

PSYCHODELIC

Written by

Sarah de Groot
Deon Scott

Sddegroot97@gmail.com
251 362 4282
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FADE IN:

1

EXT. ALABAMA - FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON

1

A red dirt road winds through dense trees. At the end of the road sits a small, run down white house. The shutters are half missing and pieces of the roof are raised beyond repair.

MILO TURNER, 10, sits in a tire swing. He's dressed impeccably- a small black suit and tie, black dress shoes that he stains with the red dirt, and not a gelled piece of hair out of place.

His eyes are the roundest and saddest of any young boy you've ever seen.

He pouts as he rocks back and forth, ignoring the gathering of people exiting the home.

All around him, people dressed in the same black attire file out of the house, all murmuring quietly amongst themselves.

A GROUP OF WOMEN huddle together, only mere feet from the tire swing. They take no notice of Milo.

WOMAN 1

I heard the burns were so bad that makeup couldn't even cover them.

Milo's head twitches in their direction.

WOMAN 2

I bet that's why they chose that god-awful turtlenecked dress.

The women snicker.

WOMAN 4

Well, if you ask me this was no accident.

WOMAN 3

What're you saying?

Milo's lip twitches and he fully turns to look at them.

WOMAN 4

With Joel's temper, there's no way there's not more to the story.

(shrugs)

It's not like she was any better.

JOEL TURNER, 35 and Milo's father, approaches Milo from the house. He's sloppily dressed and lazily cared for, and the bags under his eyes are prominent.

Joel stands behind Milo and clamps a hand on his shoulder. Milo only reacts with his eyes, closing them for a brief moment at the familiar weight of Joel's hand.

Joel stares at the women with Milo, who take no notice of the men as they continue their gossip.

Joel squeezes Milo's shoulder.

JOEL

Son, always remember this: There's bad people in this world, but there's also good people who do bad things. The good people are the ones who deserve to be punished. They knew better.

Milo stares the women down. He stands from the swing and shrugs Joel's hand off. He marches to a pile of rocks, picks one up and flings it at the women. It misses.

Milo huffs as he picks up another one, flinging it again, this time hitting one of them in the leg. They turn just as Milo flings another one, then another one, until they disperse in fluid screams.

MILO

STOP TALKING ABOUT MY FUCKING MOTHER!

He continues hurling rocks at their retreating forms, hitting their cars, their heads, their tires, sometimes nothing at all. One rock hits on of their windshields, and there's the telltale *CRACK* of the glass as they pull out from the driveway.

ECU on Milo's narrowed eyes, the skin around them red and the circles prominent.

KATIE (PRELAP)

Milo? Still with me?

A clock ticks teasingly.

2

INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - DAY

2

ECU on those same brown eyes. They snap to, revealing Milo Turner.

He's aged a good ten years, his hair now a dirty blonde and he's bulkier than ever. His clothes are still dark, all denim and leather jackets.

He looks to KATIE WATSON, mid 40s.

Katie sits attentive, almost on edge as she watches him.

She's impeccably dressed in a tweed pantsuit, her long hair meticulously pulled back. She holds the kindest smile and has this affluent, wondrous air to her.

Stark white walls, light brown bookshelves, and a light wooden desk clutter the room. The walls are filled with self-help posters and quotes. It's almost annoying.

MILO

I'm with you.

He laughs. He's a charmer, that's for sure.

Katie grins in return. She returns her gaze to the paperwork in front of her. She makes small markings here and there.

KATIE

Great! Just a couple more questions and we'll have you on your way.

(beat)

Ever been arrested or charged with a felony?

Milo shakes his head.

MILO

Nope.

Katie checks off another box.

KATIE

Ever been accused or involved in a sexual assault or harassment case?

Milo shakes his head again.

MILO

Never.

KATIE

Ever been a part of a domestic disturbance?

Milo stares at her for a moment, almost unsure of his answer. Finally, he leans back.

MILO

Nope.

Katie watches him as she checks off another box.

KATIE

Alright, you are good to go. As discussed the grant for participating in our study will apply directly to your tuition balance. Your class schedule should be on your student portal shortly!

Milo smiles, beams even, as he stands. He moves forward to shake her hand.

Before he can, she twists the paper in his direction.

Katie leans forward, almost intimidatingly.

KATIE

Milo, I want you to understand that participating in this study means you must be on your best behavior 24/7. There can be no slip-ups. Understand?

MILO

I understand. I won't let you down.

Katie's smiles wryly.

KATIE

I hope not.
(beat)
Sign here.

Milo signs and slides the paper back to her.

MILO

Thank you, Professor Watson, really. I appreciate you taking a chance on me.

KATIE

Don't thank me yet. Just keep your head low and try not to get into any trouble. I'll see you Friday at 5 for our first session.

Milo swallows as he nods.

MILO

Yes ma'am.

Katie waves him out.

Milo exits.

3 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAYS

3

Milo enters.

We finally see exactly where we are- a small community college. There's posters of the exact college in frames lining the walls. Posters explaining the history of the school, who founded what, etc.

Students pass by Milo as he walks down the hallways. Most either move out of his way or pretend he isn't there.

He walks with his head down until he reaches a pair of double doors.

Milo exits.

4 INT. MILO AND THOMAS' APARTMENT

4

Milo enters.

He closes the door quietly behind him and deposits his keys in the little dish by the door.

THOMAS BANKS shouts at the tv in the living room.

As Milo walks through the small hallway, we get a glimpse of a few photos- one of Milo and his dad from Milo's youth, Thomas and his parents, and finally, a photo of Milo and Thomas in graduation gowns, holding up their high school diplomas.

THOMAS
DIE, DIE, DIE!

Milo rounds the corner and flops onto the couch. He pulls Thomas' headphones off his head.

MILO
We've already gotten one noise ordinance, I'm not paying for another one.

Thomas pauses his game.

THOMAS
How'd your thing go?

Milo puts his arms behind his head.

MILO
My thing?

THOMAS
Yeah, your interview thing. Are they letting you into the study?

Milo nods.

MILO
Yeah. I knew I was in, it was more of a formality. I should be getting my schedule annyyyy minute now.

Milo's phone chirps with a notification.

THOMAS
Goddamn psychic.

Milo opens the student portal and scrolls through his schedule.

MILO
Looks like I have Psych 101 tomorrow, bright and early.

THOMAS
How many more bright and earlies can you have?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
This one's gonna stick.

THOMAS
Just like art, right?

Milo laughs.

MILO
Whatever. I'm gonna call it a night.

Thomas stands and replaces his controller on the charger.

THOMAS
Me too.

He crosses the living room and slaps Milo on the back of the head.

THOMAS
'Night, Major Changer.

Thomas exits. There's the telltale close of the door, and Milo's alone.

Off Milo, who can't help but laugh at himself and his roommate. Would this one stick?

5 INT. PROFESSOR ENGLUND'S CLASSROOM - MORNING 5

PROFESSOR ENGLUND, a handsome professor, stands in front of a classroom filled with young 20-somethings. He plugs his laptop in, and the projector above whirs to life.

His suede brown jacket disguises his figure perfectly. His brown hair almost matches the jacket. He holds kind eyes steadily on the classroom, taking in all the students.

The classroom buzzes with excited chatter, everyone talking about their weekends, their personal lives.

Everyone but Milo.

He sits in the very back of the classroom, doodling away at his notebook.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Alright, everyone. Time to settle in. We've got some riveting discussions about the reading which I'm sure all of you did.

There's a flurry of activity as people flip through their books, still whispering amongst themselves.

Milo sits back, arms folded, completely at ease. He's done the reading.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
That's what I thought. Let's get started.
(examines the room)
Food chain. The animal kingdom is something you've been learning about since elementary school, and this is no different. However, I want to talk about food chains in a literal sense. Take this campus, for example. There's a social hierarchy - a social food chain. Where do you fall on it?

Milo answers quickly, needing no thought.

MILO
The bottom.

A few students chuckle around him.

Professor Englund looks up at him, almost fondly, as he considers Milo's answer.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Why do you say that, Milo?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
Easy. You can tell where everyone falls on the social food chain by where they're sitting in this room.

Professor Englund leans against his desk as a few people turn to look at Milo.

One of those people is MONIQUE FULLER. She's your typical "front of the classroom" cheerleader. Blonde. Perfect. Not Milo's type at all. She stares at him incredulously, waiting for his response.

Milo takes no notice of Monique.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Interesting. Let's say you're correct, and that this room is the perfect visual representation of a social hierarchy. You're at the very back, the very bottom, as you say. Could you work your way to the front?

MILO
Of course I could.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
And how would you do that?

Milo leans forward, his gaze becoming more and more intense.

MILO
In animal kingdoms, there's a leader, right? But what happens when that leader is exterminated?

That species finds a new leader,
and another, and another, and then
another. Until there's no more
left.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
So you think one species going
extinct is the way to climb?

MILO
Exactly. When one species dies out,
the one behind it becomes one step
closer to the top.

Professor Englund rubs his chin in thought. He crosses his
arms and studies Milo.

The room remains deadly quiet, everyone staring between
Professor Englund and Milo.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Let's take it out of the animal
kingdom for a moment and talk about
us as humans. How do we climb that
social ladder?

Milo shrugs, leaning back again.

MILO
Through education, of course. The
more educated and in debt you are,
the higher you get to climb. The
leaders are always the doctors, or
the lawyers, or the politicians...
those are all people fighting for a
chance at that top prize.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Do you think people can be killed
off in that same sense?

Milo nods.

MILO
Oh, absolutely.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Care to elaborate?

Milo sighs.

Monique stares at him, she seems to grow more impatient by
the second.

MILO

The only reason I don't stand up and slaughter everyone in this room is because I have a moral compass. I've been taught right from wrong, and that would be wrong. I would be punished for slaughtering everyone.

Various students turn their heads slowly towards Milo. They watch him warily, as if they're afraid of him. He intimidates them.

Milo pays them no mind. He keeps his eyes on Professor Englund.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

Certainly so, but if that's the case, why do we still have so much crime? Murderers, rapists, thieves, I could go on all day.

MILO

Because they've found a way to defeat their moral compass.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

And you think that's good?

MILO

I suppose it depends on the situation. But when you learn that you can kill people just because, it's a different kind of power.

Monique huffs and raises her hand.

Professor Englund smiles, finally amused with the conversation. He knows it's about to get good.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

Monique.

Monique spins in her chair, turning fully towards Milo.

MONIQUE

You talk about defeating a moral compass like it's something we're supposed to do. It's not something in human nature that's exactly hindering.

Milo raises an eyebrow as he studies Monique.

He leans forwards again, almost like he does so just to get closer to her. He smiles wryly.

MILO

Having a moral compass keeps us
complacent.

Monique laughs dryly.

MONIQUE

Complacent? I don't think being a
good person keeps us complacent.

MILO

Keeps us in check, no? It's how
they control us.

MONIQUE

They?

MILO

The government. The world. The law
enforcement. Everyone. Bad people
are going to do bad things,
regardless. Does it hurt to try and
understand them in the process?

Monique crosses her arms, ready to fire back.

MONIQUE

Is it so wrong to believe that
those supposed bad people were once
good? That circumstance can kill a
moral compass before there's ever a
chance for one to truly develop?

MILO

Sweetheart, there's bad people all
over that do bad things. But
there's just as many good people
who do bad things, and those are
the people we should focus on
punishing. They knew better.

Monique locks her jaw.

MONIQUE

No one said anything about
punishing anyone, *honey*.

Professor Englund chuckles as Monique glares at Milo.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

I think that's enough for today. In the spirit of midterms, I'm giving you the rest of the afternoon to study, don't waste it! Psych 101, you're dismissed.

People stand, almost dazed from the conversation. No one makes eye contact with Milo, or even looks his way.

Monique is among them, but she marches up the classroom steps and up to Milo. She folds her arms in front of her.

MONIQUE

For the record, it's perfectly acceptable to have a conversation without the use of condescending nicknames.

Milo chuckles as he loads his notebooks into his rucksack. He stares at Monique, his head tilted.

MILO

Well, I'm very sorry. It wasn't my intention to offend you.

Monique eyes him warily, obviously not expecting that. She watches him for a moment, her head tilting as she studies his face. There's a clear argument within herself about whether or not she finds him attractive or not. She does.

Monique halfway drops her arms, but extends a hand.

MONIQUE

I'm Monique.

Milo takes her hand, lingering a moment too long with his hand in hers.

MILO

Milo.

MONIQUE

I know.

MILO

(cocky)
You know.

Monique raises an eyebrow at him. Cheeky. Why does she like it so much?

Milo stands, finally drops her hand, and slings his bag over his shoulder.

MONIQUE
See you around?

Milo watches her for a moment.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Milo? A word.

Milo turns to Professor Englund, still at the front of the classroom and nods, then turns back to Monique.

MILO
You definitely will.

Monique smiles shy at Milo, then turns and walks down the steps, flashing one more bright smile at Professor Englund as she passes.

Milo watches her go.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Milo.

Milo sighs and heads down the steps.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
That was an interesting discussion.

Milo nods, shrugs.

MILO
I was just giving my interpretation
of the reading.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
This was our first class together,
I didn't expect you to have done
the reading yet.

Milo smiles and leans against Professor Englund's desk.

MILO
I've taken this class before.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
I see.

MILO
I didn't expect such a riveting
discussion, though.

Professor Englund chuckles.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
 Expect more of those. I think it's important to delve into our own thoughts about these things. It's the only way for us to grow.

Milo nods and turns to exit.

MILO
 Keep it up. It was a really great class.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
 Milo, before you go.
 (hesitates)
 I know you're participating in Professor Katie Watson's study. I'm participating myself, interviewing others. I was wondering if I could have a copy of her notes from your sessions together?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
 I don't see why you'd need them.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
 I would just love to pick your brain.

Milo smiles. He's vain enough to comply.

MILO
 Alright. Let me know what you think.

Before another word can be said, Milo turns and exits.

6 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

6

Milo enters the hallway.

Monique waits by the door, cradling her books to her chest.

Milo halts immediately. He approaches her, a lazy grin on his face.

MILO
 Back for round two?

She smiles up at him.

MONIQUE

Hi. A group of us are getting together in a few hours to study, and I was wondering if you wanted to come?

Milo taken aback at first, leans against the wall, towering over her.

MILO

I'd love to. I've got a lot of catching up to do.

Monique pushes off the wall, walking backwards and away from him as her smile grows.

MONIQUE

Great! Meet on the quad at 4.

Milo grins, completely enamored with Monique as she turns, not giving him the opportunity to respond.

He shakes his head as he turns in the opposite direction.

MONIQUE

Oh, and Milo?

Milo stops, turning fully in her direction.

MONIQUE

I'm sure we'll have our round two, and three, and four.

She smiles coyly and turns on her heels.

Milo watches her go, his mouth half open. Finally, he turns to the double doors and exits.

7 INT. MILO AND THOMAS' APARTMENT - DAY 7

Milo enters.

He flings his bag onto the counter and stalks into the

8 INT. KITCHEN 8

Thomas stands in front of the stove, stirring some form of liquid in a pot.

THOMAS

How was your bright and early?

Milo leans against the countertop and shrugs.

MILO
It was alright.

Thomas nods.

THOMAS
You're back kinda early?

MILO
Yeah, had a good discussion,
Englund gave us the rest of the day
off to study.

THOMAS
Ugh, I love Englund. I have no
interest in psychology whatsoever,
but that man can teach.

Milo laughs. He opens the fridge and grabs a water.

MILO
Yeah, well. It was a good one.

Thomas chuckles.

Milo resumes his stance against the counter.

Thomas stirs the soup once more.

MILO
Hey, uh, this girl in one of my
classes invited me to come study
with some of her friends later
today. You wanna come?

Thomas doesn't move his eyes from the pot.

THOMAS
Who's the girl?

Milo scratches his head.

MILO
You might know her, actually. It's,
uh, Monique.

Thomas suddenly turns his head, his eyes boring into Milo's.

THOMAS
I **know** you aren't talking about
Monique Fuller!

Milo laughs.

MILO
Yeah, that one I think.

THOMAS
Okay, if Monique invited you to
"study" I really don't think you
should bring a friend.

MILO
No, it really is studying.

THOMAS
Monique is literally the nicest
person. She always brings me gummy
bears to the games... What the hell
is she doing trying to hangout with
you?

Milo laughs wholeheartedly, the laugh reverberating from his chest.

MILO
Oh, stop it. I'm so nice!

THOMAS
Yeah, sure.

MILO
Are you in or not?

Thomas looks at Milo like he's grown two heads.

THOMAS
Oh I'm so in. No questions asked.

Milo stands and starts out of kitchen.

MILO
Great, be ready by four.

Milo exits.

Thomas stares after Milo. How in the hell did he pull this off?...

9 EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - LATE AFTERNOON

9

Monique sits on a marble bench, her Psych book on her lap. Her hair is pulled back in a high ponytail and a pencil sits behind her ear. She's the picture of perfection.

DANA LIVINGSTON, 19 and a fellow cheerleader, sits- more like crashes- into Monique.

Dana's wild-child personality directly reflects in her hippie-style clothing. A lollipop dangles between her lips and she smacks it annoyingly loud.

MONIQUE
(playfully)
Could you be anymore annoying?

Dana shrugs.

DANA
I could, but you never let me try.

She pouts animatedly.

MONIQUE
Any clue where Cameron is?

Dana shrugs.

DANA
He said he'd be here at 4.

Monique laughs.

MONIQUE
Oh, so 4:30, got it.

Monique chews her lip for a moment, then closes her book and turns towards Dana.

MONIQUE
I hope you don't mind, but I invited someone.

Dana freezes, sucker in hand.

DANA
You... invited someone? To *my* study session?

Monique grabs Dana's hand in an attempt to plead with her.

MONIQUE
I know, I know. It was shitty not to ask you first, and I'm so sorry for assuming it'd be okay... but he's really cool!

Dana slouches.

DANA

He?

She almost looks sad about it.

MONIQUE

Yeah, he's just a guy from my Psych class.

Dana stands and paces the length of the quad.

DANA

You're bringing some Psych himbo to my study session?

Monique sighs. She stands and grabs Dana by her shoulders.

As she talks, Milo and Thomas approach. They're within earshot, but the girls haven't spotted them yet.

MONIQUE

He's actually really smart! I think you'll really like him!

DANA

Do you?

Monique shies away.

MONIQUE

Do I what?

Dana rolls her eyes as Milo and Thomas finally enter the quad.

DANA

Really like him?

Milo approaches, his walk suave.

MILO

Yeah, Monique, do you?

Thomas laughs and moves to stand next to Milo.

Monique turns scarlet as she turns to collect her books. She pauses upon sight of Thomas, who Dana cannot look away from.

The hormones swirling in the air are palpable as silent conversations happen between Milo and Monique: will she answer the question? Is she *already* interested with little to no effort on his part?

MILO

This is Thomas, I hope you don't mind I brought him. He's my roommate.

Monique smiles with familiarity.

MONIQUE

Thomas, yeah! I somehow always draw your name for the away-games treat baskets.

THOMAS

And I always, and I do mean *always*, appreciate the gummy bears. Nice to finally meet the face behind them!

Monique smiles, turning her attention to Dana who is **still** staring at Thomas.

MONIQUE

Thomas, Milo, this is my friend Dana. This is technically her study session, so I don't know if-

DANA

Thomas, so glad to meet you.

She puts the sucker back in her mouth, almost sexually. Awkwardly. Cringy.

Thomas remains completely oblivious to her obvious come-on. He turns to Milo. His whisper non-discreet.

THOMAS

(loud whisper)

What exactly are we studying?

Milo shrugs.

MONIQUE

Maybe we should just get going. I mean, Cameron knows where the clearing is, he can meet us there.

Dana watches Thomas.

THOMAS

Clearing?

Milo watches Monique.

MILO

I'm sure it's fine, right? Let's
get going.

Monique stays quiet as she grabs her things from the bench
and stalks towards her car.

Dana, Milo, and Thomas follow behind.

10 EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS 10

The four exit Monique's car- it's a sleek black beauty that
fits her well.

Monique carries her backpack.

Milo has his rucksack slung carelessly over his shoulder.

Dana and Thomas are both empty-handed.

As they tretch into the forest, Dana starts her chatter.

11 EXT. FOREST 11

Dana matches pace with Monique.

DANA

You didn't tell me that you were
inviting someone totally cute with
a totally hot friend?

MONIQUE

Who, Thomas?

DANA

Uh yeah, Thomas.

Monique stifles a laugh.

MONIQUE

Is that all you think about?

Dana shrugs.

DANA

That, and the downfall of douchie
dictators.

Behind them, Milo and Thomas engage in a conversation of
their own.

THOMAS

Should we be concerned that they're taking us into the woods?

Milo chuckles.

MILO

No, I don't think so. Besides, they're harmless. I can pick both of them up in one hand and chuck 'em across the forest.

Thomas' eyes grow wide.

THOMAS

Yeah, but you know what they say about cheerleaders, right? They're flexible and fast.

Milo guffaws, throwing his head back.

His laugh alerts the two girls of their presence, and they turn around to stare at the boys.

Milo catches Monique's eye and throws her a cheeky grin.

DANA

Hey, we have one more coming who's bringing some green. You guys down to get a little *elated*?

Thomas catches Milo by the arm.

THOMAS

Wait, I brought my own! I know I wasn't exactly invited and didn't really know what kind of hangout this is, so I don't have to smoke your guys'.

(gestures to Milo)

You wanna walk back with me to grab it?

Milo nods.

MILO

Sure, we'll catch up in a minute.

MONIQUE

The clearing is straight ahead, you can't miss it.

MILO

Send a smoke signal.

Milo turns to Thomas.

MILO
 Alright, race you there.

Milo takes off in the direction of car.

THOMAS
 Please no, you know I'm not good
 runner!

Thomas yells, as he chases after Milo.

Dana tugs on Monique's arm and the girls continue into the forest.

Milo and Thomas turn back towards the car.

12 EXT. FOREST CLEARING 12

Monique and Dana enter arm-in-arm.

Dana plops down on the grass and splays out on the ground, her eyes turned toward the sun.

Monique slides her backpack to the ground and opens it quickly. She pulls a small blanket from inside and spreads it over the grass.

DANA
 All the stops, huh?

She smirks, but Monique ignores her.

Monique busies herself with straightening the blanket as we cut to:

13 EXT. FOREST BUSHES 13

The scene plays out from a first person perspective through the bushes. We watch Monique flatten and straighten the blanket.

Heavy breaths penetrate the air, but the girls take no notice.

We move to the left, the branches rustle. What will happen? Is this some Psycho Killer?...

MONIQUE
 (calling)
 Thomas! We see you in there.

Monique stalks towards the trees.

MONIQUE

Come out, come out, wherever you
areeee!

(beat)

Thomas, I literally see you.

She makes eye contact with the camera, hands on her hips.

Thomas can't help but crack up. He climbs out of the bushes
and walks to Monique, still laughing.

Monique rolls her eyes through her smile. She turns and BOOM!
Milo's in your face.

Monique jumps, clapping a hand to her mouth.

It's a cheap jump-scare, yet it's effective.

Dana rolls around on the ground, clearly enjoying Monique's
embarrassment.

Milo and Thomas double over, their laugh infectious.

Monique finds it... less amusing. She slaps Milo's arms and
chest and he does his best to shield himself.

MONIQUE

That

(slap)

Wasn't

(slap)

Funny, you asshole!

More slaps.

Milo laughs and grabs her wrists.

MILO

You're right, you're right, I'm
sorry, that wasn't funny.

He stifles his laugh.

THOMAS

You know what would be funny? Doing
this to Cameron.

Dana sits up, points at Thomas.

DANA

YES.

Just then, a whistled tune floats through the clearing.

DANA

Annoyingly on cue, as always.

Milo and Thomas disperse, Milo cuts left, Thomas cuts right.

Monique watches with her arms crossed over her chest and Dana just lays in the sun, feigning oblivion.

CAMERON DAVIS, 20 and the most obvious theater kid to ever exist, enters. His perfectly styled hair only kind of moves in the breeze, and his denim jacket is distressed in the most perfect way.

How did Milo ever end up with such perfectly put together people?...

As he passes through the opening of the clearing, he waves to Dana and Monique, but suddenly, Thomas JUMPS OUT IN FRONT OF HIM!

Cameron squeals, entirely too dramatic. He falls on his butt and quickly scoots away, kicking his legs out to push him backwards, away from the now nonthreatening Thomas.

Milo is quick with the snatch! He grabs Cameron's legs and pulls him back down the encased pathway. His laugh echoes off the trees.

Dana finally stands from the ground and watches, not really laughing this time.

THOMAS

Okay... Milo, I think that's enough.

Thomas laughs nervously.

Milo's laugh only grows heartier as Cameron squeals, digging his nails into the ground.

MONIQUE

Milo!

She marches forward and pushes him off Cameron.

Milo's laughter finally falls to whimpers as he tries, and fails, to hold it back.

THOMAS

Bro, come on.

Milo's laughter stops immediately. Awkwardly. He stares at everyone staring at him.

Cameron, terrified, watches from the ground.

MILO

Too far?

Thomas shakes his head.

THOMAS

Yeah, dude. Too far.

Milo runs a hand through his hair, then offers that hand to Cameron.

MILO

Hey, I'm so, so sorry. I just got nervous, and wanted to impress you guys... I'm so sorry, it won't happen again.

When Cameron just stares, he nudges his hand in Cameron's direction again.

Cameron finally takes it and pulls himself up.

CAMERON

It's fine. I guess, it's only grass stains on my favorite light-washed jeans. No biggie.

Thomas snorts in his throat.

MILO

I'm so sorry, Cameron. I'm Milo... can I try and get the stains out of your jeans?

CAMERON

I think I can manage.

Monique rubs Milo's arm affectionately.

MONIQUE

Just keep trying, okay?

Milo offers her a small smile and the group heads to the middle of the clearing.

14 EXT. FOREST CLEARING - EVENING

14

As the sunrise settles in, Cameron offers up a joint and a lighter. He passes it to Dana.

Milo studies his Psych book, highlighting different paragraphs.

Monique peaks at what he's highlighting and highlights the same, almost unsure about what her initial answers were.

CAMERON

(to Dana)

You can light that if you want.

Dana, with the joint already lit, smiles cheekily at Cameron.

DANA

My pleasure.

Dana passes to Monique, but she shakes her head.

MONIQUE

I'm almost done.

Dana and Cameron pass the joint between them.

Thomas procures his joint holder and removes one joint. He lights it, takes a pull, and passes to Milo.

Milo takes one big pull, and back to Thomas.

CAMERON

What do you have?

He eyes Thomas' joint.

THOMAS

It's a hybrid. Just enough to help you focus without being fully ziggity zooted.

Cameron snorts. He holds up his joint for inspection.

CAMERON

This is a top grade pure sativa. It's really great for actors, helps you focus.

Thomas eyes him.

THOMAS

Can I hit it?

Cameron passes the joint.

Thomas takes a pull. He looks at the joint as he exhales and his eyebrows pinch together.

THOMAS
(coughing)
Yeah, if top grade means
kindergarten. Seriously, man,
whoever is selling you that is
ripping you all the way off.

Milo finally looks up from his book.

MILO
Lemme see.

Milo fingers the joint as he takes a pull.

He coughs once.

MILO
Yeah, no. Try this.

He passes Thomas' joint to Cameron.

Cameron takes a pull. He coughs like someone having an asthma attack. It's enough coughing to catch Monique's attention.

MONIQUE
Let me see that.

She snatches the joint from Cameron and takes a pull. Handles it like a champ.

MILO
Better, right?

Monique nods, slightly amazed.

DANA
Where did you get that?

THOMAS
Oh, Milo gets it for me.

Everyone switches their gaze to Milo. Milo shrugs.

MILO
I just know a guy, that's all.

Cameron moves to sit on his knees.

CAMERON

If you can get me more of this...
all will be forgiven! The entire
scare will never be mentioned
again, and I'll never complain, not
once, if my jeans are ruined! Which
they probably are.

Milo laughs awkwardly, nervously. Should he say yes? Would he
ever even hang out with this exact group of people ever
again?

MILO

Uh, yeah, I- I guess I could do
that. What do you want?

Cameron looks to Dana for help.

DANA

Whatever that is, or a sativa.
(conspiratorially)
He doesn't do well with indicas.

CAMERON

(embarrassed)
Shut up, Dana...

Milo laughs gently.

MILO

Yeah, I can get that.
(to Cameron)
Let me give you my number and you
can just text me when you wanna
buy.

They exchange phones. Monique watches as they do it.

When Cameron receives his phone back, he hugs it to his
chest.

CAMERON

All is already forgiven, new
friends.

Monique laughs. She peaks over Cameron's shoulder, looking
for Milo's number on the screen. She's discreet enough to not
be openly caught, but Milo definitely sees this.

Monique goes back to her textbook. She only looks up to speak
to Milo.

MONIQUE
Hey, Milo, I found something
interesting you might like.

Milo scoots over to Monique. He leans over to her shoulder,
their faces inches apart.

MILO
(reading)
Why people like scaring other
people... What about it?

Monique holds the book up to him.

MONIQUE
This specific psychologist talks
about the value of being able to
scare others.

MILO
How could that hold value?

MONIQUE
It feeds your ego.

Milo chuckles.

MILO
I think that's a reach.

MONIQUE
No, no, it makes a lot of sense
actually. By scaring people, it's
like you're asserting some kind of
dominance over them.

Milo makes a face at her.

MILO
If that makes a lot of sense to
you, I'll bite. Scaring people has
nothing to do with dominance. Maybe
it's just a need to please others.

Monique twists her body to fully face him.

Thomas, Dana, and Cameron watch on quietly.

MONIQUE
I don't see how.

Milo leans back, supporting himself with his palms.

MILO

You're bringing joy to others at the expense of one person. How can that not be about people pleasing?

Monique cocks an eyebrow.

MONIQUE

So you're calling yourself a people pleaser?

Milo laughs.

MILO

No, I'm just saying that I think it's a bogus claim. There's nothing to really support that.

MONIQUE

But there is. Right here it says that people who scare others don't see the person they're scaring as a victim.

MILO

Then why do they do it?

MONIQUE

Because they can. They can scare somebody. They can control them.

Milo shrugs.

MILO

Alright, alright. You win this round.

Monique smiles cheekily.

MONIQUE

So you agree?

MILO

I didn't say all that, now.

MONIQUE

Still, I'll take my win.

MILO

I'll get you next time for round three.

As the sun sets deeper into the horizon, Monique stands and packs her books away.

MONIQUE

As usual, we got nothing done. Good luck on your midterms, everyone.

She pulls the blanket out from under Cameron and Dana and folds it neatly. She glows from her win, obviously still in her head about it.

Milo stands.

MILO

What're you stressing about?

Monique huffs.

MONIQUE

Nothing. I'm just projecting. I come here to study, they come to get high, but I have to listen to it later if they fail.

Milo places a comforting hand on her shoulder.

MILO

I understand how frustrating that is. But, they're grown, too, and their grades are their responsibility. It's up to you to set those boundaries.

Monique nods.

MONIQUE

I know. I'm working on it.

Milo smiles and wraps an arm around her shoulder. He pulls her in the direction of the clearing, resting his cheek on top of her head as they follow the others out of the clearing.

15 EXT. CLEARING - DUSK

15

As the group walks ahead, Milo and Monique hang back.

MONIQUE

So what's your story?

MILO

My story?

Monique shrugs.

MONIQUE
Yeah, like, why are you here?

Milo laughs.

MILO
Oh, I see, the whole "get to know
you" questions.

MONIQUE
So?

MILO
Fine, fine. I'm here to learn
psychology.
(grand gesture)
Happy?

She isn't.

MONIQUE
Come on. Tell me something real.

MILO
Something real.
(ponders this.)
Okay. I followed my best friend
from kindergarten all through high
school and all the way here.

MONIQUE
Thomas?

Milo nods. He has the grace to look ashamed.

MONIQUE
That's something real, but that
doesn't tell me why you're here.

MILO
I did tell you why I'm here.

MONIQUE
You didn't tell me all of it.

MILO
(sighs)
Okay. Truth is, I only got in
because I agreed to participate in
this weird psych study.

MONIQUE

That's hard to believe. I've known you for all of an afternoon and you're probably one of the most intelligent people I know.

Milo shrugs.

MILO

I guess.

MONIQUE

You shouldn't downplay yourself, you know.

MILO

Yeah, so I've heard.

MONIQUE

So what's this study about?

Milo waves her off.

MILO

Nothing of importance. Tell me about you.

MONIQUE

Okay, well... I'm from here, my parents are investment bankers, I wanna be a therapist for children.

MILO

Why specifically children?

Monique shrugs, modest.

MONIQUE

I like helping people, and I think children are the future of our world. Someone has to protect them.

Milo nods. Looks at her fondly. Amazing.

He pulls her forward and they're back with the group.

16

INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - EVENING

16

The ticking of the clock is back and louder than ever. The room remains silent.

Milo sits on one end of the room on a white leather couch, Katie on the opposite end at her desk.

Katie stares Milo down, but in a loving way.

KATIE

Since this is our first session, I just want to get a feel for how things are going for you thus far and just go over a few things.

Milo nods. He's not exactly comfortable, but more closed off.

MILO

What would you like to go over?

Katie folds her hands together on the desk.

KATIE

I just want to remind you that the purpose of this study is to explore the mental health and wellbeing of adults who lost a parent when they were children. Are you still okay in participating?

MILO

Yes.

Katie nods.

KATIE

Okay. Let's get started. Which parent did you lose?

Milo swallows. He fidgets, but eventually meets Katie's stare.

MILO

I lost my mom.

Katie nods. She takes note of this.

KATIE

How old were you when she passed?

MILO

I was ten.

KATIE

Wow, that's really young to lose someone as important as your mom. I can't imagine how hard that must be.

Milo nods.

MILO
Have you ever lost a parent, Mrs.
Watson?

Katie smiles sympathetically.

KATIE
Please, call me Katie. And yes, I
lost my dad right after college.

MILO
(suave)
So recently then?

Katie almost blushes. She composes herself.

KATIE
Let's reshift our focus to you. How
did your mom die?

This makes Milo uncomfortable. He puffs his cheeks, releases
the air.

MILO
She killed herself.

There's a brief moment where we flashback to

17 INT. MILO'S CHILDHOOD HOME - FLASHBACK 17

KARLA TURNER, Milo's mother, hangs from the stairwell. Her
eyes bulge, the rope sits tightly around her neck. Her face
would be red had there been any life left in her. She rotates
slightly with the draft of the room.

18 INT. KATIE'S OFFICE 18

Milo blinks the memory away.

KATIE
How?

MILO
She hung herself.

Katie makes note of this.

KATIE
That must have been devastating.

MILO

It was, considering I was the one
who found her.

19 INT. MILO'S CHILDHOOD HOME - FLASHBACK 19

Young Milo enters.

He stares up at Karla's hanging body. His eyes wide and
watery.

20 INT. KATIE'S OFFICE 20

Katie stares at Milo, her face passive.

KATIE

Do you remember how it felt,
finding her like that?

Milo takes a deep breath. His face calms and he sits up
straight.

MILO

I was terrified. Now that I'm older
I understand it a little better.

Katie nods.

KATIE

That's good, Milo. That's really
good that you understand.

Milo nods.

MILO

You don't have to talk to me like
I'm still ten, you know.

Katie's eyebrow raises.

KATIE

Pardon?

MILO

You're talking to me like I'm ten.

Katie shakes her head.

KATIE

I apologize if I've offended you,
Milo.

Milo shakes his head.

MILO

You haven't. I'm just stating a fact. I'm not ten, I know that my mother killed herself, and that's that.

Katie nods. She eyes the clock. Their time is nowhere near close to being up.

KATIE

Okay... I see that we're not going to get much further, so why don't we call it a night?

Milo's on his feet.

MILO

Works for me.

KATIE

Next Friday-

MILO

5, yeah, I know.

Milo exits swiftly. The door slams behind him.

Katie sinks in her chair, almost defeated. She studies her notes for a moment, then begins scribbling.

21 EXT. DINER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

21

Milo and Thomas sit on the back of Thomas' truck in a busy small-town diner parking lot.

The lot is completely full- it's the most popular place in town.

They eat together in silence; burgers, fries, sodas.

Thomas watches Milo for a moment, sizing him up before he speaks.

THOMAS

How'd that shrink thing go?

Milo chews silently. He swallows, then grins at Thomas.

MILO

It was pretty okay. Nothing too bad.

THOMAS
Nothing too bad?...

Milo nods.

MILO
Yeah, standard questions. I gave
the therapized answers she wanted,
and we're smooth sailing to a Psych
degree baby!

Thomas laughs heartily.

THOMAS
That's what I like to hear!

MILO
Only a few sessions to go and I
have a fully paid tuition.

Thomas nods and takes another bite of his burger.

THOMAS
So, what do you think of that study
group?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
I don't really know.

Thomas sighs.

THOMAS
C'mon, I know you have some
thoughts about everything and
everyone.

MILO
Not that many.

THOMAS
Well, I for one think they were
pretty okay. I didn't know what to
expect at first. Monique and Dana
are pretty cool. Cameron seems
nice.

Milo nods. He considers this.

MILO
Yeah, they were okay.

THOMAS

How do you feel picking up for them? I know that was kind of an out of the blue thing.

MILO

It just caught me off guard that they even asked. I don't know. Just seems like a weird crowd for Monique to run with, I guess.

THOMAS

Yeah, I didn't mean to put you on the spot like that.

Milo takes a bite of a fry. He waves Thomas off.

MILO

It wasn't that big of a deal, don't worry about it.

Thomas nods. He takes another small bite of his burger and washes it down with a sip of coke.

THOMAS

Do you think we'll hang with them again?

Milo shrugs.

MILO

I haven't really thought about it.

Thomas shoves him playfully.

THOMAS

Yes you have.

Milo laughs.

MILO

Well. I've thought about hanging out with *one* of them again.

Thomas laughs loudly.

THOMAS

So you do like her!

Milo shrugs like he's got a secret.

MILO

I don't know, man. She's just different.

THOMAS
Different how?

MILO
I haven't figured it out yet, but
if hanging out with her friends and
picking up for them will get me
closer to her, then so be it.

Just then, a massive excuse for a truck pulls into the lot.
It slows in front of Thomas' truck.

Milo wipes his mouth and eyes the passenger down.

PASSENGER
Hey bro! Can I have this spot?

Thomas sets his burger down.

THOMAS
We're gonna finish eating, and then
sure, you can have it if you want
it. Or, you can park in the grass
with the other trucks.

The MAN gets out of the truck. He's stocky and tall, with
muscles about the size of his truck. He's your typical
meathead type- complete with a sleeveless shirt and backwards
hat.

PASSENGER
Come on, homie, just lemme get the
spot! That's a long walk and it's
cold out here.

Thomas laughs icily. It's the first time we've ever seen him
anything other than happy.

THOMAS
First of all, I'm not your homie.
Secondly, I said you can have the
spot when we're finished eating.

The man laughs. He approaches Milo and Thomas slowly, his
hands raised.

PASSENGER
I'm not trying to cause any
trouble, brotha, I just need a good
place to park. Y'all always want to
get hostile.

THOMAS

Now wait a damn minute, I-

Before Thomas can say anything else, Milo is in action.

Milo jumps off the back of the truck and has the man pinned to his own truck in an instant. He holds the man by the collar of his shirt.

The DRIVER of the truck, another stocky man, jumps out and is around the truck in seconds.

MILO

He's not your *homie*, your *brotha*,
or any other shitty nickname you
wanna call him, got it?

Thomas grabs Milo's arm, but he only pushes him off.

THOMAS

Milo, it's cool.

The driver grabs Milo, but Milo pushes him off as well. He brings a hand up to the passengers throat, whose face turns red almost immediately.

By now, some people have gathered in the parking lot.

MILO

Don't you **ever** say another word to
him again, do you understand me?

Milo is menacing as he spits the words.

Thomas steps into Milo's line of view.

THOMAS

Milo, come on, man, that's enough!
We don't wanna start something so
close to campus, okay? Just put him
down and let's go.

(Milo doesn't move)

Milo, now.

Milo finally looks at Thomas. He drops the man to the ground and kicks him once.

The man coughs. He holds his throat.

Milo turns and snatches his food from the tailgate and opens the passenger side door.

Thomas remains silent as he grabs his food and opens the drivers side door. He enters the truck.

22

INT. THOMAS' TRUCK

22

It's silent and tense. The radio stays off. Neither boys utter a word.

Thomas hits the steering wheel once.

THOMAS

Damnit, Milo!

Milo flinches at the outburst. He rests his forehead against his fingertips.

MILO

(quietly)

I'm sorry.

THOMAS

Oh, you're *sorry*? That could've very easily gone so, so wrong! You're surviving solely on scholarships and grants right now. My parents have their names plastered on every athletic building on campus. How many times am I going to have to remind you that enough is enough? That you're pushing too far?

Milo doesn't say anything, he just stares out the window.

Thomas sighs.

MILO

I don't know what happened. I just... I snapped.

THOMAS

I get it. But I've been dealing with that shit my entire life. You snapping so much isn't helping. You've gotta get ahold of yourself, man.

Milo nods.

MILO

You're right. I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

Thomas takes a moment to compose himself. He takes three deep breaths before he speaks.

The silence becomes unbearable.

THOMAS

We're good. I appreciate you having my back. I know you meant well.

Milo's that little boy again as he nods.

MILO

Yeah. But you know what they say. The road to hell is paved with good intentions.

Thomas nods. He drives silently, but the irritation fades from his posture. He shakes his head, but turns the radio on, still driving back to the apartment.

Milo's phone chirps. He checks it immediately.

CAMERON (TEXTING)

Hey Milo! Its Cam, was wondering if u could still pick up 4 me?

Milo responds immediately.

MILO (TEXTING)

Sure, how much?

CAMERON (TEXTING)

However much 20 bucks will get me of that good mary jane!

Milo chuckles.

THOMAS

What's up?

MILO

Cameron just hit me up. He said, and I quote,
(imitating Cameron)
"However much 20 bucks will get me of that good mary jane."

Thomas laughs.

THOMAS

That kid. We gotta teach him the lingo.

Milo nods as he scrolls through his phone. He taps a contact, then puts the phone to his ear.

MILO

Joshua? Hey, was wondering if you're around for a pickup? ...

Yeah, just a G. ... Okay, see you
in 10.

Thomas looks over at Milo quickly.

THOMAS
Where we meeting?

MILO
That sketchy gas station on 10th
avenue.

THOMAS
The red and blue one?

Milo nods, still entranced in his phone.

Thomas smiles to himself.

THOMAS
That's my favorite one, they have
good hotdogs.

23 EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

23

Milo and Thomas pull up to the side of the gas station, just
close enough to the light to not be suspicious.

THOMAS
This stuff is gonna knock that kid
on his ass.

Milo laughs.

MILO
Oh you know it is! It knocked *me* on
my ass.

THOMAS
Do you think he's gonna ask us to
smoke with him again?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
I don't know. Would you even want
to?

THOMAS
I don't know, dude, it was kinda
sketchy last time we went.

MILO

Right?! I'm glad I wasn't the only one kinda put off from it.

THOMAS

I mean, his shit is good, but damn, I don't know if it's worth it.

Milo nods.

MILO

No, same for sure. I think I'd have to be pretty bent out of shape to even consider it.

Thomas shrugs.

THOMAS

Maybe he's just lonely?

An old-school Jeep rolls up next to them, and JOSHUA jumps out. He's stocky, almost nerdy, and not the person you'd expect to be a drug dealer.

MILO

Crazy people get lonely too, I guess.

Milo rolls down the window.

MILO

Hey man, thanks for meeting so quick.

Joshua leans down, his head almost in the window.

JOSHUA

That's no problem.

He holds a cellophane bag between his fingers.

Milo taps away at his phone. There's a quick *cha-ching* noise from Joshua's phone.

Milo takes the bag quickly. He disguises it as a quick handshake.

MILO

Pleasure doing business with you.

Joshua laughs.

JOSHUA

If you need anything else, you know where to find me.

MILO

Will do.

JOSHUA

If you guys wanna link again, just hit me up.

Thomas leans over the seat, finally speaking.

THOMAS

We're on a tolerance break right now, that other shit was so good. Thanks for the invite, bro!

Milo mock-salutes with two fingers. He rolls the window up before Joshua can respond.

Thomas flips the truck in reverse and the two are outta there.

24

INT. MONIQUE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

24

Pastel pink curtains, a faux-leather couch, rugs, movies, and CDs litter the living room of Monique's extraordinarily clean apartment.

Monique sits cross-legged on the couch, her psych book in her lap. For the first time, she's completely dishelved. Her hair's a mess, her clothes are wrinkled, yet somehow she seems just as perfect as ever.

Dana and Cameron, however, seem as carefree as always. They trade a phone back and forth, looking at memes and videos. Their laughs are disturbingly loud.

Monique's head twitches, like she's fighting her own concentration.

There's a quick rap at the door.

Monique springs off the couch.

MONIQUE

I've got it.

She moves to the front door, smoothing her clothes out.

She opens it.

Milo and Thomas stand on the other side.

MILO

Hi.

She smiles up at him and steps aside so the two can enter.

Milo walks in first, closely followed by Thomas.

Milo approaches Cameron.

CAMERON

Ugh, I'm so excited for this.

Milo passes the cellophane bag to Cameron, but doesn't quite let him take it out of his hand.

MILO

Aht, aht. That's \$20.

Cameron scowls at Milo, digs a \$20 bill from his pocket, and slaps it on Milo's palm. He grabs the cellophane bag and holds it up for inspection.

Inside, one little nug sits.

Cameron, disgusted, looks up at Milo.

CAMERON

This... this is nothing?

Milo laughs.

MILO

Being your weed mule isn't free, Cameron. However much weed you want, you gotta pay that plus my \$10 gratuity fee for pickup *and* delivery.

Cameron looks between Milo and the bag.

CAMERON

So how much is this?

Thomas steps up.

THOMAS

It's a gram.

Cameron opens the bag and removes the nug. He twists it around in his hands.

CAMERON
How do I smoke this?...

Thomas sighs and grabs Cameron's arm. He pulls him off the floor and towards the open kitchen.

THOMAS
You have to grind it up...

Dana jumps up from the floor.

DANA
This I've gotta see.

She exits.

Monique hovers over the couch. She eyes Milo, then tucks a strand of stray hair behind her ear and falls back onto the couch. She puts her textbook back in her lap.

Milo moves to sit next to her. He hovers midair.

MILO
(gesturing to couch)
Is this okay?

Monique nods.

MONIQUE
Thank you for being nice to my friends. I know they're kind of a handful.

Milo chuckles. He leans towards Monique as if he were going to share his darkest secrets.

MILO
Your friends could be four handfuls and they still couldn't keep me away from you.

Monique blushes scarlet. The same piece of hair falls from behind her ear. She tucks it again.

MONIQUE
Sorry I'm such a mess.

She rushes to smooth her wrinkled clothes.

MILO
I think you're perfect.

From the kitchen, a ruckus ruins the quiet moment.

DANA

Cameron, you absolute idiot. You need a *grinder* to grind the weed! Nothing in that drawer is going to help you.

Milo chuckles quietly. He leans away from Monique.

MILO

Do you think you're ready for the midterm?

Monique shrugs, her cheeks are still tinted pink.

MONIQUE

I'm not entirely sure. There's so much that I understand, but I'm just not retaining. I don't know what to do.

Milo turns to her.

MILO

Maybe you just need an actual study partner? I know you probably can't get anything done with these guys around.

Monique snorts.

MONIQUE

That's an understatement. I mean... I love them to death, don't get me wrong. They're practically family. But sometimes it seems like all they want to do is get high.

Milo tilts his head.

MILO

Then why stick around?

Monique shrugs.

MONIQUE

I don't want to ruin our friendship. We have a ton of fun together. I'm not saying I'm completely innocent. I get high with them, too. But I like being sober just as much.

MILO

I see. Have you ever thought to
just tell them no?

Monique laughs.

MONIQUE

I told them I didn't want to
hangout tonight because I wanted to
study.

(gestures to kitchen)

Does that look like studying to
you?

Milo looks to the kitchen.

Inside, Thomas teaches Cameron how grinders work and how to
grind his weed properly. He's animated in his teaching,
probably talking louder than necessary.

MILO

So, whaddya say? Want to have an
actual study date?

Monique almost blanches.

MONIQUE

Study date?

Milo laughs.

MILO

Yes. Study date. Perhaps some
snacks, good music, books, talking?

Monique raises an eyebrow.

MONIQUE

Sounds like an actual date.

MILO

Would that be such a bad thing?

Monique hesitates for a moment. She tucks an imaginary strand
of hair behind her ear, then looks up at Milo.

MONIQUE

I think a date would be nice.

Milo grins- and I mean really beams. It's precious.

MILO

Yeah?

Monique's face grows firm.

MONIQUE
Yes, but under one condition.

MILO
Anything.

Monique cracks a smile.

MONIQUE
We leave the tag-alongs at home.

Milo's answering grin is just as sweet.

MILO
I think I can live with that.

Just then, Thomas enters the living room, once again ruining the moment.

THOMAS
Monique, hi, sorry to interrupt...
do you have a broom?

MONIQUE
Um, yes, it's in the closet next to
the pantry.

She gestures with her hands.

Milo watches her every move, like she's the most precious thing in the world. Like she's already his. Like she's his *possession*.

Thomas gives a thumbs up and retreats back into the kitchen.

Monique laughs. She shakes her head.

MONIQUE
Toddlers, all of them.

Milo smiles, eyes still on her.

MILO
Definitely. How about some actual
studying?

Monique slides her book over.

MONIQUE
I'll take all the help I can get.

She smiles up at him.

Milo can't help it- he's hooked.

CUT TO:

25

EXT. CLEARING - AFTERNOON

25

Light breeze, sunny day- perfect for a date.

Milo sits on a picnic blanket with Monique.

They're dressed impeccably- Milo in a white T-shirt, faded jeans, and his signature leather jacket, Monique in a pretty sundress that compliments every curve she has.

Milo opens the picnic basket that sits between them and offers her a small finger sandwich.

MONIQUE

I'm glad we did this.

Milo smiles at her as she eats the sandwich in two quick bites.

MILO

Me too. It's nice to be alone with you for a little while.

Monique grins.

MONIQUE

(gesturing to him)

C'mere.

Milo scoots to Monique and lays his head in her lap.

Monique runs her fingers through his hair before planting a kiss on his head.

As Milo looks up, Monique is nowhere to be found, but Karla is in her place.

Karla continues playing with Milo's hair, soothing him as he looks up at her.

Karla suddenly moves Milo off of her and stands.

KARLA

I'll be right back.

Milo turns, but Karla is Monique again.

Monique runs, almost in slow motion, towards the small footpath to exit the clearing. Her dress billows around her.

Milo smiles, enamored.

He stands and smooths out his clothes.

There's no sound from the woods.

MILO

Monique?

He walks towards the edge of the clearing.

There's no answer from Monique.

Milo walks along the path. He listens for any sound from her-footsteps, twigs snapping, a laugh- anything.

But there's nothing.

As Milo rounds the bend in the path, he stops dead.

There, hanging in the tree, is Monique. Same position as his mother. There's brief flashes where he thinks it is Karla, but it distorts back to Monique and back to Karla, then back to Monique.

Milo screams.

CUT TO:

26 INT. MILO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 26

Milo sits up quickly, his scream elongated. Sweat covers his forehead.

Milo runs a finger through his hair, almost like searching for the fingers there from his dream.

He stands, then doubles over to catch his breath.

Milo's room is almost predictable. A small laptop, bare walls, a little desk that his own art covers. The biggest thing about his room is his queen sized bed.

Once Milo recovers, he moves to the door and exits.

27 INT. HALLWAY 27

Milo enters.

He walks towards the kitchen, but pauses when he hears voices floating from Thomas' room.

We almost float through his door.

28

INT. THOMAS' ROOM

28

Thomas lays on his twin bed, knees up, journal in his lap. He writes quietly, line by line. A phone sits between his shoulder and ear.

THOMAS

Yeah, I'm getting a lot of playing time, Mom.

...

Yeah, I've been starting.

...

Mom, I promise, I'm doing a lot better. You were right, I just had to shift my focus.

...

I know, just like dad says- focus is everything for success.

...

Just let me know when you guys can make it to a game so I can save you some seats.

...

I love you, too.

Thomas hangs up the phone.

He sighs to himself.

There's a faint knock on his door.

THOMAS

Yeah?

Milo pushes the door open.

He enters.

Thomas studies Milo. He takes in the sweat stain on his shirt and the obvious displacement of his hair. He closes his notebook.

MILO

Everything good?

Thomas nods.

THOMAS

Just a check in with good ole mom and pops.

Milo nods. He sits on the edge of Thomas' bed.

MILO
Just checking on their golden
child?

Thomas laughs.

THOMAS
Yeah, something like that. You
good?

Milo sighs.

MILO
Yeah, just weird dreams. What're
you working on?

Thomas opens his notebook to the page he was on.

THOMAS
(reading aloud)
How boring would life be if they
never left Eden?
If not one seductive red apple were
to never be eaten.
No war, no hate, no loved ones
bleeding.
Bliss be the result of ignorance
and blindly believing.
Faith is a trust fall into a dark
abyss.
And hope is praying that someone
actually sees this.
He has the whole world in his hand,
what keeps him from making a fist?

Milo nods.

MILO
I dig it. It's deep.

Thomas' offers a solemn smile.

THOMAS
You're probably the only person who
thinks that.

Milo shakes his head.

MILO
That wouldn't be true if you showed
your art to other people besides
me.

THOMAS
I just... I can't.

MILO
I know. But you've also never
tried.

Thomas sighs.

THOMAS
I know. I'm working on it.

Milo stands and offers a fist to Thomas.

Thomas bumps it.

MILO
You know I've got your back.

THOMAS
I know. Thanks, man.

Milo nods and exits.

Thomas lifts an arm behind his head and stares at his poem.

29

INT. PROFESSOR ENGLUND'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

29

Milo sits at the back of the now familiar classroom. As students file in, he doodles a vine of roses that look oddly familiar on the top of his notebook.

Monique enters.

She saunters up the stairs and past her usual seat, all the way up to the empty seat next to Milo.

Milo watches her as she deposits herself next to him.

MILO
Good morning, Monique.

She smiles up at him.

MONIQUE
Morning, Milo.

MILO
Someone looks happy today. Good weekend?

MONIQUE
The best.

Milo grins and slings an arm around the back of her chair. He scoots it towards him.

Professor Englund enters.

He sets up his laptop to the projector and takes note of everyone in the classroom.

MILO
(whispering)
You ready for round three?

30

INT. PROFESSOR ENGLUND'S CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

30

As Professor Englund dismisses the class, he calls up to Milo.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Milo, I thought we could chat if
you have a second?

Monique stands next to Milo, who packs his stuff away.

MILO
(to Monique)
I'll catch up with you later.

Monique smiles up at him and exits.

He slings his bag onto his shoulder and once again heads down the stairs.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
I was looking at Professor Watson's
notes on your first session and I'm
a little confused.

MILO
By what?

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Your session was supposed to be an
hour, yet she has you clocked in
for only 20 minutes.

Milo shrugs.

MILO
I guess I gave her the answers she
wanted.

Professor Englund shakes his head.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

I'm not entirely sure that's true.
She writes that you're dismissive,
rude, and defensive.

Milo shrugs.

MILO

I was just trying to be honest.

Professor Englund sighs and stares Milo down.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

Need I remind you that if you're
pulled from this study you lose
your grants? All your tuition money
for completion is down the drain
and it will all have been for
nothing.

Milo holds his hands up.

MILO

I understand, Professor Englund. It
was the first session, though.
There's plenty of time to turn this
around.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

Why don't you take the night and do
something out of your comfort zone?
Perhaps it will give you
perspective.

MILO

I will, Professor. I won't let you
down, I promise.

Milo hoists his bag higher on his shoulder as he exits.

Professor Englund watches him go.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

(to himself)
God I hope so.

31 INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

31

Milo stands in the small kitchen, an apron tied around his
waist. He viciously whisks eggs together in a large mixing
bowl.

Thomas enters.

He stops in his tracks as he takes in Milo's state.

THOMAS
(under his breath)
Oh no...

He leans against the countertop closest to Milo and slowly slides the knife block to himself.

THOMAS
Hey, bud. Whatcha makin?

Milo continues to beat the eggs.

MILO
Cupcakes.

Thomas nods encouragingly. He takes note of the multiple plates filled with cupcakes, a solid chocolate cake, and the loaf of bread in the oven. They all look less than appetizing.

THOMAS
That sounds great. Everything
alright?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
Yeah, I'm just fluffing some eggs.

THOMAS
Looks like you're beating the shit
out of some eggs, actually. Wanna
tell me what's going on?

Milo sighs and nearly drops the mixing bowl. He lets it slide onto the counter and covers his face with his hands.

MILO
I don't know. I have that session
with Katie coming up and I'm so
nervous about it. Englund's on my
ass about everything. He even
suggested I do something out of my
comfort zone, so here I am fucking
baking. I have this date with
Monique after the session and I'm
just... in over my head.

Thomas takes the whisk from Milo's hand and places it in the mixing bowl.

THOMAS

What's going on with the sessions?
I thought they were going well.

MILO

I've only had the one, but
apparently I'm dismissive, rude,
and defensive.

Thomas laughs.

THOMAS

You? Dismissive and rude?

Milo nods.

MILO

(exasperated)
Apparently!

THOMAS

What flavor are the cupcakes?

Thomas picks one up and takes a bite.

MILO

Vanilla.

THOMAS

Exactly! No man who makes vanilla
cupcakes is dismissive or rude!

Milo slouches and laughs.

MILO

Apparently I'm the exception.

THOMAS

You're not. You're just nervous.
Why don't you finish this batch,
and we can gorge ourselves on
cupcakes and watch some movies.

Milo nods.

MILO

Yeah, okay.

Thomas exits.

THOMAS (O.S.)

You finish up, I'm picking the
movie!

Milo smiles to himself, finally at ease.

32 INT. HALLWAY - EVENING 32

Milo sits outside Katie's office. His leg bounces.

MILO
(to himself)
Okay. Be open. Be real. Don't be
nervous. No need to be nervous.

His leg bounces faster and faster.

The door opens.

KATIE (O.S.)
Milo, come on in.

Milo stands.

33 INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - EVENING 33

Milo enters.

His head fills with the sound of the clock ticking.

He sits on one end of the room, arms folded across his chest.
He's almost entirely closed off.

Katie folds her hands in front of her at her desk.

KATIE
Glad to be back here, Milo.

Milo half shrugs.

MILO
Me too.

Katie nods, her lips pursed.

KATIE
We're going to go a little deeper
today, okay?

MILO
If you must.

He sits back. Milo is almost entirely closed off to this woman.

Katie shuffles some papers around on her desk until she finds what she's looking for.

KATIE

I lost my father not too long ago and throughout my adult life it's affected me greatly. After college, I focused greatly on my own personal growth and wellbeing in regards to my father dying.

Milo nods.

MILO

And what did you find?

KATIE

I found that early parental loss affects roughly 5% of the entire population.

Milo chuckles darkly.

MILO

Guess I'm considered a minority now.

KATIE

Not exactly. You're in the minority, yes, but that really depends on where you are now?

Milo cocks and eyebrow. He leans forward. Katie has his full attention now.

MILO

How do you figure?

Katie holds his stare. She doesn't falter. He doesn't intimidate her.

KATIE

I suppose that all depends on where your mental state is now.

MILO

And how should my mental state be?

KATIE

Would you say that you matured early?

Milo takes a shallow breath, like he's been punched in the gut.

MILO

I-

Katie cuts him off, her voice raises over his own.

KATIE

-Or would you say that you haven't
really matured at all?

MILO

I wouldn't-

KATIE

(adamant)

What about your learning habits?
I'm assuming you're a rather bright
student, but do you really apply
yourself?

Milo shakes his head, completely bewildered.

MILO

Okay.

He holds his hands out, almost like he's steadying himself.

KATIE

I'll give you a moment to think on
those things.

She sits back, lips still pursed. She jots down notes as
Milo's stare falls to the floor.

After a moment, he looks up at her, and it's a side to Milo
we haven't seen yet.

MILO

I had to mature. I didn't have a
choice. I'd say that much is true.

Katie leans forward. She matches his intensity.

KATIE

Why do you think you had no choice?
Do you blame yourself, Milo?

Milo swallows thickly.

MILO

I don't have anything to blame
myself for.

Katie remains silent. She toys with her pen on the desk, seemingly lost in thought.

KATIE

You know, this study can only be accurate if you don't lie to me, Milo. This is a safe space.

MILO

I'm not lying to you.

KATIE

I see.

(beat)

Did you know that out of those numbers, 3.5% of those are estimated to be children under the age of 18 in the United States?

MILO

No, I didn't know that.

KATIE

And did you know that it wasn't normal for you to feel the need to mature so quickly? And even though it is something that we see often in these children, it shouldn't be normalized. It wasn't fair for you to lose your childhood.

Milo remains silent.

KATIE

Do you know why you felt the need to do so?

He shakes his head.

KATIE

Because you were undoubtedly pressured to take on the role of your mother after her death. To keep your father sane, I'm assuming?

Milo nods. He finally looks up at her.

MILO

My father was a good man. He's done everything for me.

Katie tuts.

KATIE

I told you this study can only work
for you if you don't lie to me.

MILO

(through his teeth)
I'm not lying to you.

Katie leans forward again.

KATIE

Did your father allow you to see
him grieve, or did he hide his
feelings from you? Like they were
dirty, or taboo to feel?

Milo shakes his head, his face grows more and more red with
every question she asks.

MILO

Don't talk about my father that
way.

KATIE

Did he allow you to grieve in a
healthy way?

Milo rests his forehead in his palm.

MILO

(uttering)
No.

KATIE

What was that?

Milo finally looks up at her, and the pain is evident on his
face. His eyes water, his fists clench.

MILO

I said **no**.

Katie nods and writes this down.

KATIE

Good, Milo. You're being honest
with me now, *that* is what I need!

Milo's leg shakes. He's nervous or angry or maybe even sad.

KATIE

We're almost done for this session. I don't want to push you too far, but we have to get this out of the way. Do you think you can handle that tonight?

MILO

I can handle anything you throw at me.

Katie nods, almost lost in thought again.

KATIE

I see.

(silence)

In my studies, I found that children who lose a parent early on in life tend to develop mental disorders: depression, anxiety, maybe even something as simple as a sleeping problem. Would you say any of these things are true?

Milo hesitates, but nods.

MILO

I've never been diagnosed, but some days I feel more anxious than others.

Katie nods.

KATIE

Can you describe this anxiety?

Milo wrings his fingers together in his lap. For a moment, it's like he's transformed back into that small boy.

MILO

It's like closing my eyes and seeing my mom hanging from the stairwell again. It's feeling like if I turn a corner too quickly I'll run right into her.

Katie writes this down, her hand moves at lightening speed.

KATIE

Have you ever turned to substance abuse? Maybe to quell the anxiety?

Milo eyes her.

MILO
Why do you need to know?

Katie looks up, alarmed.

KATIE
It's part of the statistics. This
is a safe space, Milo.

Milo shakes his head.

MILO
I just don't see how it's relevant.

Katie sighs. She drops her pen.

KATIE
Milo, do you have a drug problem?

Milo's eyes harden.

MILO
I don't do drugs. I've never even
so much as touched the hard stuff.

KATIE
Oh, substance abuse doesn't have to
mean hard drugs. It can be weed, as
well.

Milo swallows. He takes a moment to collect himself, then
sighs and looks up at Katie.

MILO
And everything stays in this room?

Katie nods.

KATIE
Yes. Everything is completely
confidential and no real names will
be used in the study.

Milo nods.

MILO
I smoke weed every now and then.
Just helps me sleep sometimes.

Katie writes this down as well.

KATIE
I see. Do you think that's
something you could stop doing?

Milo shrugs.

MILO
Probably.

KATIE
I see.

Milo watches her. He knows she isn't exactly pleased.

MILO
Sometimes I get nightmares.

Katie's pen halts writing immediately. She looks up at him.

KATIE
What are your nightmares about?

Milo gnaws on his lip. His leg bounces more now, almost shaking his entire body.

MILO
Being alone, mostly.

Katie nods.

KATIE
Would you say that being alone is something that frightens you?

Milo shakes his head.

MILO
No. Being abandoned scares me.

Katie writes this down.

KATIE
I don't want to push you too far tonight, so I think that's enough for our time together. I'll see you here next week, same hour.

Milo stands. He wipes his palms on his jeans, clearly shaken. Why had she ended things so suddenly?

As he turns to walk out the door, Katie speaks up.

KATIE
Milo? Good work today. I think since the first session we've made great strides. Thank you for being honest with me.

Milo offers a small smile- it's genuine and gentle. He turns and exits.

As the door clicks shut, Katie tosses her pen on her desk and leans back, letting out a long sigh.

34 INT. MILO'S ROOM - NIGHT

34

Milo stands in front of the mirror. He wipes down his shirt, smooths invisible wrinkles.

Thomas enters.

THOMAS

What time are you picking Monique up?

Milo picks up his phone. His text thread is visible.

There's a string of unread text messages from Milo to Monique.

'We still on for tonight? Everything okay? Monique? Hello?'

All sent at least an hour apart.

MILO

Just waiting for her to text me back. I'll probably head over to her place in a minute.

Thomas leans against the door-jam.

THOMAS

Just don't be creepy.

Milo finally turns to him.

MILO

Would that be creepy?

Thomas shrugs.

THOMAS

Depends on how you go about it, I guess.

Milo nods. He purses his lips.

MILO

Okay. Maybe I'll just ride by and see if any lights are on?

Thomas chuckles.

THOMAS

Borderline creepy, but that can be kept a secret.

Milo shrugs.

MILO

Is it creepy to just want to make sure she's okay? She doesn't have to go out with me if she doesn't want to, I just want to make sure she's alright.

THOMAS

I'm just bustin' your balls, man. Go check on her. If she's not home we'll just order some pizza and forget about her.

Milo nods.

MILO

Thanks, Thomas.

Thomas offers him a small smile.

He exits.

Milo checks himself in the mirror one last time, then exits.

35 EXT. EMPTY HIGHWAY - NIGHT 35

Milo drives down the empty road. His little black car speeds along the asphalt.

Finally, he pulls up to Monique's apartment complex.

36 INT. MILO'S CAR 36

Milo drives forward. He keeps his eyes peeled for Monique.

He pulls up outside Building J and scans it. He knows exactly what he's looking for.

Monique's lights are off.

Milo hesitates for a moment, then steps out of his car. He leaves it running. This shouldn't take long.

Milo approaches the window. He checks over his shoulder to make sure no one watches. He peaks inside, taking in the empty living room.

He slips his fingers underneath the window and pushes. Silly Monique, forgetting to lock her windows. Could be dangerous. Milo shakes his head and slips inside.

37 INT. MONIQUE'S LIVING ROOM 37

Milo looks around, familiarizing himself. He stalks to the edge of the room.

38 INT. MONIQUE'S HALLWAY 38

Milo creeps along the walls. He pushes a door open. Just the bathroom.

He turns to the door immediately on the other side and pushes it open. Jackpot.

39 INT. MONIQUE'S BEDROOM 39

It's very pink and not very Monique. Milo looks at the framed photos on the wall of her, Dana, and Cameron. The cheer squad. Even a little photo of her and Milo from the day at the clearing taped to her desk.

He fingers the photo for a moment. Smiles to himself. She's the sweetest.

Milo opens the closet doors, just to check that she isn't tied up in there. As the door opens, a small box falls to the floor.

Milo checks over his shoulder. He shouldn't look, right?...

He bends and picks up the box, removes the lid. Inside there's more pictures- family pictures, some photos of Monique, and some movie ticket stubs. Nothing too scandalous.

Milo examines a family photo with Monique in the middle. He pockets the photo and closes the box. Returns it to the top of the closet.

Milo exits.

40 INT. MILO AND THOMAS' APARTMENT 40

Milo enters.

He walks through the hallway and into-

41 INT. LIVING ROOM

41

Thomas sits on the couch with a beer and a bag of chips.

He turns at the sound of Milo.

THOMAS

No luck?

Milo shakes his head. He's defeated at best.

He slouches next to Thomas.

MILO

I hope she's okay, wherever she is.

THOMAS

I'll get the pizza.

Milo nods. He pulls out his phone again- still nothing from Monique.

He opens up Snapchat and swipes through a few stories. Nothing catches his interest until... there she is. Right in front of his face. Monique at a party. Dancing on some guy's lap. She's on a couch, surrounded by guys. Dana and Cameron sit on the floor in front of the couch, their heads tucked into a phone. They pay Monique no attention.

Milo watches for only a moment before he's off the couch.

MILO

Do you know of any parties
happening tonight?

Thomas nods.

THOMAS

Yeah, there's one at Craig's, why?

Milo seethes.

MILO

I'll be back in a little while.

He stalks out.

Thomas leans over the back of the couch, obviously confused. He jumps when the door slams shut.

THOMAS
 (to himself)
 Here we go again...

42 EXT. HOUSE PARTY - NIGHT 42

Milo pulls up.

He exits his car and slams the door shut.

Music blares as he walks through the yard, past couples making out on the lawn, some laying in the grass in a daze. He passes a guy vomiting in the bushes.

43 INT. HOUSE PARTY 43

Milo enters.

The music is louder now- deafening. Milo pushes through the full house. He elbows people until he's in

44 INT. SITTING ROOM 44

Plush couches are filled with people. They lounge on them, some sprawled to fill the entire couch.

Monique sits amongst the group. She's clearly either high or intoxicated, maybe both, maybe worse. She lounges against a the arm rest of the couch. A HANDSY GUY rubs up and down her legs. He keeps one hand on her thigh.

Dana and Cameron are nowhere to be found.

Milo marches forward.

Monique catches sight of him and grins.

MONIQUE
 Milo! You came!

Milo says nothing. He very calmly pushes the hands of the guy off of her, then lifts her from the couch. He drops her over his shoulder and exits.

45 EXT. HOUSE PARTY 45

Milo exits.

Monique pounds on his back. She slurs her protests.

MONIQUE
Milo! Put me down!

Milo remains silent. He stalks towards his car.

MONIQUE
I said put me down! This isn't
fair!

As Milo reaches his car, he puts Monique down.

She makes a run for it, but Milo catches her around the waist and hauls her into his car.

MILO
Stop it.

He tries to buckle her seatbelt, but she throws a hissy fit. She slaps at his hands and pushes him away.

MONIQUE
Let me go, Milo! I'm not your
property!

Milo stops fighting her. He locks her door and slams it shut, then stalks to the front of the car. He takes a moment to compose himself before he enters.

46 INT. MILO'S CAR

46

Milo enters.

It's quiet.

Milo stews as Monique pouts. The tension is palpable.

MILO
No, you're not my property. But you
were being an idiot.

Monique turns her head towards the window and crosses her arms.

MONIQUE
No, I was having fun.

Milo puts the car in drive and pulls out quickly. His hands are tight on the wheel.

MILO
No, **you were being an idiot.**

Monique doesn't look at him.

MONIQUE

Even if that were true, it's none of your goddamn business. You're not my boyfriend.

Milo shakes his head once.

MILO

You're right, I'm not your boyfriend. But if I were, I wouldn't be after tonight.

Milo speeds up. A little over the speed limit now, but the road remains empty.

MONIQUE

Don't pretend like you're any better than I am!

Milo shakes his head. He speeds up.

MILO

Put your seatbelt on.

MONIQUE

Don't fucking tell me what to do, Milo!

MILO

I'm just trying to protect you.

MONIQUE

Well, don't! Stop trying to save me! I don't need saving!

MILO

Clearly you do! That guy had his hands all over you. Dammit, Monique!

Monique shakes her head. She turns her body in the seat to fully face Milo.

MONIQUE

I can handle myself Milo!

MILO

Obviously you can't.

MONIQUE

You don't know anything about me.

Milo's speed increases again. Dangerous speeds now.

MILO

I know enough! Would you put your fucking seatbelt on?

Monique crosses her arms again.

MONIQUE

No. I'm not going to listen to you, especially not when you're acting like a chauvinistic pig!

Milo chuckles darkly.

MILO

Oh, I'm the pig? You were practically humping that guy in your snapchat story!

Monique laughs now, but it's menacing.

MONIQUE

Oh, so that's how you found me. Great. Remind me to block you later!

Milo's speed increases. Past 70 now.

As he speeds down the road, a silhouette of his hanging mother reflects in the trees. Milo twitches. He wipes at the back of his neck, trying to shake the image.

He's fed up.

MILO

Go ahead! Go ahead and block me, I dare you. At least then I wouldn't have to wonder about you anymore, or wonder why you stood me up!

MONIQUE

That's what this is about???

MILO

No, it's about you putting yourself in unnecessary danger! You can't hold your liquor, let alone handle your highs! You were in trouble and you didn't even care!

The speedometer is past 90 now as Milo speeds on. The road, thankfully, remains empty.

MONIQUE

Don't do your psychoanalyzing
bullshit on me! You didn't need to
save me, **I'm not your fucking
mother!**

His head whips to her, eyes wide. When he turns back to the road, his mother stands there. Blood drips from her neck. She's truly horrifying.

Milo slams on brakes in the middle of the road. Monique flies forward. She smashes her head against the windshield. Her forehead cracks the glass. Blood drips. It sticks to the glass.

From Monique's perspective:

Everything is hazy. Monique hears her heart pounding in her ears, her breath labored. She touches a hand to her forehead and slowly pulls it away to inspect the blood.

She looks to Milo, still in her dazed state. He leans against the steering wheel, almost hyperventilating. Almost. The world blurs and dips in and out until-

Milo immediately looks over to her and grabs her arm. He pulls her to him. The view becomes clear, no longer hazy.

She doesn't resist.

Milo wipes the blood away, though it continues to flow.

MILO

Are you okay?

Monique cries quietly. She nods.

MILO

I'm so sorry...

A sob breaks through her lips. She rests her head on his shoulder as her cries fill the car.

MONIQUE

Me too.

Milo lifts her head and inspects the bleeding cut.

MILO

Come on, let's get you home.

47 INT. PROFESSOR ENGLUND'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

47

Students file out of the classroom.

Milo gathers his things and Monique's. It's like she's damaged now, the way Milo shields her. She looks unaffected, bar a small cut on her head.

She smiles at Milo as he hands her her things.

MILO

You can go ahead, I'm gonna talk to Englund.

Monique nods.

MONIQUE

I'll catch up with you later?

Milo nods and gives her a peck on the cheek. There's something off about the interaction- maybe a fear in Monique's eyes, or death in Milo's. Can't pinpoint it.

Monique exits.

Milo descends the steps to Englund, who brushes his paperwork together.

MILO

Can we talk?

Englund nods, gives his full attention to Milo.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

What is it, Milo?

Milo wrings his hands together. Definitely hard for him.

MILO

I need...
(stammering)
I need some help.

Professor Englund eyes him.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

(concerned)
What's troubling you?

Milo shakes his head.

MILO

I don't think I'm cut out for this study...

I- I don't know if it's for me. I'm having all these thoughts now and I feel so angry all the time.

Englund relaxes.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
Milo, that's part of the process.
(takes Milo by the
shoulders)
Don't you see? That's what this
study is designed to do.

MILO
I don't think I can handle it.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
You can, Milo. You're fine.

MILO
But I'm not!

Englund steadies him.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
It's important that you tell
Professor Watson these things. It
can only help her in the study.

Milo's enraged.

MILO
Help *her*? WHAT ABOUT ME?

Englund shakes his head.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
You're a willing participant, Milo.
These things are expected to
happen. It's *good* that you are
feeling these things!

MILO
(cracking)
It doesn't feel good!

PROFESSOR ENGLUND
It's not supposed to feel good!

MILO
(finally breaking)
I don't know what to do.

Englund steadies Milo again. He lifts his chin.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

You push forward. You push through
the feelings and the anger and the
doubt, and you **get better**.

Milo nods. It's not what he wanted or *needed* to hear.

MILO

I've been "pushing through" my
entire life. I guess this isn't any
different.

PROFESSOR ENGLUND

(not getting the point)
Precisely!

Milo bristles. He brushes past Englund and exits.

Off Englund, pleased with himself for his "help."

48 INT. MILO AND THOMAS' APARTMENT 48

Milo enters. He's furious.

He slams the door closed behind him and stalks to his
bedroom.

49 INT. MILO'S BEDROOM 49

Milo enters. Again, slams the door.

He paces the length of his room, tugs at his hair.

Thomas enters.

THOMAS

You good?

Milo hardly acknowledges him. He chews on his thumbnail,
keeps his back to Thomas.

THOMAS

Milo?

MILO

(snapping)
Does it look like I'm good?

Thomas isn't fazed.

THOMAS

Why don't we sit?

MILO

Let's not.

Milo stops his pacing. He scratches at his head, tugs at his hair. Something's off and Thomas knows it.

THOMAS

Okay, well... what's going on? What happened?

MILO

Nothing happened.

THOMAS

Obviously something did. Something with Monique?

MILO

Not everything is about girls, Thomas.

THOMAS

I know that. I'm just trying to help.

Milo finally turns to Thomas. Faces him head-on. His face is a brilliant red, his eyes narrowed.

MILO

Did you ever stop to consider that I don't *need* your help? Maybe, just maybe, I can handle shit on my own? My god, bro, I already lost my mom, I don't need another one. Instead of trying to parent everyone, how about talking to yours while you still can. And maybe you can try to stop being so fucking ungrateful.

Milo quiets. His breathing is heavy and labored.

Thomas looks as if he's been slapped in the face.

THOMAS

(menacingly calm)

Got it. Maybe you should take a walk, clear your head. And maybe on that walk, you should decide not to come back tonight.

Thomas exits.

Milo exits, pissed.

50 EXT. CAMPUS QUAD - EARLY EVENING

50

Milo stalks down the sidewalk. He grits his teeth and keeps his hands in his pockets.

He hardly notices Dana and Cameron approach him. They're pissed.

DANA

What the hell did you do to her?

She pushes against Milo's shoulder, halts him immediately.

DANA

So help me, Milo, what the *hell* did you do to her?

Milo exhales deeply. The hits just keep on coming.

DANA

ANSWER ME!

MILO

I didn't do anything to her! It was an **accident**.

Cameron crosses his arms.

CAMERON

You expect us to believe that? One minute she's fine and now she has this big gash on her head and doesn't want to come out of her room!

MILO

(accusatory)

If you two left her alone every now and then she wouldn't need to hide in her room.

Dana recoils.

CAMERON

You could have at least taken her to the hospital or called the police or something! Who has an accident and doesn't report it?

MILO

There was no physical damage or evidence. Look. I didn't take her anywhere because I didn't want to get her in trouble.

CAMERON

No, you didn't want to get in trouble.

MILO

It's not like that!

Milo runs a hand through his hair. His patience wears paper thin. He tries to hold it together.

MILO

Monique isn't 21 yet. She could've lost her scholarship or been kicked off the team. You know how important that shit is to her.

CAMERON

(pissed now)

That shit?

Milo rolls his eyes.

Dana doesn't want to hear anymore.

DANA

Stay the fuck away from her.

Her face presses inches away from Milo's.

Milo hates this. He stands up to her, completely menacing and in her space. He refuses to back down.

MILO

(challenging her)

Or what?

Cameron chimes in.

CAMERON

Wouldn't everyone be interested in knowing where we buy our drugs from? Maybe *who*? No one will believe it if you deny it.

Milo's jaw clenches. His eyes don't leave Dana.

MILO

Monique's a big girl. If she doesn't want to see me anymore, she won't.

He shoulders past Dana, knocks her into Cameron. He continues to walk away, doesn't even notice he's pushed her.

51 INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - EVENING

51

The words of Thomas and Milo and Monique and Dana and Cameron play in his head. For a moment, everything is hazy and it's unclear where he is.

He hears the harshness of others, but never himself. It's like a focus on the actions of others, the words of others.

KATIE
(muffled)
Milo?

Milo doesn't respond. He faintly hears her voice, but it's in the background of his fight with Thomas, which currently plays through his head. Thomas telling him not to come back sticks out, playing like someone pressed 'repeat.'

KATIE
(clearer now, but still
muffled)
Milo!

Cameron's threats resurface, followed by Dana telling him to stay away from Monique. His leg involuntarily bounces as the words circulate.

KATIE
(clear now)
Milo! I need you to focus.

We snap to focus.

Milo sits in his usual position. His clothes are the same, he looks the same. It's only been a couple of hours since his explosion with Thomas.

KATIE
We're gonna dig a little deeper
today.

MILO
Joy.

Katie drops her pencil. Stares at Milo.

KATIE
Are you not in the mood to
participate today?

Milo shrugs. Nonchalant. Annoyed.

MILO
I'm in a wonderful mood today.

Katie raises a brow.

KATIE

Let's start with this wonderful mood you're in. What happened?

Milo leans forward.

MILO

I'm not sure what you're referring to.

KATIE

Oh, you aren't? How about the fact that your arms are folded to keep yourself closed off to me. You can't hold eye contact with me for more than thirty seconds. You're slouching, which means you're probably physically and emotionally exhausted. So again I ask: what happened?

Milo sighs. She's won.

MILO

I don't know if I can do this study anymore.

KATIE

Planting the seed of doubt already, huh? I'm surprised. I thought you of all people could handle anything thrown at you.

Milo grits his teeth.

MILO

Maybe I'm tired of people throwing everything at me.

Katie writes this down.

Milo leans forward. He rests his elbows on his bouncing knees.

MILO

I'm angry.

KATIE

I know you are. But maybe anger is the way to delve into these problems, Milo. Use it as a tool.

MILO

I don't know how to use it as a tool when it's blinding.

KATIE

Let's refocus that anger. Let's shift it somewhere we can deal with it and understand it.

MILO

Like where? My father? That's too obvious.

Katie shakes her head. She stands and crosses the room to sit on the little coffee table in front of Milo.

KATIE

Your mother.

Milo pulls away from her.

MILO

You want me to be pissed off at my mother?

Katie shakes her head.

KATIE

No, Milo. I want you to understand that it's okay for you to be upset at her actions. It's okay to be angry about her choices.

Milo's eyes immediately water.

MILO

I'm not angry at her.

KATIE

That's okay, I'm not suggesting that you have to be.

MILO

Yes you are.

Katie remains patient.

KATIE

No, I'm not, Milo. But you have this rage inside of you- this anger, this hatred. And it's important for us to locate that so we can work on it. You deserve to be happy, too.

Milo swallows thickly.

MILO

What does this have to do with your study?

Katie shakes her head.

KATIE

Milo, your wellbeing is more important to me.

Milo nods. Some tears fall from his eyes. He makes no move to wipe them away.

MILO

I feel so guilty all the time.

KATIE

Why do you feel guilty?

MILO

Because I couldn't save her.

KATIE

It wasn't your job to save her, Milo. You were just a boy.

Milo shakes his head.

MILO

I remember the day it happened. The day I found her. I stayed a little later at school than I usually do to borrow a book from the library. I got carried away... lost track of time.

Katie takes his hands.

KATIE

Milo, nothing you could've done would have saved her. She'd already made up her mind.

Milo chokes on a sob.

MILO

But why did she have to do it?

KATIE

There's nothing I can say that's can explain why, other than she was sick. It's nobody's fault.

She was suffering in a way that
maybe you are now.

Milo nods. His cries finally burst through the dam until he's
full on, uncontrollably sobbing.

MILO

I'm so sorry.

Katie wraps her arms around Milo, doing the best she can to
comfort him.

He sobs into her shoulder, his body shaking.

KATIE

I'm going to give you a task, okay?

Milo nods. He lifts himself off her shoulder and wipes his
nose with the back of his hand.

KATIE

Tonight, I want you to find
something that brings you
fulfillment. Maybe something you've
always wanted to try, maybe
something you've done before. It
can be pizza and a movie, it can be
art, it can be video games.
Anything you want it to be. As long
as it's healthy and makes you feel
fulfilled. Okay?

MILO

I can do that.

Katie stands. She helps Milo stand and walks him to the door.

KATIE

You have my number. If you need me,
I'm only a phone call away.

Milo nods. He offers a small smile, then exits.

52

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

52

Milo walks alone. He kicks some rocks here and there. Hands
in his pockets. All alone.

He pulls out his phone and makes a call.

MILO

Hey, you busy right now?

53

INT. JOSHUA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

53

Tidier than expected. Bright. Almost too clean.

Milo looks around the apartment.

Joshua bustles about. He turns on the tv and a string of LED lights, then cuts the room lights off.

JOSHUA

Sorry the place is a mess! Make yourself comfortable.

Milo offers a tight smile.

MILO

The place is great. Thanks.

JOSHUA

So what brings you over?

MILO

I actually was looking to buy? Maybe just hang for a while.

Joshua looks thrilled. He rummages through a small bag on the living room table.

JOSHUA

Yeah, okay! What do you want?

MILO

The strongest stuff you've got.

Joshua pauses his rummaging.

JOSHUA

The strongest I've got will get you up there, but not like *up there* up there.

Milo shrugs.

MILO

It'll have to do.

JOSHUA

I do have something else, if you're interested.

He pulls a little cellophane bag out. Inside sits what looks to be dried up mushrooms.

MILO
What is that?

Milo takes the bag and opens it. He sniffs, recoils, closes it.

JOSHUA
Just some shrooms! Nothing too scary. Psychedelics.

Milo looks unsure.

MILO
I don't know. What does it do?

Joshua lights up. He loves this.

JOSHUA
You'll be super relaxed and will probably hallucinate a little bit. I don't do them a lot, but it's so therapeutic when I do

MILO
Therapeutic how?

JOSHUA
It's different for everybody, but for me, it's like I can finally understand why I am the way that I am. It's best to do these in nature, so if you're not up for it, I get it. No worries.

Joshua goes to put the bag away, but Milo stops him.

MILO
No, I'm up for it.

Joshua removes one portion of the mushrooms from the bag.

JOSHUA
Siiiick. Here. This is only 1/8, so it's a good dosage for beginners. Bottoms up my friend.

Joshua and Milo eat the mushrooms.

Good vibrations. The floor moves like the ocean. The LED lights keep the lighting low, but just bright enough for Milo to see.

Milo stares ahead, and suddenly, the tv turns into a projector screen. We see Milo lashing out at Thomas on screen.

Milo pushes himself further into the couch.

MILO
(muttering)
No.

He can't look away.

Within the image, there's a glowing red around Milo. His own face distorts. This evil version of himself is not something he recognizes.

The image changes to Milo and Monique in the car. Again, he doesn't recognize himself.

Milo whimpers. He tries to disappear into the couch. Evil Milo won't let him.

EVIL MILO
No, you're going to sit here and watch! Watch what you did to these people!

Joshua's riding his own wave, happy and relaxed. He becomes one with the couch. Eyes wide and free.

Milo can't look away from the screen as he watches himself slam on brakes.

MILO
Milo, don't!

Monique slams forward and Milo can't stop watching. He's devastated.

EVIL MILO
You claim to care about these people? And you treat them like THIS!?

It cuts *back* to Milo and Thomas fighting. Milo finally sees himself as the bad guy.

Horrorified.

MILO
Stop it... stop!

Milo's fingers dig into the couch.

EVIL MILO

Couldn't even save your own fucking mother. You're disgusting.

The image flickers to Milo's mom standing in the kitchen, blood racing from her wrists.

KARLA

It's okay, Milo! Mommy's okay, don't worry. Just had a little accident. I promise, mommy's okay!

Young Milo nods and hugs Karla around the waist.

EVIL MILO

It was right in front of you! You were *too stupid* to even notice!

The image shifts again, but this time Joel stands behind Karla, who's bent over the toilet. Empty pill bottles are strewn across the sink.

JOEL

Get it out, Karla. Come on, throw it up!

The anxiety in his voice is palpable.

Karla vomits into the toilet as young Milo stands outside the door, watching.

Joel notices him.

He moves to close the door.

JOEL

Mommy's okay, honey, she's just feeling a little sick. Why don't you head to bed? I'll be there in a second.

The door closes. Milo's in the dark. He turns and exits.

The projector screen finally goes black.

Milo's face... absolutely mortified. He stares at nothing, though his eyes remain wide with fear. His breathing begins evening out, and just as he's almost okay-

EVIL MILO

Did you think it was over?

Milo's breathing picks up again. He shoves himself back into the couch. He shakes his head and squeezes his eyes shut.

MILO

No.. no. Stop! Make it stop, make
it stop! Someone MAKE IT STOP!

He opens his eyes. There's nothing there.

But suddenly, the projector screen is back and Evil Milo stalks towards him.

EVIL MILO

You're pathetic. Take a look around
you, Milo! You're a tornado. All
you do is cause damage wherever you
go!

Milo watches in terror as Evil Milo continues stalking towards him. He soaks in the words.

Milo pushes himself deeper into the couch. He tugs at the cushions, but he's frozen. Unable to move or really breathe.

Evil Milo climbs out of the projector screen.

Milo tries to scream, but only his mouth opens.

Evil Milo continues his trek to the couch. He produces a knife from his back pocket and lifts it so it catches the light

MILO

Please don't! Please, stop it!

EVIL MILO

It's what you deserve.

Evil Milo stabs Milo straight in the chest, right where his heart is.

Milo's eyes widen.

CUT TO:

55 INT. JOSHUA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

55

Milo's eyes snap open.

Sunshine flows through the room.

Milo's in the same position on the couch. He looks well rested, yet somehow still exhausted.

Joshua sits on an armchair by the window. He scrolls through his phone.

Milo sits up. He feels around his chest for any kind of wound, but finds nothing.

Joshua notices.

JOSHUA

Crazy trip, huh? I think I took a little too much, had to smoke some to calm down. Then I got too calm... oh well.

Milo stares at him like he's crazy.

MILO

That was a *good* trip???

Joshua laughs.

JOSHUA

Probably for you! Anyways, make yourself at home, I've gotta work.

Joshua stands, reveling his whole fast food employee uniform. He pats Milo's head as he exits.

Milo slouches against the couch for only a moment. He eyes the blank wall where the projector screen was like he's waiting for someone to jump out at him.

When all is quiet, Milo stands and exits.

56 INT. MILO AND THOMAS' APARTMENT - MORNING

56

Milo enters.

He immediately knocks on Thomas' door.

Thomas opens and steps out.

MILO

I was a dick.

THOMAS

I know.

MILO

I'm so sorry, Thomas.

Thomas crosses his arms.

THOMAS

It's gonna take more than that, Milo.

I can't just keep taking it when
you have a mood swing or a bad day.
I'm not your punching bag.

MILO

I know. And you're right. Katie's
helping me deal with my anger and
really addressing the root of the
problem.

Thomas softens a little.

THOMAS

That's great, Milo. I'm glad you're
getting the help you need.

MILO

I really am sorry.

THOMAS

I know you are.

Milo holds out a fist.

MILO

We good?

Thomas eyes Milo's outstretched fist and shoulders past him.

THOMAS

I've gotta get to class.

The disappointment on Milo's face is heartbreaking.

Thomas exits.

Milo shakes out his hands and heads into-

57 INT. MILO'S BEDROOM

57

Milo enters.

He falls backwards on his bed and reaches his hands behind
his pillow. For the first time in a while, he's completely
relaxed.

Something rustles as he moves, and he pulls the photograph of
Monique and her family from underneath his pillow.

He holds it up, staring at it, admiring it.

Milo lays the photo next to him and closes his eyes.

58 EXT. STREET - NIGHT

58

Sweat drips down Milo's forehead. His feet slap the wet pavement as he pushes himself to run faster. He glances over his shoulder at intervals.

He takes a glance, and when he turns back to the front there's EVIL MILO directly in front of him. Milo stops inches away from Evil Milo, almost knocking directly into him.

Evil Milo's smile is menacing. He takes a step towards Milo, and Milo takes several steps back.

Milo backtracks, running backwards. He finally turns and BAM. Runs right into Karla, who hangs from a tree branch.

Milo screams.

He turns to run the opposite way, but the forest closes in on him. There's nowhere to go. Nowhere to run. Nowhere to hide.

As the forest closes in on him, so do Evil Milo and hanging Karla. They inch closer and closer to him, caging him in.

Milo thrashes out, his fists swinging as his grunts and groans intensify.

As Evil Milo reaches him, he pulls out that same knife and stabs Milo square in the chest.

59 INT. MILO'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

59

Milo sits up with a loud gasp. Sweat stains his shirt, even his hair is damp.

Milo clutches his chest. How long had he been out? Hours, surely.

Milo's phone chirps. A text from Monique.

MONIQUE (TEXTING)

Can i see u tonight? We need to talk

Milo types out

MILO (TEXTING)

Sure

He tosses his phone aside and runs a hand down his face. He lightly slaps his cheeks, like he's trying to wake himself up still.

Milo stands from the bed and exits.

60

INT. BATHROOM

60

Milo enters.

He flicks on the lights, and there behind him is EVIL MILO!

Milo jumps and acts on instinct. He punches the mirror. Evil Milo doesn't move.

EVIL MILO

You're so pathetic. All you'll ever
do is hurt people.

Evil Milo laughs as Milo repeatedly punches the mirror. His face contorts in agony until he's fully sobbing through the punches.

Milo falls to his knees, finally, FINALLY, unraveling. He curls into a ball, like he's trying to make himself smaller. He wraps his arms around his head and sobs loudly into his knees.

The door opens quickly and Thomas enters.

He takes in Milo's state, the smashed up mirror, and the blood droplets on the sink and on Milo's fists.

Thomas almost completely freezes. His hands move to his head. Like he can't decide what to do.

THOMAS

Fuck- uh.. Okay. Milo?

Thomas squats in front of him. He tries to pull Milo's arms away from his face.

Milo doesn't move. He continues to sob into his knees. He rocks himself back and forth slowly, muttering incoherently.

THOMAS

Milo, I can't understand you, I
need you to speak up.

Milo raises his head and leans it back against the cabinets.

MILO

I can't do it anymore.

He takes shaky breaths as his sobs wreck him.

THOMAS

Do I need to call someone?

Milo shakes his head. He covers his face with his hands.

MILO

Nobody cares anyways.

Milo hiccups and buries his face in his hands. The sobs won't stop.

THOMAS

Milo...

Thomas places a hand on his forearm and pulls a hand away from his face.

THOMAS

Milo, you have to stop worrying about saving everyone and start focusing on saving yourself.

Milo shakes his head. He leans back against the cabinets again and swallows thickly. His sobs have subsided but the tears are still flowing freely.

MILO

Nobody cares. When I try to help people just get hurt. There is no saving me. It's too late.

THOMAS

How could you think that?

Milo takes a moment. His face scrunches as he cries again. Finally, when he can't take it anymore, he leans forward and hugs Thomas hard.

MILO

I see her everywhere, Thomas. It was my fault! All the signs were there and I ignored them. I ignored them, Thomas, I let her die! I killed my mom.

Thomas sighs and hugs Milo harder, their fight completely forgotten for now.

THOMAS

You were too young to understand anything that was going on. It's not your fault.

Milo shakes as he cries.

THOMAS

Your mom loved you so much, Milo.
She wouldn't want to see you in
pain like this. She would want you
to take the help seriously. She
would want you to be happy.

Milo snuffles.

MILO

Why am I always powerless when the
people I care about are hurting?
Why do I hurt people so much?

THOMAS

Milo... I think the help you're
getting right now is really
important. True, you do hurt
people. But acknowledging that you
do is the first step to being
better.

Milo sits up and looks at Thomas. His face is red from the
crying, his hair all over the place. Milo's a mess.

MILO

But what's the point? Why should I
try to build a family with everyone
important to me if they're just
going to leave? Why is family only
temporary for me?

Thomas thinks for a moment.

THOMAS

Milo, I'm not temporary. I'm not
going anywhere. *I promise.*

MILO

They hate me.

THOMAS

Nobody hates you.

MILO

They do.

THOMAS

Then what can we do to rectify
that?

Milo shrugs. He's like a child.

MILO
I guess I could apologize.

THOMAS
That sounds like a good start.

Milo nods. Thomas stands and helps Milo up.

THOMAS
Tell me about that ego death I
heard about?

Milo looks at him, confused.

THOMAS
Josh called.

Milo follows Thomas out of the bathroom. The door closes. We
linger there for a moment, completely in the dark.

61 EXT. CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

61

The group sits in a circle in the grass and the tension is
palpable. Thomas is the only one standing and he stands in
the middle of the group.

Dana and Cameron sit huddled together, clearly unhappy about
being here.

Milo and Monique sit together, but there's a large gap
between them.

THOMAS
Now, I know there's been some
tensions recently and I wanted to
try and clear the air.

Dana glances at Milo.

MILO
I just wanted to say I'm sorry to
you guys if I've hurt you in any
way.

DANA
(snarky)
It's not us you need to apologize
to.

Her eyes cut to Monique, who is beside herself.

Monique pulls her knees to her chest. Though her face is
apprehensive, there's a kindness in her eyes.

MONIQUE

I've already told you guys that it's okay. I'm okay. The cut's gonna go away and I'll be fine. It probably won't even scar.

Cameron rolls his eyes.

CAMERON

Why don't you tell us what happened from the beginning?

Milo nods.

MILO

Okay. Um... well. Monique and I had a date planned and she never showed up for it. So I went to her place, there was no one home. I saw a video of her later on and went to pick her up.

Monique eyes Dana and Cameron.

MONIQUE

Which you two ditched me completely trashed at, thanks.

Dana doesn't look at her. Her stare locks on Milo.

DANA

Go on.

MONIQUE

There was a guy all over me. I think. In the video there was. And then the next thing I know, I'm in Milo's car and we're arguing and it's all fuzzy from there.

Milo sighs.

MILO

I was going too fast and didn't realize it. A deer ran out in the middle of the road and I slammed on brakes.

MONIQUE

I remember that.

Milo smiles shyly at her.

THOMAS

See? It was an accident. Now, can we all forgive each other and move on?

Cameron crosses his arms.

CAMERON

I guess.

Dana remains silent.

Milo stands and pulls a small bag out of his pocket. Inside sits an obscene amount of mushrooms.

MILO

As a peace offering, I brought something for you guys.
(off Cameron's look)
Free of charge.

Cameron takes one offered mushroom and examines it.

CAMERON

What is it?

MILO

Mushrooms. You know...
psychedelics?

Dana perks up at this.

DANA

How much are they? Like how strong?

MILO

Oh, only an eighth. Perfect dosage for beginners.

DANA

How do they work?

THOMAS

It's really fuckin' cool, actually. Tripping is super fun, but you gotta be careful. We should meditate before, really get our mindsets right.

Milo nods enthusiastically.

MILO

Yeah, exactly what he said. Trips are fun as long as you relax and stay calm.

Monique looks weary.

MONIQUE

I don't know, Milo.

MILO

Don't worry. I'm gonna stay sober since I have the most experience with psychedelics. I'm trying to do better, and staying away from this stuff has helped me so much. If you're not comfortable taking one, I brought a blunt in case someone needs to calm down.

MONIQUE

I think I'll stick to the blunt. Thanks.

She takes the blunt from Milo.

Milo continues through the circle.

Dana takes hers, Cameron takes his, and finally Thomas.

Together, they eat, bar Monique, who smokes.

THOMAS

That tasted awful.

MILO

Kind of spongey, right?

62 EXT. CLEARING - DUSK

62

The sun has long set, but the sky still holds a dark orange. A fire blazes now in the middle of the group.

Dana and Cameron lay on the grass, hands in the air. They try to catch stars.

Monique sits still, eyes trained on the fire.

Thomas dances in the back of the clearing to a beat no one else can hear but himself. Something feels off about his behavior.

MONIQUE'S POV

The fire blazes on.

MILO
Has it hit yet?

We turn, and sitting where Milo was is Evil Milo. His face further contorts, as does the world around the fire.

Monique shakes her head. She scoots back and away from him, trips over absolutely nothing.

Evil Milo scoots towards her the more she scoots away.

Evil Milo pulls the stolen photo of Monique and her family from his pocket. He all but shoves it in her face.

EVIL MILO
Would they be proud, Monique?

Monique's face in the photo twists and contorts, as if she doesn't recognize herself.

Evil Milo tosses the photo to the ground next to the fire, and it's almost as if Monique is the only person in the photo to burn.

He reaches towards her. It all goes dark.

THOMAS' POV

Thomas still dances. The stars fall around him like lightening bugs. Hands in the air, spinning with the world. He turns his back to Milo and Monique. Unaware of what unfolds behind him.

CAMERON'S POV

We face the stars.

Cameron's hands are in the air, only identified by a little friendship bracelet he and Dana wear.

It's like the trees are rotating as the winds blow. His world slowly slips in and out of focus. The sound waves around him vibrate. They make little ripples in the air around him.

A hearty laugh. What a good trip.

Dana is in his face now.

DANA
Run! Cameron, run!

Cameron tries to shuffle to his feet, but the world tilts beneath him. He claws at the sound waves, but his fingers pass straight through.

Milo approaches.

CAMERON

Milo, thank God!

He turns, but it's not Milo at all. Well. Not Milo's face.

Evil Milo stalks towards him, walking at a dangerously slow pace.

Cameron can only lay there, grasping at sound waves that aren't there.

As Evil Milo nears him, he wraps his hands around Cameron's neck.

The splutters and gasps from Cameron are loud and distracting as they produce even more sound waves. He claws at Milo's hands.

His eyes start to close.

DANA'S POV

Dana breathes heavy as she runs through the forest. All around her, messages from her father pop up.

'Disappointed in you'

She tries to hurdle over a tree root, but it quickly turns into a blue iPhone message: 'Are you coming to church?'

She cries out as she continues running.

She trips over the word 'disappointed,' dodges the word 'failure,' as it flies at her head. A bush holds the faint shadow of her father's most disappointed face. No escaping this.

Yet, she bursts from the clearing.

63

EXT. MEADOW

63

Dana falls in, sinks to her knees in the grassy meadow. It's clear for what looks like miles, the forest stuck behind her.

Dana curls into the fetal position. She rocks herself back and forth. Her sobs grow louder and louder.

There's a soft hum- so soft it'd be difficult to hear if it weren't so painfully quiet around her.

She looks up, and there stands 4 FIGURES in long choir robes and matching masks. They shuffle towards her in sync.

With every other step they take, another figure appears until they're marching forwards in a circle formation around her.

Dana shuffles away from them, eyes wide and fearful. She screams as they close in.

Just as they reach her, a hand clamps on her shoulder, pulling her from the figures that aren't there.

EVIL MILO

Found you.

Dana's screams pierce the air.

Evil Milo drags her back into the trees.

The meadow sits peacefully in the moonlight, as if nothing were wrong.

64

EXT. FOREST

64

Evil Milo drags Dana through the trees, but she's not having it.

Dana fights back. She pushes against him, kicking her legs and shoving with her arms.

When she's finally free, she makes a break for the meadow, but Evil Milo is faster.

He grabs the back of her shirt and pushes her to the ground. Evil Milo repeatedly shoves her face in the ground. He rubs her nose in the dirt until her whimpers stop completely.

Suddenly, Thomas breaks through the trees.

THOMAS

Whoa... Milo, I think that's enough.

Milo doesn't look up.

MILO

It'll never be enough. They **need** this!

Thomas pushes Milo off of Dana.

THOMAS

Milo, **ENOUGH**. They got it. They learned their lesson.

Milo looks at Thomas. It's like he's himself again. He backs away from Dana.

MILO

What're we gonna do?

Thomas eyes Dana. She doesn't seem to be hurt, but she's not moving either.

THOMAS

You're gonna go back to the apartment, I'm gonna take care of them.

MILO

I'm not letting you deal with this by yourself.

THOMAS

Milo, go. I can get away with anything, you can't. How many times do I have to remind you of that?
GO.

Milo stands and runs off.

Thomas rolls Dana over. There's no real damage to her face, just a bloody nose.

She groans.

DANA

Thomas?

THOMAS

Hey, you're okay. Just having a bad trip.

65 INT. KATIE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

65

There's that damn ticking clock again.

Milo sits in his usual seat, but he's somehow different. Lighter, maybe? Happier? He looks unbothered.

Katie eyes him warily. What's gotten into him?

KATIE

I know you've struggled through this process, Milo. I wanted to take a second to talk about that, if you're willing?

Milo smiles.

MILO

Yes, of course. I think I was struggling with everything because I didn't know how to confront my demons. I didn't know how to put them to rest.

Katie writes this down.

KATIE

And now?

MILO

Now my demons are resting peacefully, I feel.

Katie raises an eyebrow.

KATIE

Why do you say that?

MILO

I took your advice. I got out of my comfort zone and did something different. It was so so refreshing, and the new air made it so much easier to really focus on what was happening in my head. I finally found the courage to confront my issues, and I have you to thank for that.

Katie shifts uncomfortably in her seat.

Before she can answer, there's a small knock on her door.

The DEAN OF STUDENTS enters. He eyes Milo and gestures for him to follow.

Milo sits across from the Dean in a red leather chair. He's nonchalant.

DEAN

Milo Turner. Here for a study,
clean record, good attendance,
decent grades, and yet... here you
are.

Milo gestures as if to say 'here I am.'

MILO

May I ask what this is regarding?

The Dean closes his folder and clasps his hands together,
resting them atop the desk.

DEAN

There was a group of students-
upstanding students- who say that
you gave them drugs and tried to
kill them.

Milo chuckles. He's grown back into his cocky, confident
self.

MILO

That's absurd.

The Dean cocks his head.

DEAN

Is it?

MILO

It is. Sounds like a bad trip.
Maybe they felt guilty for their
actions?

DEAN

You seem to know who they are, but
I haven't said who.

Milo rolls his eyes. His fingers twitch, but he rubs his
hands together to hide the movement.

MILO

Look. I had a thing with their
friend Monique. I stopped hanging
out with them because they all
continuously asked me for drugs and
to pickup for them. When I refused,
they didn't want anything to do
with me.

The Dean studies Milo carefully.

DEAN

I see. So if I were to drug test
you right now, you'd come up clean?

Milo shrugs, considers this.

MILO

(bluffing well)
Yeah, I would.

The Dean sighs.

DEAN

Milo, I want to believe you. I
really do. But these are really
difficult allegations to ignore.
Miss Fuller has been seeing the
school psychiatrist at my
recommendation for continuous
nightmares and panic attacks, which
I'm almost certain you've heard
about. The others have dropped out
of extracurriculars, their grades
have dropped. I can't just excuse
this. Whatever happened in those
woods has terrified them beyond
comparison.

Milo leans forward.

MILO

I understand that. I'll respect any
decisions that you feel you need to
make. But just to make sure you
have all the facts you would need
to make an informed decision, I
would like it to be put on record
that Monique has a drinking
problem. I've personally rescued
her from countless parties. She's
reckless when she drinks. Dana cuts
class to smoke weed every other day
and has her sidekick Cameron cover
for her. Cameron also buys drugs
for the entire theater department.
So unless you want to drug test
every person that interacts with
them, it might just be easier to
take my word for it.

He leans back, satisfied.

The Dean considers his words carefully. He mentally weighs
the options. The silence deafening.

Finally, he rubs his head.

DEAN

Okay. If I hear anymore wild reports of this kind of behavior, you will no longer have a place at my school. Is that understood?

Milo nods.

MILO

Absolutely, sir. I assure you, you won't. Have a great day.

Milo exits.

67

EXT. CAMPUS QUAD

67

Milo approaches Thomas, who leans against one of the marble benches.

MILO

We're all good.

Thomas chuckles.

THOMAS

I knew we would be.

MILO

That whole ego death idea was genius, how'd you even come up with that?

Thomas shrugs. He stands and hoists his bag onto his shoulder.

THOMAS

I figured if it gave you a mental breakdown, it'd nearly kill them. I didn't expect you to go all mental on them.

Milo laughs.

Together, the two walk down the sidewalk. They mock Monique, Dana, and Cameron as they walk. They mimick their screams, their cries for help.

SUPERIMPOSED:

Through a camera phone, we watch Monique inch closer to the edge of a roof. A party rages behind her.

Tears stream down her face.

STUDENT

Monique, get down! This isn't
funny!

There's several chants of people encouraging her to come
down. Some reach to help her, but we can't see them.

Monique steps backwards towards the edge. She shakes her head
at them.

MONIQUE

(whispering)

I can't do this anymore.

She steps backwards off the edge of the building.

Several screams are heard.

CUT TO BLACK.

CREDITS.