister rail.

No movement from below.

David listens, allows a moment for the sound to repeat, but it never comes.

David returns to the office. Sits down. He types KADEN into the contact bar.

WHAM!

A lacrosse stick cuts through the air, catching David at the back of the head and knocking him to the floor.

David looks up, one hand raised in defense as he attempts to crawl away from the unseen assailant.

WHAM! WHAM!

The stick comes down hard and fast. Hitting David in the shoulder. The cheek. His wrist.

David continues to crawl away. He makes it to the hallway, stopping a foot short of the top of the landing when --

A devastating final blow catches David under his chin, knocks him over the threshold, and sends him tumbling down sixteen wooden steps. He lies unmoving at the base of the stairs.

INT. SHAWN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kaden sits on the queen-sized bed. He looks at it like it's some foreign object.

Shawn enters.

SHAWN

Sorry. He woke up and wanted a story.

Kaden looks around, taking it all in.

SHAWN

Listen, if you want, you can have the bed and I can sleep on the couch.

KADEN

It's your bed.

SHAWN

I just want you to be comfortable.

BANG! A sound, like a door being kicked open.

SHAWN

The hell was that?

The guys cautiously go together to investigate.

INT. SHAWN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kaden and Shawn enter. The front door is wide open.

SHAWN

Stay here.

Shawn grabs a fireplace poker.

EXT. FRONT PORCH

Somewhere, a dog BARKS.

Shawn flicks on the porch light. He steps out with the poker, looking vehemently in all directions.

INT. SHAWN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Kaden stands frozen in silence. Trying to see out but not moving a muscle.

THUMP! A new sound, coming from the end of the hall. Kaden looks at the open front door.

KADEN

Shawn?

No response from outside.

Kaden slowly heads down the hall.

EXT. SHAWN'S HOUSE

Shawn rounds the side of the house. Comes to a lacrosse stick lying in the grass. It's been cracked in half.

INT. SHAWN'S HOUSE - DILLON'S ROOM

Kaden steps in. Walks past the small TV on the dresser, the only source of light in the room.

Dillon's fast asleep. Kaden goes over to him. Fixes his blanket.

Kaden turns to leave when he sees a familiar BLUE TEDDY BEAR snuggled in Dillon's arms.

Kaden stumbles back, his gaze drifting to the glowing TV...

...to the home video of Kaden asleep in bed.

ON THE TV:

A shadow casts over the bed. Hangs over Kaden's sleeping body for a moment when --

TREVOR

steps into frame and looks directly at the camera. Then he pulls the bed covers back and disappears under the sheets with Kaden.

BACK TO SCENE:

Kaden watches with wide, horrified eyes.

SHAWN (O.S.)

Kaden?

Kaden rushes to the TV. Searches for the video source. Finds a flash drive stuck into the TV's USB slot. He tugs it free.

The video goes off, just as Shawn appears in the doorway.

SHAWN

I guess I scared 'em off. You okay?

Kaden nods.

SHAWN

What's that?

Shawn points to the flash drive in Kaden's hand. Kaden nervously shoves it into his pocket.

KADEN

Nothing. I, uh -- I have to go.

Kaden goes for the door, nearly knocks Shawn over.

SHAWN

What?

KADEN

I shouldn't be here.

Kaden continues out of the room and down the hall. Shawn follows, confused.

SHAWN

What's wrong?

KADEN

This was a mistake.

SHAWN

Is it because of what happened? I can call the police --

KADEN

-- No! Don't call the police.

SHAWN

Then tell me what I can do to make you stay.

Kaden ignores him, pulls out his phone and opens the front door.

SHAWN

At least let me take you home. I just have to get Dillon in the car.

KADEN

I'll take an Uber.

SHAWN

Kaden --

KADEN

Just let me go, Shawn.

Kaden walks out. Shawn goes to follow, but hesitates.

SHAWN

Kaden -- *Kaden!*

Kaden continues on and disappears into the darkness.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kaden storms into the apartment. Doesn't bother closing the front door.

INT. KADEN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Kaden barrels in. He searches on top of the dresser, knocking over picture frames and trinkets.

Not finding what he's looking for, Kaden hysterically rakes his arm across the dresser, sending knick-knacks flying.

Kaden slows his breathing. Looks ahead. Zeroes his gaze on the outlet above the dresser...

...the same outlet he couldn't plug the lamp into.

Kaden touches the outlet. Picks at the edge of the plastic plate. It seems loose.

Carefully, Kaden slides his fingers under the plate and plucks it from the wall.

The entire outlet comes off.

Kaden looks at the blank wall space where the outlet once was. There's no hole. No wires. Not even a mark to ever indicate the outlet was there.

Kaden looks at the outlet plate in his hand. It has a flat back with a double-sided piece of wall tape in the middle.

There's a dime-sized circular CAMERA positioned where the teeth of a plug would go.

The outlet is a secret nanny cam.

Kaden stumbles back, in total shock, not seeing Trevor standing cross-armed in the background, watching him.

TREVOR

Hundred bucks on Spy Tech. The battery's supposed to last a week.

Kaden is too stunned to face him.

TREVOR

That's all the time I needed, really.

KADEN
What do you want?

TREVOR
What do you mean?

KADEN
Why are you doing this to me?

Trevor smiles with a shrug.

TREVOR
Because I need you, Kaden. I don't know what I would do if you ever tried to leave me. I had to make sure that couldn't happen.

KADEN
By blackmailing me?

TREVOR
Think of it as a reminder.

KADEN
A reminder of what?

TREVOR
You liking it when I touched you.

KADEN
I didn't know --

TREVOR
-- You knew. So the next time you say you're counting the age difference and that's why we can't be together, maybe you can count the number of times I made you feel so good, you exploded all over my wrist. I'll help get you started.

Trevor holds up his index finger. Then he turns around and heads for the door.

Kaden's eyes race in their sockets, desperate.

KADEN
I will never want you, Trevor.

TREVOR
Careful. We don't have to be the only ones who see that video.

Trevor leaves.

Kaden's knees buckle. He collapses on the edge of the bed, not knowing where to look. Not knowing if unseen eyes might still be looking back.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Shawn and Mary talk quietly at the receptionist's desk when Kaden approaches. He doesn't acknowledge Shawn. He simply grabs his clipboard and continues down the wing.

Mary nods encouragingly to Shawn, who takes a deep breath and follows after Kaden.

SHAWN

Hey.

KADEN

I'm busy, Shawn.

SHAWN

You need to make time for this.

KADEN

What do you want, Shawn? An apology for last night? Fine. I'm sorry I didn't fuck you. Happy now?

Shawn can't hide the hurt on his face but stands tall.

SHAWN

This isn't about that.

Kaden continues on. Shawn tries to keep up.

SHAWN

Look, just stop for a minute --

KADEN

-- Can you leave me the hell alone!?

Shawn suddenly grabs Kaden by the arm and whips him around.

SHAWN

This has nothing to do with us!
Your dad's in I.C.U.

INT. HOSPITAL - I.C.U. - MOMENTS LATER

Kaden and Shawn observe David through the room window.

David lies in a hospital bed, IVs hooked to his arm, a breathing mask on his face.

SHAWN

They found him at the bottom of the stairs. A solicitor saw him through the window this morning. Your sister's on her way.

Kaden just stares, silent, unblinking. He slowly makes his way inside the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAVID'S ROOM

Kaden unsteadily takes a seat next to his dad. He looks at his father's face. At his timeworn hands.

KADEN

Dad...

But the only response comes from the pumping ventilator whispering in the corner.

INT. HOSPITAL - LATER THAT DAY

Paige arrives. Immediately runs into Kaden's arms. They hold each other in pained silence.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY - LATER

The end of a long day. Kaden and Paige sit in lobby chairs, emotionally drained. Paige rests her head on his shoulder.

PAIGE

I didn't think you would be here.

Kaden doesn't respond.

PAIGE

I know it means a lot to him.

KADEN

I'm here for you.

Kaden puts his hand in hers, but she pulls away.

PAIGE

Kaden...

Paige opens her mouth to continue. Hesitates.

KADEN

What?

PAIGE

I know why Dad didn't come to the funeral. And it's the same reason I almost didn't go, either.

Kaden sits up. She has his attention.

PAIGE

About a week before the accident, Dad and I were coming out of a restaurant and...

Paige closes her eyes. This isn't easy.

PAIGE

We saw Cole. With someone else. At first we thought it was just one of his students but -- there was more to it than that. They were physical. And Cole looked like he didn't want anyone to see them together. We were planning to tell you, but...

Tears well in her eyes.

PAIGE

After Cole died, Dad saw how much that destroyed you. And he didn't trust himself to keep quiet about it and that's why he stayed away.

KADEN

Why didn't you tell me?

PAIGE

Because it wasn't going to change what happened to Cole. But after this, I can't have the two of you not speaking because of somebody else's mistake. Even Cole wouldn't want this.

Kaden's phone RINGS. The two just stare at each other, unblinking. Paige's eyes dart between Kaden's face and the phone in his pocket.

Finally, Kaden takes out the phone and answers.

KADEN
 (to phone)
 Hello?

VOICE ON PHONE
 This is Michael Peldon with
 Crestmont Security. Is this Kaden?

KADEN
 (to phone)
 Yes.

MICHAEL PELDON (V.O.)
 I understand you had some questions
 regarding your noise complaint.

Kaden stands up, excuses himself.

Paige is left to herself. She fishes for a tissue, but the
 box in her lap is empty. She stands up.

INT. HOSPITAL - VENDING MACHINE AREA

Kaden paces, phone to ear.

MICHAEL PELDON (V.O.)
 (from phone)
 Unfortunately I didn't get a name.
 Just a statement that furniture was
 being moved and that was the source
 of the noise you were hearing. I
 did issue a verbal warning but --

KADEN
 -- Who did you speak to? A woman?

MICHAEL PELDON (V.O.)
 No, it was a younger man.

KADEN
 How young?

MICHAEL PELDON (V.O.)
 I don't know. Maybe twenty? It was
 hard to tell because of the hat he
 was wearing.

KADEN
 (sotto)
 He was home.

Kaden's bloodshot eyes widen with renewed purpose.

MICHAEL PELDON (V.O.)
If you'd like, I can --

But Kaden abruptly hangs up and makes a mad dash to --

INT. HOSPITAL - PEDIATRICS

Shawn stands cross-armed watching the news on a lobby TV.

ON THE TV:

An overhead helicopter shot as firefighters and policemen crowd the banks of a narrow river.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
...giving you the latest on this
developing story. A body was
discovered in the Chattahoochee
River near the East Palisades Trail
this morning...

BACK TO SCENE:

Kaden bursts through the double doors.

KADEN
Shawn!

SHAWN
What's going on?

KADEN
I need you to take me to my
apartment. Now.

SHAWN
What happened?

KADEN
Trevor was here the night of the
noise complaint. I was right. His
mom has been covering for him this
whole time.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
As we await formal identification,
police are speculating the body to
be Jonathan Treyker, a manager of
the local Crestmont Apartments who
was reported missing just last
week...

Both men hear the name and glance to the TV. The unfolding scene incites both men like fire. Shawn grabs his keys.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY

Paige returns, opens the new pack of tissues in her hand. She's about to sit down when she notices someone in a blue hat about to enter David's room.

PAIGE

Excuse me.

The figure turns. It's Trevor, holding a familiar blue teddy bear in his hands.

PAIGE

Can I help you?

TREVOR

Oh, sorry. I'm looking for someone.

Paige doesn't respond. Waits for the stranger to continue.

TREVOR

Not sure if you know him. David Perkins?

PAIGE

That's my dad.

TREVOR

Oh. My name's Trevor. I'm...well, I'm the one who found him this morning. I just wanted to see how he was doing --

Paige can barely keep her composure. She instinctively throws her arms around Trevor, holding him tight.

PAIGE

-- Thank you.

Trevor smiles. Hugs her back, his eyes darting from the teddy bear in his hands to David's room.

PAIGE

The doctor said if he got here just ten minutes later...

Paige finally lets him go. Wipes her cheeks.

TREVOR

I wasn't sure what would be appropriate but I picked this up on the way here. Would it be okay if I...?

Trevor gestures to the door.

Paige nods and follows Trevor into the room.

INT. SHAWN'S CAR - SAME

Shawn drives like a bat out of hell, weaving in and out of traffic. Kaden rides passenger, ending a phone call.

KADEN

Girl at the front desk said she hasn't seen them leave today.

SHAWN

So what's your plan?

Kaden doesn't respond.

SHAWN

You do have a plan, don't you?

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

Shawn parks at the curb. Kaden jumps out of the car.

KADEN

Stay here. If I'm not back in five minutes...

Shawn nods.

SHAWN

Be careful, Kaden.

Kaden hauls ass up the entrance steps.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY

Kaden runs up the metal stairs, takes them two at a time. He comes to the upstairs neighbor's door and raps his fist against it.

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT

Helen opens the door. She doesn't have a chance to speak when Kaden barges in, nearly knocking her down.

KADEN
Where is he!?

HELEN
Excuse me!

KADEN
Where is your son!?

Kaden looks in the dining area. Then the kitchen.

HELEN
Excuse me, you can't --

KADEN
You told me your son was with you
when you went out of town.

HELEN
He was!

KADEN
You're lying! I spoke to the
officer who handled my noise
complaint and he saw your son here.

HELEN
What officer!?

KADEN
Enough! You're not going to cover
for him anymore! How many people
have to get hurt before you realize
he's dangerous?

Sterling comes out of the back bedroom.

STERLING
What's going on?

KADEN
Where's Trevor!?

STERLING
He's not here.

Kaden pushes past Sterling, enters the bedroom.

STERLING
Mom, what's going on?

HELEN
Go call your dad.

Kaden pauses at a picture on the wall -- Helen, Sterling, and a middle-aged man: Sterling's FATHER.

And the realization nearly knocks Kaden to the ground.

KADEN
(hushed)
Trevor's not your son.

Helen steps forward.

HELEN
I'm not sure what's going on here,
but Sterling was with me last
weekend. Now I haven't seen Trevor,
and frankly it's not my job to know
the whereabouts of your nephew. But
if you don't get the hell out of my
home *right now*, I'm calling the
police.

Kaden, unblinking, still in shock, can only do as he's told.
He makes his way to the front door. Just as he crosses the
threshold:

HELEN
Tell Trevor he's not welcome here
anymore.

The door slams.

Kaden's phone BUZZES. He checks the incoming message.

It's a picture of Paige standing next to her father's bed.

Kaden's eyes widen.

KADEN
No...

INT. HOSPITAL - DAVID'S ROOM

Trevor sets the teddy bear on a chair, right next to Paige's
cell phone. It's lit up -- KADEN CALLING. Trevor discreetly
takes the phone.

PAIGE
I really appreciate you coming by.

Paige looks at Trevor. Lifts a brow. Trevor sees her staring.

PAIGE
Sorry. You look so familiar to me.
Have we met before?

TREVOR
I don't think so.

PAIGE
I swear I've seen you somewhere.

TREVOR
I guess I just have one of those
faces.

She smiles, reassured.

INT. SHAWN'S CAR

Shawn drives. Kaden has his phone to his ear.

KADEN
My sister's not answering.

SHAWN
Try Mary.

Kaden calls. Bites his lip.

KADEN
Come on, Mary, pick up...

INT. HOSPITAL

Mary's cell phone buzzes across the circulation desk. It seems like she won't answer when a hand suddenly grabs it.

MARY
(to phone)
This is Mary.

INTERCUT: KADEN / MARY

KADEN
Mary! I need you to go to my dad's
room right now.

MARY

Kaden? Where are you? I thought you were on the clock.

KADEN

Mary, please, I need you to do this!

MARY

OK, OK, I'm going.

She shuffles down the hall.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAVID'S ROOM

Trevor heads for the door to leave. Paige follows him.

TREVOR

Would it be okay if I left him a message?

PAIGE

Yeah, I think have a pen in my purse.

Paige goes to her purse. Fishes through it.

PAIGE

Here we go.

Paige slides out a pen and turns around.

Trevor suddenly plunges a knife into her gut. Paige's eyes blossom in surprise. Her lips part in a pained exhale. She drops the pen.

TREVOR

I don't need a pen for this message.

He smiles. Removes the knife. Paige drops to the floor.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY

Trevor exits the room. Shuts the door. He makes his way down the hall, just as Mary (still on the phone) rounds the corner.

MARY

(to phone)
OK, I'm here.

Mary opens the door. Enters the room. She drops the phone, puts her hands to her face, and SCREAMS.

INT. HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE

Shawn's car pulls up to the sliding front doors. Kaden jumps out, runs inside.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY

Kaden turns the corner. Comes to David's room, but doesn't go in. There are police and nurses everywhere.

A tear-stricken Mary is among them. She doesn't say anything to Kaden. She just looks at him with pained, horrified eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL - PARKING GARAGE

Shawn parks. Gets out of the car. He makes his way down the aisle of cars, oblivious to Trevor watching him, a gleam in his eye, knife at the ready.

INT. HOSPITAL - LOBBY

Kaden sits on a chair. Hands in his face. Distraught. His phone vibrates. SHAWN CALLING. He answers.

KADEN
(to phone)
Shawn.

TREVOR (V.O.)
Hey neighbor.

Kaden freezes. Narrows his eyes.

KADEN
Where's Shawn?

TREVOR (V.O.)
He's with me.

KADEN
(weak)
What have you done?

TREVOR (V.O.)
I imagine you've learned a few things about me.
(MORE)

TREVOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

We both know I had to come up with something if I was going to spend so much time around your apartment - around you.

KADEN

Where are you?

TREVOR (V.O.)

Look in your dad's room.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAVID'S ROOM

Kaden enters, still on the phone.

TREVOR (V.O.)

On the chair.

Kaden sees the blue teddy bear on the chair. And something else. A photo. He picks it up.

It's the picture of Kaden and Cole at the rock climbing gym; the same one he had taped to his headboard.

TREVOR (V.O.)

I'll be in the same spot I was when that picture was taken.

Kaden's eyes zero in on the background of the picture. Sure enough, there's someone standing there in a blue hat. Like they're watching the photo being taken.

TREVOR (V.O.)

And Kaden, don't even think about calling the police. You've got one person left. You decide his fate.

CLICK.

Kaden stands thoughtful. Calculating. But he doesn't stay there long. He knows what he has to do.

EXT. ROCK CLIMBING GYM - NIGHT

An SUV pulls into a parking spot. Kaden gets out. Looks up at the grandiose building.

INT. ROCK CLIMBING GYM

After hours. A few emergency lights provide a limited picture of the place.

Kaden comes in through a side door. He enters quietly, eyes flying in all directions.

There's no sign of Shawn. Or Trevor.

Kaden continues on. Steps into the main arena --

-- and is greeted by a motion sensor light. It blinds him.

TREVOR (O.S.)

I knew you wouldn't disappoint me.

Kaden looks up. Adjusts his vision.

Trevor stands at the top of the 40-foot rock pillar. The very same rock wall Cole fell from.

Just a few feet below Trevor, suspended in the air by a single climbing rope, is a bloodied-up Shawn. He's also bound and gagged.

KADEN

Shawn.

They acknowledge each other when Kaden narrows his eyes at Trevor.

KADEN

Let him go!

TREVOR

Not the best choice of words for someone forty feet in the air.

KADEN

What do you want?

TREVOR

I want you. And I can't have anyone getting in the way of that.

KADEN

OK... I'll never talk to Shawn again. Is that what you want me to say? It'll just be you and me, alright? Now pull him up!

TREVOR

I'm not sure I can believe you, Kaden.

KADEN

You can trust me. You have to if we're going to be together, right?

TREVOR

What you just said about Shawn is exactly what Cole said about you.

Kaden's eyes blossom.

TREVOR

It wasn't always you. When Cole first subbed in my class, I thought he was the one. He was all I could think about. Especially after I got him alone with me after school. He resisted, but that's not why we couldn't last. It was everybody in our way. You. My parents.

MEMORY FLASH:

Trevor sitting on Kaden's couch talking about the Xbox.

TREVOR

I used to have one but lost it in a fire.

MEMORY FLASH:

Two people, a MAN and WOMAN, stuck in a house, screaming, ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

BACK TO PRESENT:

Trevor pulls out the hunting knife.

TREVOR

Even that damn property manager.

MEMORY FLASH:

John Treyker in Helen's apartment. Trevor silently creeps in behind him, eyes locked on the key ring attached to John's belt.

Trevor JUMPS him.

A struggle ensues. John loses his footing, cracks his head against a picture on the wall.

MEMORY FLASH:

Kaden and Paige eat pizza and exchange glances, their eyes drifting up to the ceiling and settling on the chandelier rocking in the dining area.

BACK TO SCENE:

Trevor runs his finger along the blade of the knife.

TREVOR

They were easy to take care of. But not you, Kaden. You were different.

Kaden's face drops as he realizes...

MEMORY FLASH:

Cole and Kaden at the rock climbing gym.

COLE

Let's switch.

Cole exchanges their clips.

BACK TO PRESENT:

Kaden regards Trevor with hateful eyes.

KADEN

You killed Cole.

TREVOR

It wasn't supposed to be him, but don't you see what a blessing it was? The two of you switching spots was a sign, Kaden. I spent the longest time thinking I wanted to be with Cole. But that accident made me realize: I wanted to be him. And that means being with you. That's why Shawn has to die. He can't interfere with what fate has created for us.

Trevor bends down. Positions the knife to cut the rope carrying Shawn.

KADEN

Wait!

Trevor hesitates. Kaden's eyes dance, thinking, searching.

KADEN

Let me do it.

Trevor's lips curl into a crooked smile.

KADEN

You said I decide his fate. Let me do it.

Trevor stands. Playfully twirls the knife.

TREVOR

OK...

Kaden exhales a sigh of relief.

TREVOR

But let's make it interesting. You can do it, but only if you can climb up here in one minute. That's something Cole would say, right?

Trevor smiles, proud.

Kaden eyes the towering rock wall. He swallows the lump in his throat.

KADEN

I -- I need a harness.

TREVOR

No.

Kaden cocks his head -- *what?*

TREVOR

You have to trust fate. If it's meant to be, you'll make it.

Kaden is horrified. He licks his lips, shakes his head.

But then he looks up at Shawn. Defenseless. And Kaden stands just a little bit taller.

KADEN

OK.

Trevor pulls out his phone. Taps the stopwatch.

TREVOR

Ready?

Kaden grabs the nearest hold. Girds himself with a silent prayer.

TREVOR

Aaaaaaand GO!

Kaden starts the climb. He's fast but careful, moving gracefully with fluid purpose.

Shawn watches him ascend, eyes hopeful and wide.

Trevor checks the stopwatch.

TREVOR
Fifteen seconds down!

Kaden doesn't look at the ground. His focus stays up.

Trevor checks the time again.

TREVOR
Halfway!

But Kaden's not halfway in distance. He speeds up the pace, snatching at holds, pure adrenaline pulling him upwards.

TREVOR
Ten seconds left!

Kaden passes by Shawn. He doesn't stop to look at him, but it's clear from the look in Shawn's eyes there might actually be a chance.

TREVOR
Five...

Kaden has three more holds.

TREVOR
Four...

Kaden grabs one. Pulls.

TREVOR
Three...

He grabs another. Lifts himself up.

TREVOR
Two...

Kaden grabs the last hold...

TREVOR
One.

KADEN LEAPS UP TO THE PLATFORM.

It's a photo finish, but he makes it just in time.

Kaden falls onto his back, exhausted, breathless, covered in sweat.

TREVOR
Nicely done.

Trevor leans over the edge. Speaks to Shawn.

TREVOR
You see that, Shawn? He must really
want to kill you...

Kaden stands. Holds his hand out for the knife.

Trevor points the sharp end of the knife at Kaden.

TREVOR
...or maybe he just thinks I'm that
stupid.

Kaden catches his breath, out of options. He bows his head in
defeat...

...AND SUDDENLY POUNCES AT TREVOR!

Kaden knocks Trevor down. The knife goes flying, spinning to
the edge of the 7' x 7' platform. It almost goes over.

Kaden punches Trevor. Then again.

But Trevor is strong and easily knocks Kaden away. He falls
onto his back.

They both scramble for the knife. Kaden's fingers graze the
handle...

...and accidentally send the knife over the edge.

KADEN
No!

DOWN BELOW

The knife plunges downward... right on top of Shawn... it
STICKS HIM in the shoulder. He HOWLS IN PAIN.

UP TOP

Trevor puts his knee on Kaden's throat. Presses down. Kaden
kicks and squirms, chokes out a nasty cough.

DOWN BELOW

Shawn's bound hands pull the knife from his shoulder. Blood
spills. He grimaces.

Then Shawn turns the knife over and begins to saw through the ropes constraining his wrists.

UP TOP

Trevor still has his knee to Kaden's neck. Kaden's face goes purple. His eyes roll over white until --

-- Kaden uses the last of his strength to HIT Trevor between the legs. He knocks the breath out of him and sends Trevor reeling.

Kaden GASPS FOR AIR, only manages to roll over onto his stomach when Trevor unexpectedly KICKS HIM ACROSS THE FACE. Kaden flies back, not able to grab on to anything...

Kaden falls off the platform, gripping his fingers on the edge of the terrace at the last possible second. He dangles forty feet above the ground.

Trevor steadily rises to his feet. Stands over Kaden's hanging body, chest rising and falling.

TREVOR

Our first real fight. I thought it would be much later.

Kaden kicks his feet and thrashes his body, but he can't pull himself back.

TREVOR

How much longer are you going to fight me, Kaden?

KADEN

I can't hold on...

TREVOR

And now you need me. When will you realize you've always needed me?

Kaden's fingers begin to slide. He grits his teeth.

TREVOR

I want to help you. I just don't know if I can trust you.

KADEN

Please...

Kaden's face strains. He can't hold on much longer.

TREVOR

So are we going to trust each other, or are you going to stab me in the back?

There's a glint in Kaden's eye.

THWACK

Trevor hunches over... his eyes bulge and lips part in a silent expression of pain and surprise.

Shawn stands behind Trevor, his hand gripping the handle of the hunting knife, the blade buried deep into Trevor's spine.

Trevor lets out a cracked exhale and falls to his knees. He reaches back with shaky hands, trying to feel the knife lodged in his back.

Shawn helps Kaden onto the platform. He gets to his feet, and now it's Kaden standing over Trevor.

Pained, disoriented, Trevor regards Kaden for comfort. He smiles weakly as he chokes out his last words:

TREVOR

At least... I'll get to see... Cole again.

Kaden's hardened face doesn't even flinch.

KADEN

No you won't...*Simon*.

The sting can be seen all over Trevor's face as he finally collapses, his body spilling off the edge of the platform and down into empty space.

Gone.

Kaden and Shawn fall into each other's arms as we...

CROSSFADE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Kaden and Shawn are back in their scrubs. Injuries mended. Hearts full. They enter together, share a kiss, then go their separate ways.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAVID'S ROOM

Kaden enters. Finds David sitting up in his bed, alert, and looking well. David opens a chocolate pudding cup.

DAVID

There you are! Listen, I appreciate the iPad you got me and I'm sure I'll learn how to use it by the time I get the hell out of this place, but when are you going to tell the doctor to up my dosage?

KADEN

Are you hurting again?

A privacy curtain suddenly pulls back. Paige lies in the adjacent bed, bandaged up and still alive.

PAIGE

Don't listen to him. He's fine.

DAVID

Look, I just figured something a little bit stronger might feel more like a vacation.

KADEN

Dad, if we upped your dosage any more you'd be halfway to Heaven. And I'd like to keep you here on earth as long as we can.

Kaden goes to Paige.

KADEN

How are you feeling?

PAIGE

Hanging in there.

Suddenly, there's a loud BOOMING noise coming from the floor above them. They both follow the sound and listen.

KADEN

They're doing some construction on the fourth floor. Want me to say something?

PAIGE

Maybe we'll let it go this time.

They both smile.

INT. HOSPITAL

Kaden comes to the receptionist's desk. Flashes an infectious smile to Mary.

MARY
You're in a good mood.

KADEN
Whatcha got for me?

MARY
Same old, same old.

She hands a file to Kaden. He takes it. Opens it up.

His face drops.

At the top of the form, the patient's name:

TREVOR JAMES MITCHUM

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR

Kaden unsteadily approaches the patient's room. He stares at the closed door like it's a casket that shouldn't be opened.

Finally, he musters the strength to place his fingers on the handle and open the door.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM

Kaden walks in to find...

A teenage boy sitting on the exam table. Nerdy. Curly red hair. Kinda chunky. This is the **real** TREVOR MITCHUM. His MOM sits next to him.

KADEN
Trevor Mitchum?

TJ
My friends call me TJ.

TJ'S MOM
Sorry we had to cancel his last appointment. Someone broke into our house and stole some stuff.

KADEN
I'm sorry to hear that.

TJ
Can we get this over with?

KADEN
I'd be glad to.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Kaden kneels over Cole's headstone. He takes a moment of silence, then places something on the grave.

KADEN
When we meet again.

Kaden stands up and returns to the car where Shawn is waiting. They drive away.

As the vehicle becomes a distant speck, we drift back to the headstone...

...to the Xbox game Kaden left behind.

FADE OUT.