Pray for me St. Jude

A Screenplay by: Joshua A.B. Hinke The sun sets on the horizon as we see MICHELLE 18 years old, with golden blonde hair and good figure stands over a grave. The name reads Todd Miller 1969-2006. Below the title is written, "Loving father and husband." Below that is reads, "Courageous soldier."

A tear wells up in her eyes and dribbles down her cheek. TRISTAN Stevens, her 23 year old boyfriend who wears a black sweater and a pair of corduroy jeans. He approaches Michelle and puts a jacket on her shoulders.

TRISTAN

Michelle, it's cold. We should go.

Michelle takes Tristan's hand in hers. She squeezes it tightly and Tristan gently rubs it in return.

MICHELLE

You think he's in a better place?

TRISTAN

(Lying)

Yeah.

Michelle wipes away her tears and then pulls Tristan into her, he wraps his arms around her.

MICHELLE

I keep thinking I'm going to wake up. Like it's some sort of nightmare. Like if I just wait long enough I'll wake up in a cold sweat and call his name...

TRISTAN

It'll be okay.

MICHELLE

I love you.

TRISTAN

I love you too.

MICHELLE

It's just a nightmare.

TRISTAN

Come on, we need to get out of here.

MICHELLE

No, I'm not ready.

Michelle lets go of Tristan and turns back to her father's grave.

Michelle you've been out here for three hours just staring at...that...

Michelle puts her hand under her nose trying to hold back more tears.

TRISTAN

...Michelle it's...not healthy...

Tristan just stares at Michelle as she stands before the grave.

TRISTAN

...You can't just stand there forever.
(A beat.)

It's not gonna bring him back.

Michelle sighs and rubs her arms, trying to warm herself up.

MICHELLE

I know that, Tristan. I just don't want to go yet.

Tristan waits for a moment and then turns back walks to a tree. He leans against it and watches Michelle as she stands staring at the tombstone. She finally bends down and kisses the top of tombstone and turns away. She walks to Tristan and gives him a small kiss on the cheek. They walk to the car.

INT. MICHELLE'S FRONT PORCH -- NIGHT

Michelle and Tristan stand on Michelle's porch. She unlocks the door and is about to go inside.

TRISTAN

...Sorry, I'm not better at this whole...thing.

Michelle takes Tristan's hand.

MICHELLE

You don't have to be good at anything. I just need you to be here. Just show you care...

Michelle pulls out her house keys and looks up at Tristan.

MICHELLE

...So, thank you for being here...

Tristan shrugs and looks away.

MICHELLE

... I know church isn't your thing.

Yeah, well...

MICHELLE

You okay?

Tristan looks a Michelle puzzled.

TRISTAN

Am I okay? He's your father.

MICHELLE

You just seem so distant.

Michelle wipes away the remnants of tears that she's cried. Michelle smiles at him.

TRISTAN

I better go.

MICHELLE

Call me in the morning.

TRISTAN

Ok.

Michelle gives him a peck and then turns to her house. She unlocks the door and turns to wave goodbye as she enters the house. Tristan stands on the front porch for a moment.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Tristan lies in his bed. His ceiling fan slowly spins over him, blocking him from our sight every now and then.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

We see AARON, Tristan's roommate and friend. Aaron has black hair that is cut in a fade. He lies in bed with a GIRL, the typical gorgeous blonde, under his arm sleeping on his chest.

Aaron's alarm clock goes off and his eye's slowly open. Aaron smashes his hand down on the snooze button of the alarm clock that reads 8:00.

Aaron looks down at the girl lying on his chest, sleeping soundly. He lifts his hands up and gives her a little shake. She shifts a little on him.

GIRL

What?

AARON

When do you work?

GIRL

Not till 7. Go back to sleep.

Aaron grabs the clock and looks at it. He looks down at the girl and pauses. Then he sets the clock down on the dresser and goes back to sleep.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Tristan stirs in his sleep. In the distance we can hear a conversation between Aaron and the girl in his room. Soon they begin talking loud enough that we can hear them.

GIRL (O.S.)

...You shit!

AARON (O.S.)

Come on, settle down. You're not really mad.

GIRL (O.S.)

I'm gonna be late. This is the third time this week.

AARON (O.S.)

It's only an hour.

GIRL (O.S.)

Shut the fuck up, Aaron!

Tristan begins to wake up to the two arguing.

AARON (O.S.)

Listen, I know what to do. Let's just stay in bed and I'll teach you a lesson in discipline.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The girl is putting her clothes on and getting ready to leave as Aaron sits in the bed watching her amused.

GIRL

I have to go to work!!

AARON

Yes, you're angry, and I forgive for that.

GIRL

I'm gonna lose my job and it's all your fault.

AARON

But it was so worth it. I mean come on, you were moaning like crazy.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan is trying to block out the argument and go back to sleep.

GIRL (O.S.)

I hate you!! I hate you so much!!

AARON (O.S.)

Except next time, I think I get to wear this.

Tristan covers his ears with his pillow not wanting to hear this argument.

GIRL (O.S.)

You've ruined my life!!

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Aaron is still watching her getting ready to leave.

AARON

Not ruined your life so much as redistributed your working status.

GIRL

Everything I worked for.

AARON

Yeah...well...you could always go back to being a stripper.

GIRL

I hate you!!

The girl grabs her purse and storms out of the room, slamming the door.

AARON

Call me.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan turns in his bed and faces the ceiling. He runs his hands through his hair and stretches.

TRISTAN

Girl troubles?

AARON (O.S.)

No, not really.

TRISTAN

Do you think she'll call?

AARON (O.S.)

Don't know, don't care.

TRISTAN

You're a good guy, Aaron.

Tristan rolls over and picks up his cell phone. He opens up the cell phone and dials. The message is from his sister, MARI, we hear her sharp professional tone over the phone.

MARI

Hey, Tris, this is your sister, Mari. I was just calling to make sure that we're still on for lunch today. If you want to bring Michelle that's fine, but I understand if she doesn't want to come. She's been-

Tristan shuts his phone.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan steps out into the hallway and walks to the bathroom. He starts to open the door but hears Aaron peeing and decides against it.

He leans against the opposing wall and waits. We hear Aaron whistling to himself in the bathroom as he goes about his business. Soon the door opens. Aaron takes Tristan's face in his hands and smiles.

AARON

It's gonna be a good Saturday. I can feel it in my gut.

Aaron walks away leaving Tristan standing in the hall in shock. Tristan reaches up to touch his face and comes to a terrifying conclusion.

INT. BATHROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Tristan is shaving as there is a KNOCK on the door.

TRISTAN

What?

AARON (O.S.)

It's Michelle on your phone.

TRISTAN

I'm in the bathroom.

AARON (O.S.)

I'm sorry Michelle, Tristan can't talk. He's rubbing the lamp if you know what I mean. I'll have him call you back.

TRISTAN

I'm what?

INT. TRISTAN'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Tristan enters the kitchen and starts searching through the cupboards for something to eat.

AARON

So how is she?

TRISTAN

Who?

AARON

You know who.

TRISTAN

She just lost her dad, Aaron, how do you think she's doing?

Aaron stops eating and thinks for a moment.

AARON

I would think she's pretty shitty.

TRISTAN

You wouldn't be far from the truth.

AARON

At least she gets her college paid for now.

TRISTAN

What?

AARON

The family's of a dead soldiers get whatever they want from the government. I mean literally she's set for life now.

TRISTAN

I'm sure that's a small compensation for her dead father.

AARON

I don't know...sometimes I wish I was that lucky. Maybe I wouldn't be waiting tables all damn day. I mean I don't even really like my father. He's kind of a prick.

TRISTAN

You don't complain when he sends you those checks.

Tristan finally pulls down bread and puts two pieces in the toaster.

AARON

Pssh, that's nothing compared to what I could get from the government.

TRISTAN

It's also nothing compared to what you could get from getting a real degree other than Music.

AARON

At least I got a degree. What do you got?

TRISTAN

I don't know. I've got a job. I've got a girlfriend...

AARON

Wow, working at a video game store and dating an emotional wreck. Really sounds like your life is perfect.

TRISTAN

I didn't say it was perfect, it was just...par.

AARON

I'm living for more then par.

TRISTAN

Unemployment?

AARON

It's only temporary...

Tristan shakes his head. The timer on the toaster oven dings. Tristan goes and starts to butter toast.

AARON

...Wanna go to the Twins game this afternoon?

TRISTAN

I'm going to lunch with, Mari.

AARON

Ah, the Bloodsucking Sister returns.

TRISTAN

With a vengeance.

AARON

I can't believe she's clean now.

TRISTAN

Five years.

AARON

A tear shed for our brethren lost to rehab.

TRISTAN

Not for Mari.

AARON

Whatever dude. Mari was a fox when she was on the bottle. How's that big...rich...money dude working out for her?

TRISTAN

He's a real douche bag.

AARON

You need to knock that man out and point her in my direction.

TRISTAN

You're not dating my sister.

AARON

Why not?

TRISTAN

Cause you're an asshole.

AARON

So are you.

TRISTAN

I wouldn't let me, date my sister either. Besides, the one thing that's always been the same about Mari, is that she's a lunatic.

INT. DINER -- AFTERNOON

Tristan sits across from Mari, his sister and her husband, JAMES. They both wear business suits looking very professional, James has tons of money and it is obvious in the way he dresses and the clothes he wears.

Mari seems to always be a little on edge. Tristan sits across from her looking very out of place wearing his scrubby t-shirt and jeans. They eat lunch quickly, Tristan is trying to get this over as fast as he possibly can.

MARI

So, how is Michelle?

TRISTAN

Doesn't anyone realize that's a pretty stupid question?

MARI

I was just wondering how the girl was doing.

TRISTAN

Her father was just killed in a war she's been protesting for the last two years. That's how she's doing.

JAMES

Does she need to talk to someone? Like a counselor? I could arrange it.

TRISTAN

She's depressed James. She's not crazy or anything.

JAMES

You don't have to-

TRISTAN

Thanks but no thanks, James.

Pause.

MARI

When are you going to go to college?

TRISTAN

Never.

MARI

Tristan, you need to go to college.

TRISTAN

Why?

MARI

You're so smart...you just need to channel yourself to something.

TRISTAN

I already do.

James laughs a little. Mari kicks him under the table.

MARI

I hardly think that working at the video game store counts.

TRISTAN

Well I do. And I'm me, so I get to decide what counts.

MARI

Look at Michelle, she's going to college at the U, she's getting her life together and that's more then I can say for you.

TRISTAN

Lay off, Mari.

MARI

Mom's worried about you.

TRISTAN

Name one time in her life that mom wasn't worrying about all of us?...

Mari has nothing to say to that.

TRISTAN

...So, James, how's the business going?

JAMES

It's good Tristan. You know, you're welcome to work for me whenever you want.

TRISTAN

Thanks, Jimmy, but I'm not cut out for corporate America. I'm not good at manipulating faceless masses into doing my evil bidding.

MARI

Tristan, do you plan to live the rest of your life like this?

TRISTAN

I'm easily making as much as you are being a street lawyer.

MARI

At least I'm doing something I'm passionate about.

TRISTAN

Way to fight the power, Mari.

MARI

You're just impossible sometimes.

TRISTAN

Sorry.

MARI

No, you're not.

What do you mean, no I'm not?

MARI

If you were actually sorry you'd go out and do something with your life.

TRISTAN

Whatever.

MARI

Did you know that dad lost his job with St. Ben's?

TRISTAN

Good, now he can get a job at a school that won't preach to all it's students.

MARI

I don't remember you complaining about it when you went to school there.

TRISTAN

I was twelve years old, as long as I had candy in my mouth and video games in my hands I was happy.

MARI

Not much has changed has it?

TRISTAN

Jimmy? How do you survive her without suffering chronic aneurysms?

There's an awkward silence.

TRISTAN

Dad wanna work at Game Haven?

MARI

Thanks, but James has already offered if nothing comes up.

TRISTAN

Just an idea.

Mari opens her purse and pulls out a gum package. She pops out a piece and puts it in her mouth.

TRISTAN

Still trying to kick the habit?

MARI

I'm doing good.

When was your last smoke?

MARI

Tuesday.

TRISTAN

Worthy of applause.

MARI

You still drink?

Tristan hushes Mari.

MARI

Tristan...

TRISTAN

Of course not...I'm a good boy. In honor of my sister's strong move to quit her addiction, I've cleaned up completely.

MARI

I'm no stranger to sarcasm.

TRISTAN

Of course not, with Trump over here you probably welcome the color to the conversation.

MARI

Jesus, Tristan, does everything have to be an argument with you?

TRISTAN

Sorry.

MARI

God-j-f-

TRISTAN

What was that? You were mumbling.

Mari pops another piece of gum into her mouth and tries to breathe.

MARI

You're a very taxing boy.

TRISTAN

You're a very bitchy sister.

James mumbles something.

TRISTAN

Shut up, Rockafellar, no one asked you.

MART

Tristan.

TRISTAN

Well, it's been great talking to you all, but I've got to go to work.

MARI

Tris...

TRISTAN

Nope, there's no time to waste for the directionless.

Tristan kisses Mari across the table then slides out from the booth, slapping James on the arm.

TRISTAN

You got the check covered, don't you Gates?

James does not look amused. Tristan gets out of the booth and walks out of the restaurant. James looks over at Mari who shakes her head as she watches Tristan leave.

JAMES

Like brother like sister.

MART

I was never that difficult.

James laughs.

JAMES

Oh, you used to be.

MARI

Shut up, James.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICES -- MORNING

NATALIE, a young woman with glasses and long black hair, sits behind a computer, leans back in her office chair listening to someone talk on the phone. As they yammer on and on we see she is sketching on a note pad.

NATALIE

Cybercast this is, Natalie.

(A beat)

Okay, okay, we can set that up for you.

(She types on her

computer)

Yep, and I can do that too. Alright.

(More typing)

Yep, you have a nice day.

Natalie pushes her glasses up on her nose and starts typing again. She looks over to the front desk and sees a blonde, perfectly figured, woman getting a tour of the office space. Half the guys in the room are checking her out.

Natalie's friend, JAMIE, a woman with brunette hair and a very stylish outfit is typing at her computer. Natalie tries to get Jamie's attention.

NATALIE

(Coughing loudly)

Jamie!

Jamie doesn't notice. Natalie tries again.

NATALIE

(Coughing louder)

JAMIE!

Jamie still doesn't notice.

NATALIE

(Coughing louder again)

JAMIE!!

Everyone in the office looks to Natalie.

NATALIE

Sorry.

Natalie makes eye contact with Jamie and points toward the break room. They both get up and go to the room.

INT. BREAK ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Jamie timidly enters the room and looks as Natalie paces back and forth.

NATALIE

Something's going on, I know it.
Mr. Weed isn't happy. Maybe I had a complaint filed against me, maybe the corporate offices called and wanted me fired, maybe he found out that I left five minutes early on Friday. I only did it because I had to take care of mom, you don't think he'd fire me for that would you?

Jamie is pouring a cup of coffee at this point.

JAMIE

What?

NATALIE

Jamie, I am in the middle of crisis here, you could at least act like you care.

JAMIE

Natalie, every week we have this discussion and every week it's a false alarm.

NATALIE

But he has a good reason to do it this weekend.

JAMIE

Natalie, Ronald takes 15 minute bathroom breaks to masturbate every day, I don't think Mr. Weed will sweat those five minutes.

Pause.

NATALIE

Ronald?

JAMIE

I heard the guys talking about it.

NATALIE

Really? Cause that's gross.

JAMIE

No, what's gross is when he comes back and gives me that weird look.

NATALIE

Borderline creepy.

JAMIE

Yeah, let's not talk about it okay?

NATALIE

Deal.

JAMIE

I'm just saying that you have nothing to worry about.

NATALIE

Did you see that whore out there? Looks just like my Malibu Stacy doll that I grew up with.

JAMIE

I think she might be cool. She has good taste, did you see those shoes?

NATALIE

Jamie, she is the enemy. There is only so many people this company can hire before they start firing some.

JAMIE

Or maybe we're just growing.

NATALIE

Have you been getting more work?

JAMIE

No.

NATALIE

Then we're obviously not growing. If anything I'd say we're getting smaller. Perfect time for cuts.

JAMIE

Whatever. Listen...

Jamie takes Natalie's hands.

NATALIE

Don't hold my hand, it seems lesbianistic.

Jamie let's go of Natalie's hands.

JAMIE

You're job is perfectly safe, okay?

NATALIE

Okay.

JAMIE

No one's gonna fire a brilliant, beautiful girl like you.

NATALIE

Don't flatter me.

JAMIE

Natalie, just get out there and work.

INT. CORPORATE OFFICES -- CONTINUOUS

The blonde passes Natalie.

BLONDE

Hey, I'm Rochelle.

NATALIE

If you think for one second you're taking my job...I'll kill you.

Natalie walks past the stunned blonde. Jamie follows her.

JAMIE

(to the blonde)

I'm sorry, she's under a lot of stress.

Mr. WEED, the office manager, enters the room.

MR. WEED

Natalie!

NATALIE

Yes, Mr. Weed?

MR. WEED

I'd like to see you in my office

NATALIE

OH GOD NO! . . .

Natalie falls to her knees and buries her face in her hands, weeping and sobbing. Everyone pauses to watch her, except for Jamie is who is typing at her computer shaking her head.

MR. WEED

Natalie?...

Natalie continues sobbing.

MR. WEED

...Natalie?!...

Natalie looks up at him.

MR. WEED

...Get in here.

Natalie finally gets a grip and walks toward his office as if she was headed to a death sentence.

INT. MR. WEED'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie shuts the door.

NATALIE

(Thoroughly embarassed)

I'm so sorry, Mr. Weed. I was just under a lot of stress and that's why I...broke down in...uncontrollable ...sobbing.

Mr. Weed gestures to his seat across from his desk. Natalie sits down.

MR. WEED

As you've probably noticed, Natalie, we've been going through a tough time here at Cybercast. The company has decided that we need to begin changes.

NATALIE

Let go? Am I let go?

Mr. Weed starts to explain but Natalie cuts him off.

NATALIE

Like fired? Are you firing me? But-but why?

MR. WEED

Natalie-

NATALIE

I've-I mean-I've worked here for five years and have never had a single complaint filed against me. Why-Why would you fire me? Is it-

(Pause, then angrily)
Is it that blonde bimbo you had in here the other day? That fully equipped Barbie doll? Is that what this is?

MR. WEED

No, Natalie-

NATALIE

You're firing a quality employee for Mrs. Legs, Tits, Lips, and Ass! Oh HELL NO! Do you have any idea what that means to me!

MR. WEED

No Natalie, I just-

NATALIE

I spent the last five years wasting my life away for this! Working for this pig headed dumb face who can only think with his...penis! That's right I said penis in the work place and you can't stop me cause I'm fired! Penis, penis, penis, penis!

Mr. Weed is taken back. Everyone outside the office is trying to peek in to see what is going on.

NATALIE

And-And you know what Mr. Penis
Thinker? You have bad breath. That's
right I can't stand your disgusting
breath. And you sit there every
morning singing every damn song that
comes over the radio! And you know
what? You suck at it! You're a
horrible singer, you're beyond tone
deaf, you're tone...blind...and
mute...you're like tone...everything
bad! That's right and you know what?

(MORE)

NATALIE

We all know what those private meetings are all about. We all know you're screwing every secretary in the metro area!! Is that why I'm fired? Do I not put out enough? Is there some sort of office sex orgy going on and I'm just not in on it?

MR. WEED

Natalie...

NATALIE

Oh GOD...It's cause I'm ugly isn't it?! Do you really think I'm ugly!?...

MR. WEED

Natalie you're very...

NATALIE

Well I'm going home now to sit in the bathtub with a microwave and all of you can read about it tomorrow in the paper and just feel awful about yourself and what your little stunt did to the fragile self esteem of a poor innocent young woman...

Pause and Natalie tries to catch her breath. It dawns on here what she has just done.

NATALIE

...Oh my God...I don't know how I got into all of that. I'm fired right? I mean I really am fired right?

(A beat)

Because if I'm not I'll totally take back everything I just said. I mean at this point you'll probably fire me anyways, but...I'll just go pack my things.

Natalie walks out of the office. Mr. Weed grabs a pen and scratches Natalie's name off of the promotion list.

EXT. TRISTAN'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- LATER

SETH is Tristan's younger brother, he has long shaggy hair and wears torn up jeans with a Queen t-shirt. He sits out on the front porch of the house, smoking a cigarette.

Tristan pulls into the driveway and Seth gets up to greet him.

TRISTAN

How's my little brother?

Not bad, how about you?

TRISTAN

I'm okay.

SETH

You just in the neighborhood?

TRISTAN

Kind of, work isn't so far from here.

SETH

Just thought you'd drop by?

TRISTAN

I had lunch with Mari and so I figured I come by and see you.

SETH

Mari still as uptight as ever?

TRISTAN

Worse.

Seth laughs.

SETH

Let's get outta here.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

They both head to his car.

SETH

Thanks for screwing me over.

TRISTAN

What?

They enter the car.

INT. TRISTAN'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan enters the car and starts it up.

SETH

Mom is already looking at colleges for me to attend.

Tristan scoffs at his mother.

TRISTAN

Sorry.

You better be. She's even starting to look at private schools.

TRISTAN

Gross.

SETH

Yeah.

TRISTAN

So how's life back here?

SETH

It sucks.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I had a good guess you were gonna say that.

SETH

You were right...

Tristan backs out of the driveway.

SETH

...You wanna go to a party this weekend?

Tristan laughs and shakes his head.

TRISTAN

You couldn't pay me to come back home.

SETH

No, this is different, it's not in town. It's in the cities.

TRISTAN

Who do you know in the cities?

SETH

This kid that graduated last year.

TRISTAN

Who?

SETH

I dunno, he's a friend of Jake.

TRISTAN

Huh.

Silence.

I swear to god if the Vikings don't start blitzing more I'm gonna kill the coach.

TRISTAN

No shit, Martinez has been playing like shit. They need to give him some help and stop counting on the front four. Yeah, no kidding, they looked terrible.

SETH

Have you seen the trailer for the new Aquaman movie?

TRISTAN

Sorry, but Aquaman was the dumbest super hero ever.

SETH

Your full of shit, Aquaman kicked ass. He's the king of Atlantis.

TRISTAN

Big deal, Atlantis was destroyed and everyone is dead. He's ruling a kingdom that no one cares about and no one lives in. Some great king.

SETH

He can talk to the fish.

TRISTAN

Who the hell cares? So he can talk to fish, what good is that gonna do? If the fish ever show up all you need is a ton of fishing rods.

SETH

I bet it's a kick ass movie.

TRISTAN

Sorry, I just don't agree with you.

SETH

You know who needs his own movie? The Green Lantern.

Tristan's phone goes off. He picks it up and checks his caller ID.

TRISTAN

It's Michelle, give me a second.

Tristan flips open the phone.

Hello?

INTERCUT BETWEEN MICHELLE AND TRISTAN

MICHELLE

Hey, what are you doing?

TRISTAN

I'm with Seth right now.

MICHELLE

Oh, okay.

TRISTAN

I tried calling you during my break but you didn't answer.

MICHELLE

I must've been in the shower.

TRISTAN

Oh.

MICHELLE

You wanna do something tonight?

TRISTAN

Yeah, sure.

MICHELLE

Tina told me to go over to her house, I was kind of hoping to get trashed.

TRISTAN

I can play sober cab.

MICHELLE

Okay, I love you babe.

TRISTAN

Yeah, you too.

BACK TO SCENE

Tristan hangs up the phone.

SETH

That love muffin?

TRISTAN

Yeah.

SETH

You guys have been dating how long now?

Since I was a Senior in high school, so like...two years?

SETH

Damn.

TRISTAN

Yeah, I know.

SETH

How's it going?

TRISTAN

I don't know...

SETH

That good, huh?

TRISTAN

She's perfect...like too perfect you know? I wish she'd like...yell, scream, hit things. I know she wants to, I can see it building up in her. But...These next weeks are gonna be hard.

SETH

Yeah.

TRISTAN

Wanna drink?

SETH

Sure.

TRISTAN

Open the glove compartment.

Seth pulls out a flask.

SETH

What is this?

TRISTAN

It's just some So Co.

Seth takes a drink. He hands the flask to Tristan who takes a drink.

SETH

You remember stealing liquor from Dad's cabinet?

TRISTAN

(Laughs)

Yeah.

I don't think I've been locked in my room for so long in my entire life.

Tristan laughs and they exchange another swig of the flask.

INT. NATALIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Natalie enters the house and kicks off her shoes. She drops her purse in the entry way and walks into the house.

NATALIE

Mom?

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie's mom, VIRGINIA, sits in a rocking chair watching trashy television. She has scraggly blond hair but has managed to keep figure as she gets older.

NATALIE

What are you watching?

VIRGINIA

I don't know.

NATALIE

Turn it off.

VIRGINIA

No, I'm watching it.

NATALIE

You don't even know what it is.

VIRGINIA

But, I'm still watching it.

NATALIE

Whatever...

Natalie sits down on the couch across from Virginia.

NATALIE

...I lost my job today.

Virginia clicks her tongue and shakes her head.

VIRGINIA

Why?

NATALIE

(Chuckles)

I don't even know. I didn't stick around long enough to find out.

VIRGINIA

If you think I'm working you're sadly mistaken.

NATALIE

I didn't say that mom. I'm just saying I'll have to find another job.

VIRGINIA

Where?

NATALIE

I don't know.

VIRGINIA

I don't want you posing for nudie magazines.

NATALIE

Did I say that? Did I say I was going to be a porn star.

VIRGINIA

You hinted at it.

NATALIE

How?

VIRGINIA

If you don't know, then I'm not going to tell you.

NATALIE

Whatever.

VIRGINIA

I think we should switch to cable, the satellite loses reception sometimes.

NATALIE

We're not getting cable, mom.

VIRGINIA

Do you really want me to sit here and with out television?

NATALIE

Yeah, heaven forbid you pick up a broom and sweep, or take out the trash, or...

VIRGINIA

Fine, I'll just sit here when it gets rainy and not watch television.
(MORE)

VIRGINIA

I'll just think about my impending death as it slowly eats away at my body as it did my poor dead husband.

NATALIE

Okay mom, I'll call the cable company tomorrow.

VIRGINIA

Before or after you get a new job?

NATALIE

I'll have to take the naked pictures of me first.

VIRGINIA

I said...

NATALIE

It was a joke, mom. A joke.

Pause.

VIRGINIA

Things would be a lot easier if your father were still alive.

NATALIE

Yeah, the alcoholism definitely would improve the situation.

VIRGINIA

Don't talk about your father that way. You're father was a good man. A little found of the sin water he might have been, but he made up for it by being a sexual stallion.

NATALIE

I just threw up a little.

VIRGINIA

Oh Natalie, you're a big girl you know all about all those things. Dare I say it, you might even be able to educate me.

NATALIE

I'm not having this conversation.

Natalie gets up and walks away.

VIRGINIA

What did I say?

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks in the kitchen and pulls out a frozen pizza. She starts unwrapping it, she pauses to read the directions and starts chewing on her finger nails. Virginia enters from the living room.

VIRGINIA

What are you doing there?

NATALIE

Making dinner.

VIRGINIA

If it's frozen pizza again, you might as well starve me, cause I won't eat it.

Natalie pulls out the trash can and drops the pizza in.

NATALIE

What will you eat, mom?

VIRGINIA

I could go for a good meat loaf.

NATALIE

I don't know how to make meat loaf, mom.

VIRGINIA

It's almost a sin for a young woman to not know how to make meat loaf.

NATALIE

Sorry.

VIRGINIA

Very well, make the frozen pizza. I don't care.

Natalie shakes her head in sheer frustration. She picks up the telephone.

NATALIE

Never mind, mom. I'm ordering out.

VIRGINIA

Like pizza?

NATALIE

No, like sandwiches.

VIRGINIA

You can do that now?

NATALIE

What a fascinating modern age we live in, huh?...

Natalie hangs up the phone.

NATALIE

...they're busy.

Natalie slams the phone down on the receiver. She sits down at the dinner table and soon is joined by her mother.

NATALIE

Mom, am I ugly?

VIRGINIA

By all that is holy! Of course not!

NATALIE

Then why am I twenty-five and still...

VIRGINIA

A virgin?

NATALIE

Single.

VIRGINIA

Well Natalie, you were never very good at being...sexually enticing.

NATALIE

You know what? Forget I said anything about it.

VIRGINIA

Maybe we should go thong shopping.

NATALIE

Drop it.

EXT. PARTY -- NIGHT

Tristan walks out into the night his keys in hand. He looks up at the stars and pauses. His concentration is broken by a drunken Michelle as she stumble into him.

TRISTAN

Hey.

MICHELLE

I love you...

She kisses him.

MICHELLE

... I love you so much.

Thanks, babe.

Michelle laughs uncontrollably and kisses him again. Tristan sweeps her off her feet.

TRISTAN

...Come on, Princess. It's time we got you home.

INT. TRISTAN'S CAR -- LATER

Tristan pulls up to Michelle's house.

TRISTAN

Be quiet, your mom is sleeping.

Michelle looks at him and smiles.

MICHELLE

Tristan?

TRISTAN

Yeah?

MICHELLE

Let's do it.

TRISTAN

What?

MICHELLE

Let's do it.

TRISTAN

Do what?

MICHELLE

It.

TRISTAN

You're drunk.

Michelle grabs him and tries to work her way on him, but Tristan pushes her off. She tries again, but her drunken state and Tristan's strength fend her off.

MICHELLE

What's wrong with you?

TRISTAN

Michelle...A. You're drunk, B. Your mom is less then 50 feet from us, C...I don't know it seemed like a longer list when I started.

MICHELLE

Mom's asleep.

Just...not tonight.

MICHELLE

What's wrong with you?

TRISTAN

Nothing's wrong with me. I just don't want to have sex in my car fifty feet from your house.

MICHELLE

Fine, whatever.

Michelle gets out of the car.

TRISTAN

Be quiet, she's asleep.

Michelle slams the car door. Tristan sighs and watches as she stumbles to her front door. As soon as she's in the house he drives away.

INT. GROCERY STORE -- DAY

Natalie is filling out an application on a counter. She screws up writing something and scribbles it out. Then she erases it partly. She continues until the paper rips. She turns to the store clerk.

NATALIE

I ripped the application.

CLERK

Not a biggy. Just keep going.

NATALIE

No, it looks stupid.

CLERK

Just write around it. There's no need for more innocent trees to die.

NATALIE

Listen, the trees come secondary to me being able to pay the bills.

CLERK

Americans wastes more resources than any other country in the world.

NATALIE

I'll make sure to vote for the Green party, now give me another application.

The clerk rolls his eyes and hands Natalie a new sheet of paper.

A girl in the check out line sees Natalie and looks her over. This is CALIEGH, she is a very cute girl, with a perfect hair cut and perfect outfit.

CALIEGH

Natalie?

Natalie starts and doesn't look at Caliegh and just pretends to be looking at a magazine.

CALIEGH

Natalie Marks?

Natalie still pretends not to hear Caliegh. Caliegh taps her on the shoulder and Natalie glances over, nervously.

CALIEGH

Natalie!? It's me, Caliegh Clifford!

NATALIE

Oh my god!

Caliegh gives Natalie a hug.

CALIEGH

So how are you?

NATALIE

Fine. Just fine.

CALIEGH

You going to college?

NATALIE

No, um...just started working...well I was working. Then I got fired by a bunch of penis...people...But anyways, how are you?

CALIEGH

I'm good. I'm graduating from the U this spring.

NATALIE

Graduating! Get out.

CALIEGH

Yeah. So you're looking for a job...here?

NATALIE

No, not here. Ha, what would give you that impression.

CALIEGH

Well, I thought I saw an application...

NATALIE

Nope, just this magazine.

Natalie shows Caliegh a copy of Maxim that she picked up in her hurry.

CALIEGH

Maxim?

NATALIE

Yeah...I like to...read the articles...

CALIEGH

I see.

NATALIE

It's more informational than you think.

CALIEGH

Right...

Pause.

CALIEGH

...Hey, I'm having a party at my boyfriend's place tonight. You wanna come?

NATALIE

A party? Like bunch of people, highly intoxicated? That sounds...something.

Caliegh is already digging through her purse for something to write her address down on.

CALIEGH

No, you have to come. We haven't seen you in so long.

NATALIE

Yeah, well...

Caliegh scribbles on a piece of paper.

CALIEGH

Ten until whenever, bring booze and yeah...I'll see you then.

Caliegh shoves the paper into Natalie's hands and walks away.

NATALIE

Yeah...then...

Natalie pauses.

NATALIE

...Shit.

EXT. CALIEGH'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

The party is raging in the house and has spilled smokers onto the porch. Natalie pulls up on the side street.

INT. NATALIE'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie pulls to a stop and takes a deep breath.

NATALIE

Could drive away...no one would know. No one would care...

Natalie sighs and pulls the keys out of the ignition. She opens the door and steps into the night.

EXT. CALIEGH'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks across the lawn, through a bunch of smokers coughing as she inhales their smoke. We see Seth is one of the smokers. He pulls out his cell phone.

SETH

Tristan? That's right, I knew you would.

INT. CALIEGH'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie weaves her way through people drinking, smoking, making out, and talking. She goes through the house and finally finds Caliegh.

CALIEGH

Natalie! You made it! I want you to get a drink and get some boys.

Natalie is taken back by Caliegh and slowly turns around.

NATALIE

Oh God. Okay, get a drink, get a boy.

She walks to the bar in the house. A GUY sits behind the counter nodding his head to the music playing.

NATALIE

Get a drink and then a boy. Get a boy? What the hell? Is she crazy it's not like boys just...

GUY

Can I get you a drink?

Natalie starts at the guy who just asked the question. She turns and looks at him, surprised and then slowly nods her head.

NATALIE

Yeah...

GUY

Whadda you want?

NATALIE

I don't know...something...

The guy waits for Natalie to elaborate but she doesn't.

GUY

You ever try gin?...

Natalie shakes her head.

GUY

...We're gonna remedy that shit right now.

INT. CALIEGH'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Natalie sits down on the couch and sips her drink.

INT. CALIEGH'S LIVING ROOM -- HOURS LATER

Natalie is still sitting on the couch. People are making out next to her and she scoots away. Finally, she falls out the couch and walks away.

EXT. CALIEGH'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks outside and we see Seth and Tristan passing a pipe back and forth.

SETH

I'm telling you the Aquaman movie is gonna kick ass.

TRISTAN

I'm just telling you Aquaman sucks. The End. P.S. He sucks balls. Not just any type of suck, it's ball sucking suck.

Natalie hurries past them.

SETH

Hey!...

She stops abruptly.

SETH

...Does Aquaman suck?

I...don't know what you're talking
about.

TRISTAN

Aquaman, the comic book character...does he suck?

NATALIE

Never heard of him

TRISTAN

Case and point.

SETH

Whatever.

Natalie looks at the pipe in Tristan's hand.

TRISTAN

You wanna hit?

Natalie laughs nervously.

SETH

The girl's gotta drive, Tristan.

NATALIE

No, I'll try it.

Natalie approaches him and he hands the pipe to her. Natalie takes it gingerly.

TRISTAN

You ever smoke before?

NATALIE

Yeah...all the time...I mean not so much anymore. But, I used to...all the time...

Tristan and Seth exchange looks again. Natalie inhales and it's way too much. She gags immediately and starts hacking. Tristan shoots a smile at Seth.

NATALIE

Oh my god.

SETH

Good job there, babe...

Seth takes the pipe and goes inside.

SETH

...I'm gonna check on Jake.

Tristan nods and pats Natalie's back who is still gagging.

It's rough for the first time isn't
it?

NATALIE

Yeah.

Natalie sits down where Seth was.

TRISTAN

Hey, I'm Tristan.

Natalie gives him a little wave.

NATALIE

I'm Natalie.

TRISTAN

You know Billy?

NATALIE

Who?

TRISTAN

Billy? The kid that owns this place?

Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE

No, no, I know Caliegh.

TRISTAN

Who's Caliegh.

NATALIE

This...girl, a friend from high school. Actually, not really a friend. Actually, I hated her. Actually, I don't even know why I'm here.

TRISTAN

One of life's great mysteries isn't it? Why are we here?

NATALIE

(Confused)

Yeah...

TRISTAN

I'm sorry, it's the...talking.

Natalie laughs.

TRISTAN

So you go to school here?

At the U? No, I-I don't go to school at all.

TRISTAN

Me either, good call...good call. So what do you do?

NATALIE

I was working...but I got fired.

TRISTAN

Sweet. That's really cool. I like you.

NATALIE

(Uncomfortable)

Thanks...So what do you do? You work or something?

TRISTAN

I work at the Game Haven.

NATALIE

That's cool.

TRISTAN

No, not really. I hate that place. I hate everything about it. I hate the egotistical people that work there, I hate the acne scared bastards that shop there. I really wish I could quit.

NATALIE

Then why don't you?

TRISTAN

What?

NATALIE

Why don't you just quit?

Tristan thinks this over.

TRISTAN

That's a brilliant idea. I'm gonna quit that place. I'm gonna walk in and tell my boss, I'll be like, "You know what? You're a knob job and I'm going home." And then I'll go home, it's the perfect plan...

Natalie laughs a little, Tristan sees her laughing and starts laughing as well. Natalie bites her nails nervously.

...God...I'm stoned...and I'm drunk...and I'm tired...and I have to work at 12 tomorrow...

Tristan looks at Natalie for a second and pauses.

TRISTAN

...Do you wanna go for a walk or something?

Natalie smiles.

NATALIE

Yeah, a walk would be nice.

TRISTAN

Cool.

INT. STREET -- LATER

Natalie and Tristan walk on the street talking back and forth.

TRISTAN

So, what do you love?

NATALIE

What?

TRISTAN

What do you do, what's your thing, your...I don't know. Your passion in life? If you were locked away in a room for the rest of your life, what would you want to be able to do?

NATALIE

I don't know...I...I like to draw.
I used to just draw all the time.
At school, at home, on the bus. I
was always drawing. It was just
like, I could create whatever I wanted
with just a pencil and paper.

TRISTAN

You stopped?

NATALIE

There just wasn't time anymore. I was working, and when I wasn't working, I was taking care of my mom.

TRISTAN

That sucks.

Yeah. What about you? What's your passion?

Tristan thinks for a moment.

TRISTAN

Honestly?

NATALIE

Yeah, honestly.

TRISTAN

I don't know. Nothing. I am really good at doing nothing. And I think that really frustrates everyone I know, that I'm so good at doing nothing. But it's what I do. And it's what I'm good at. My teachers used to tell me all the time that I would just sit in class and zone out and do...nothing. I'm so good at it.

Natalie laughs.

TRISTAN

...What?

NATALIE

I don't know, I've never heard anyone claim that they are the best do nothing-er. That just seems like a...unique skill.

TRISTAN

And a misunderstood skill.

NATALIE

I bet.

Tristan stops in front of an apartment building. Natalie stops as well looking at him worried.

NATALIE

Is something wrong?

TRISTAN

No. No, it's...nothing.

(A beat)

You wanna see my apartment?

NATALIE

This is your apartment?

TRISTAN

Yeah.

Are you trying to pick me up? Or are you just tired? I could have driven-

TRISTAN

No, I just...

Tristan's hand takes Natalie's.

TRISTAN

...I just want to show you my apartment.

Natalie thinks for a moment.

NATALIE

Sure.

INT. TRISTAN'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Tristan opens the door to his apartment kissing Natalie. She struggles to close the door behind her batting at it with her arms as she focuses on kissing Tristan. They work their way across the kitchen. Tristan takes off his shirt.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

As they get into the hallway they can hear shouts and moans coming from Aaron's bedroom. Natalie realizes this and stops for a second and looks at the bedroom door.

NATALIE

Do you live in a brothel or something?

Tristan is confused and then sees that Natalie is talking about Aaron's room.

TRISTAN

He's my roommate, just disregard all noises you hear from that room.

NATALIE

Ah...ok.

They being kissing again and Tristan opens the door to his room and they tumble in.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan stops kissing her and turns on the light. He looks around the room which is an absolute pit. Natalie looks around and is taken back by the room's condition.

NATALIE

Maybe it's better with the light off.

Tristan nods and turns the light off. In the darkness they stumble through the room and finally find the bed.

Tristan starts to work his hands down Natalie's body and then starts to undo Natalie's pants. She gets a hold of herself and thinks about what is happening.

NATALIE

Stop.

Tristan does and looks at her.

TRISTAN

What?

NATALIE

Just stop, stop.

Tristan puts his hands up in the air to show that he's stopped.

TRISTAN

Stopped.

(A beat)

Oh right!

Tristan searches on his night stand. He knocks something we can't see over in the darkness and it SHATTERS. He finally turns on the light and opens the a drawer. He pulls out a condom.

TRISTAN

Alright we're all set.

Tristan starts to undo his pants.

NATALIE

No!

Tristan stops and looks at Natalie, confused.

TRISTAN

What?

NATALIE

Listen...I just...can't.

TRISTAN

You can't? You came all the way up here. You fell for that awful apartment line and you can't?

Natalie turns away from Tristan and sits on the side of his bed.

NATALIE

Look Tristan you're a great guy, but this would be...my first time.

First time? Like first time hooking up randomly?

NATALIE

Like first time having sex.

TRISTAN

(Taken back)

Oh.

NATALIE

And I was just hoping it would be a little more...not random hooking up...ish.

A beat.

TRISTAN

It's ok. I understand.

Tristan kisses Natalie on the cheek. Natalie looks around nervously now that the lusting high is gone.

NATALIE

I guess I better leave.

Tristan's hand covers her.

TRISTAN

No...

Natalie stops.

TRISTAN

...Like, you don't have to. You can stay here.

NATALIE

No, I better...

TRISTAN

You could be raped, or kidnapped, or...something awful I can't even think of.

NATALIE

My car's just a couple of blocks away...

Natalie reconsiders and then smiles a little.

NATALIE

...You promise not to rape me in my sleep?

TRISTAN

Scouts honor.

Natalie lays down again. She kisses Tristan.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Natalie wakes up. She turns and sees Tristan still asleep next to her. She checks to make sure that she still has all her clothes on.

Then she gets out of bed and starts to leave. She pauses and turns around to give Tristan a kiss on the cheek. With that she leaves.

EXT. CALIEGH'S HOUSE -- LATER

Natalie smiles to herself as she walks to her car. She opens the door and then notices an envelope under her windshield wiper. She opens it to see a ticket for a parking violation.

NATALIE

Damn it...

She looks around.

NATALIE

... There was nowhere to park you stupid, dumb face...stupid...ahh!

Natalie gets in the car and drives away. As she drives away she sees a cop writing another parking ticket. She rolls down her window.

NATALIE

FUCKER!

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Aaron picks up an alarm clock that 9:30. He rolls over and wakes up the girl sleeps next to him.

AARON

It's 9:30.

The girl stirs.

GIRL #2

Hm?

AARON

It's 9:30. Dont' you have work or something?

GIRL #2

Yeah at 9, don't worry about it.

Aaron rolls his eyes.

AARON

Okay...

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Tristan lies in bed fast asleep.

GIRL #2 (O.S.)

YOU STUPID SHIT!

AARON (O.S.)

You know I don't really feel like I'm to blame here.

GIRL #2 (O.S.)

Of course you wouldn't!

AARON (O.S.)

I don't suppose the fact that the sex was good would save me.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The girl is putting her clothes back on as Aaron sits in bed rubbing his eyes.

GIRL #2

The sex was horrible. It was like having sex with a gerbil. Not that I've ever had sex with a gerbil. But, I imagine it would be something like what happened last night.

AARON

Okay you know what? Next time you're horny why don't you just not call me?

GIRL #2

Why don't you go to hell?

AARON

That has nothing to do with this argument.

GIRL #2

I hate you!

AARON

I'm going gay.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan stirs.

GIRL #2

You bastard.

Something is thrown and hits the wall waking Tristan up. He rolls over and rubs his eyes.

AARON

Okay, you know what? That was my Kirby Puckett autographed baseball.

GIRL #2

I don't give a shit! I'm so over you.

AARON

Okay, you get over me. Just stop throwing my shit.

A door slams and Tristan rolls over in bed. He sees the empty pillow next to him.

INT. TRISTAN'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Tristan wanders into the kitchen as Aaron pours a bowl of cereal.

TRISTAN

Think she'll call again?

AARON

God, I hope not.

TRISTAN

Didn't you say she was psycho?

AARON

Yeah...after a few beers the whole psycho thing sublimates into God she has a nice ass.

TRISTAN

You're a role model for the male gender.

Aaron gives Tristan a wink and sits down. Tristan pulls out some pop tarts and puts them in the toaster. They pop out immediately and he has to try again, and again, and again, finally he throws the pop tarts on a plate.

AARON

Good try.

TRISTAN

I think we need a new toaster.

AARON

I won't hear it.

Tristan sits down at the table.

TRISTAN

If I was to have...explicit relations with another girls right now...would that constitute an affair?

AARON

It's definitely cheating. Why?

TRISTAN

No reason.

AARON

No, there's a reason. You just don't want to tell me...

Tristan shakes his head.

AARON

...Did you cheat on Michelle last night?

TRISTAN

I'm not sure...I think so.

AARON

Did you sleep with a girl that had different DNA then Michelle?

TRISTAN

No...

Aaron nods and goes back to his cereal.

TRISTAN

...But I did make out with one.

Aaron's attention is recaptured.

AARON

Who?

TRISTAN

She was just some girl, I don't know. But she was talking to me and...I don't know. I've never thought of cheating on Michelle before, never even crossed my mind. And when I was with this girl last night it was like Michelle didn't even exist. I don't know.

AARON

I'm gonna use some big words here, Tristan. Mature words that are gonna scare you. But we have to use them anyways.

TRISTAN

I'm ready.

AARON

Do you love Michelle?

Yes.

AARON

Do you love this other girl?

TRISTAN

Probably not. I mean I just met her last night.

AARON

Then there you go. Listen, I've seen you and Michelle together. She's perfect for you. Don't mess it up over some girl you met last night. I mean come on, it's a just a one night thing right?

TRISTAN

Right...

Tristan's phone rings he pulls it out and answers it.

TRISTAN

...'Sup?...Okay...Yeah...okay see you later, babe...

Tristan hangs up. Aaron looks at him.

TRISTAN

...We're going to dinner with my parents.

AARON

That's another point right there. Any girl who can sit through a dinner with you and your parents? They're worth keeping around.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

Aaron pauses.

AARON

Hey, you didn't give this girl your number did you?...

Tristan thinks.

AARON

...Did you?

TRISTAN

Of course not. I wouldn't do that.

AARON

Good. Good.

INT. NATALIE'S ROOM -- DAY

Natalie's cell phone is on a contact: TRISTAN. Her fingers run over the buttons time and time again. Finally, she closes her phone and lies down in bed. She waits for a beat and then opens the phone again and calls someone.

The phone rings and we hear Jamie on the other line. As they talk Natalie picks up a notebook next to her bed and starts sketching in it.

JAMIE

(Over the phone)

Hello?

NATALIE

Jamie?

JAMIE

Nat, how are you doing? You left so quick...

NATALIE

Jamie, I met a guy.

JAMIE

A real guy? Like a human with two legs and arms?

NATALIE

He even has a penis...I think. I don't know, I haven't seen it but I'm pretty sure it's there.

JAMIE

OH MY GOD!

INT. OUTSIDE'S NATALIE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Virginia is passing and hears Natalie's raised voice. She stops and listens at the door.

INT. NATALIE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

NATALIE

And he was so nice. And we just lay in his bed...and...It's like I'm in high school again. Except this time I'm not going to prom with Big Hairy Steve.

INT. OUTSIDE'S NATALIE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Virginia has heard enough and walks away from the door. She goes down the stairs.

INT. NATALIE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

JAMIE

So have you thought about what you're gonna do now, I mean like for job?

Natalie thinks to herself.

NATALIE

Not really...I applied around...but, I don't know.

JAMIE

If you need anything, you call me okay?

NATALIE

Yeah. I will.

JAMIE

Bye.

NATALIE

Bye Jamie.

Natalie hangs up the phone and pauses for moment. She lies down in bed again and sighs.

VIRGINIA (O.S.)

NATALIE!!!!!!!

INT. NATALIE'S KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Natalie comes running down the stairs where her mother is sitting at the table.

NATALIE

What? What is it?

VIRGINIA

There is nothing wrong with Steven Willard.

NATALIE

What?

VIRGINIA

I heard you talking about, "Big, Hairy, Steve." Steven was a very nice boy.

NATALIE

Whatever.

VIRGINIA

Natalie, I don't like the way you're acting. What's gotten into you? It's this boy isn't it?

What?

VIRGINIA

This boy I heard you talking about on the phone.

NATALIE

Mom, what are you-?

VIRGINIA

I don't like what he's done to you.

NATALIE

(Mocking her mother)

Really?

VIRGINIA

He's a bad influence, the next thing you know you'll be smoking pot and having sex in dingy apartments.

NATALIE

(Still mocking)

You think so?

VIRGINIA

He's poisoned your mind and I will not stand for it.

NATALIE

(Still mocking)

You won't.

VIRGINIA

You will not see that boy again and that is the end of it.

NATALIE

Mom, when you are paying the bills and cleaning the house, you can make the rules again.

VIRGINIA

But you are still my daughter and I know what is best for you.

Natalie shakes her head and walks away.

NATALIE

I'm a big girl, mom.

VIRGINIA

You're only 24!

INT. THE STEVEN'S KITCHEN -- EVENING

MISS STEVEN'S, Tristan's mother, who is aging nicely with dyed blond hair and a wilting body, is pulling meat loaf out of the oven. Michelle is helping he set the table.

MISS STEVENS

So how are thing, Michelle?

MICHELLE

They're good. I got my grades back from last semester and I think I might be able to get that scholarship.

MISS STEVENS

Really? That's wonderful. And I'm so sorry to hear about your father. God rest his soul.

MICHELLE

Yeah.

MISS STEVENS

I just want you to know, Charles and I are totally in support of what he was fighting for.

Michelle swallows hard and bites her lip.

MICHELLE

That's nice.

INT. THE STEVEN'S LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

MR. STEVENS, a portly balding man, sits in front of the T.V. watching ESPN. Tristan sits in the couch next to him. Mr. Steven launches an empty beer can at the T.V.

MR. STEVENS

(at the T.V.)

NO! NO We're not winning because we're not blitzing. Since that fat piece of shit Martinez isn't playing up to par we have to start blitzing!

The analyst continues to talk. Mr. Steven's listens and then throws his newspaper at the T.V.

TRISTAN

It doesn't help that we won't have Hopkins for the next three weeks.

MR. STEVENS

Hopkins sucks.

TRISTAN

The guy had five pro bowls in the last six years.

Seth comes down the stairs.

SETH

Seven seasons over a thousand yards.

TRISTAN

Averages two touchdowns a game. I don't care who you are, that's pretty good.

SETH

He was on track for at least thirteen hundred years this season.

MR. STEVENS

Alright, I get it. Hopkins is good.

SETH

Don't worry it's the Vikings. We always will find a way to suck ass.

Seth walks away into the kitchen as Mr. Stevens grumbles to himself and resituates himself in his chair.

MR. STEVENS

I still blame that fat ass.

SETH (O.S.)

You just don't like Martinez because he played for Notre Dame.

MR. STEVENS

Damn right!

Tristan laughs.

MR. STEVENS

The hell are you laughing at?

TRISTAN

Nothing. Nothing at all.

MR. STEVENS

You keep it that way, Chuckles.

Tristan smiles and leans back in his seat.

MISS STEVENS (O.S.)

Dinner's ready.

The front door opens and Mari walks in with James carrying a large Perkins box.

MARI

I'm here! I just go off work, I'm sorry...

Mari walks to her dad and gives him a kiss.

MARI

Hi, daddy.

MR. STEVENS

What's in the bag?

MARI

We stopped at Perkins and got a pie.

MR. STEVENS

Apple? It better not be something weird like French Silk...damn French.

Mari gives him another kiss on the cheek and moves in to the dining room. James shakes hands with Mr. Stevens.

JAMES

Good to see you again, Charles.

MR. STEVENS

James, You too. Let's get into the dining room before the women start ot fret.

INT. THE STEVEN'S DINING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

The table is just finished being set by Miss Stevens.

MISS STEVENS

Charles, will you say grace?

Everyone takes hands around the table.

MR. STEVENS

Thank you Lord, for brining us all around the table tonight. For keeping our family safe and for all the comforts you provide us.

Tristan rolls his eyes and Mari kicks him under the table.

MR. STEVENS

Amen.

ALL

Amen.

They break hands and start serving themselves food.

MISS STEVENS

So, Michelle where do you go to school, again?

MICHELLE

The U? In Minneapolis.

MISS STEVENS

Do you like it there?

MICHELLE

Yeah, it's nice. I like the teachers, the atmosphere, it's a good place.

MISS STEVENS

We always thought Tristan would go to college, he was so smart in high school. He was valedictorian of his class.

MICHELLE

Yeah, I know he beat out my brother.

MISS STEVENS

Tristan, why don't you enroll at Michelle's school?

TRISTAN

Because I'd rather drink Antifreeze.

MISS STEVENS

Why don't you want to go to school, Tristan?

TRISTAN

And study what, mom? There isn't a degree for people who don't know what to do with their lives.

MR. STEVENS

You've had nearly twenty-five years to think about it.

Tristan sighs.

TRISTAN

Hey Trump, can ya pass me the mashed potatoes?

James passes the mash potatoes to Tristan who scoops some onto his plate. He puts them back on the table.

MISS STEVENS

I want you all to know that Seth was named Salutatorian of his class.

Seth shakes his head and stares at the table, embarrassed.

SETH

God damn it, mom.

MISS STEVENS

And he was accepted to the University of St. Lawrence.

MARI

Congratulations! That's so great.

SETH

Not bad for sleeping through class, huh?

MARI

What are you going to study?

TRISTAN

(under his breath)

The fine art of how to beat a hang over.

Seth hears this and laughs, he regains control of himself and gets serious.

SETH

I'm not sure yet.

MARI

I could see you in physics or something like that.

Tristan laughs so hard he accidentally spits food on the table.

TRISTAN

Oh god, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

He wipe it up with a napkin. Seth chuckles a little while staring at the table.

MARI

Something funny?

TRISTAN

Nope. Nothing's funny. Sad, maybe. A little sad. I think the best word to describe it would be...

Michelle puts her hand on Tristan's leg trying to restrain him.

TRISTAN

... Nevermind.

Mari pops a piece of nicotine gum and chews it viscously.

SETH

I have cigarettes if you need one.

MARI

No thanks.

Silence.

JAMES

I got that position all squared away Mr. Stevens.

MR. STEVENS

That you James.

Tristan shakes his head.

TRISTAN

You really want to get ankle deep in Corporate America, dad?

MR. STEVENS

Tristan...

TRISTAN

You really want to start out on the bottom of some stupid totem pole working you ass off all day for some rich bastard who doesn't give a shit about you?

MISS STEVENS

TRISTAN!!

MICHELLE

Come on baby.

TRISTAN

Whatever.

Tristan goes back to trying to eat, but just ends up playing with his food. His father watches him.

MR. STEVENS

Anything more to say?

MISS STEVENS

Don't, Richard.

TRISTAN

You want to know what I think?

MR. STEVENS

I don't really give a damn what you think, but you're free to voice you're opinion.

TRISTAN

You love teaching, Dad. Why would you leave it?

MARI

Tristan, stop it.

TRISTAN

You used to see those guys coming home from work every summer and you told me how happy you were to teach.

(MORE)

To have a job that mattered in lives of so many children and you're changing into this?

MR. STEVENS

You do what you have to do, Tristan.

TRISTAN

Aren't you the same guy who would build a castle in his room when taught about Medieval England? The same guy who would change the character's voices while reading to his class? The same guy who would take his kids deep sea diving every year? And now you're throwing it away to go get some stupid nine to five corporate job?

MR. STEVENS

I'm doing what I have to, to make sure that my future is secure. It's time you quit acting like a high schooler and do the same.

Pause. Tristan gets up and leaves the table.

TRISTAN

You're a sellout.

MISS STEVENS

Tristan.

Tristan walks away and goes outside. Michelle follows him.

EXT. THE STEVEN'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan throws the door open and walks onto the porch. He slams his fists down on the railing. Michelle slowly walks outside after him.

MICHELLE

Tris...

TRISTAN

Not now.

MICHELLE

Tristan come on, what's wrong.

TRISTAN

Nothing's wrong, okay? I just need to blow off steam.

Michelle puts her arms around Tristan.

MTCHELLE

Talk to me.

Tristan pulls away from her.

TRISTAN

I can't right now, okay? I can't.

Michelle is hurt and steps away from Tristan.

MICHELLE

You used to always talk to me.

TRISTAN

I will, just not right now, okay?

MICHELLE

Fine.

She turns around and goes back in the house. Seth steps outside moments after she's back in the house. He pulls out his cigarettes and offers one to Tristan.

TRISTAN

No thanks.

Seth lights up his own.

SETH

That was...awkward.

TRISTAN

It's like I'm living at home again.

SETH

Except when you lived at home, Mari was usually coming home drunk every night.

TRISTAN

I don't get her. She was the worst of us all. Then she meets Mr. Burns and suddenly she's a changed girl.

SETH

Love does that to people.

TRISTAN

So does a halfway house.

SETH

That must've been a really messed up time for her.

TRISTAN

I dunno, she never talks about it. She used to call me when she was in.

SETH

Really?

TRISTAN

At like the weirdest times. Just out of nowhere.

SETH

What about?

TRISTAN

Nothing. She just waned to talk. Then she shows up and can do no wrong.

SETH

She just wants to control everyone's life.

TRISTAN

She's good at it.

SETH

Yeah...

Seth leans against the porch fence with Tristan.

SETH

...Listen you have to lay off dad.

TRISTAN

It just kills me. To see someone leave what they love.

SETH

He can't afford to look for a new job. Besides teaching isn't paying enough as it is.

TRISTAN

Ah yes, the money factor.

SETH

Tristan, let it go. Dad did what he had to.

TRISTAN

He used to play with us all the time. Then all the sudden things changed. I mean just completely changed.

SETH

That's what happens, Tris. People change, things change. We're not ten anymore. Our relationship with dad's changed.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

SETH

Just lay off, man. He has a lot on his plate.

TRISTAN

Everyone does.

SETH

Let me ask you something.

TRISTAN

Yeah?

SETH

Are you really happy with your life?

Tristan shakes his head and looks to the ground.

TRISTAN

No.

SETH

Then spare dad his dignity, okay? Dad can't afford to work at Game Have. He has to provide for a family.

TRISTAN

I know.

Pause.

SETH

What's gonna make you happy, Tris?

TRISTAN

Happiness is kind of like a rainbow, Seth. We know it's out there and sometimes we even see it from a distance. But, it's really rare that we ever can capture it for ourselves.

SETH

Don't feed me that psycho babble man. Cause if that rainbow crap is the reason you sentenced me to four years at St. Lawrence, I'm gonna kick your ass.

Tristan smiles and looks at Seth.

TRISTAN

Honestly? People have asked me what I wanted for so long I kind of gave up. I realized I'm just not made for something. I mean all those surveys you take in high school.

(MORE)

About what job you should want? They were just fire material for me.

SETH

Sounds pretty shitty.

TRISTAN

It is.

SETH

Too bad there's no career for being a professional smart ass. You'd be made.

They exchange looks and Tristan gives Seth a playful punch.

TRISTAN

Give me a cigarette.

SETH

I knew you'd come around...

Seth gives Tristan a cigarette.

SETH

...Don't let Mari catch us. She fed my last pack to the neighbor's dog.

TRISTAN

Seriously.

SETH

That cubby bitch will eat anything.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Natalie sits in front of the T.V. She's hardly watches the show that's on and sinks in to the couch, slouching. Her mother sits on the other side of the room snoring loudly.

The phone rings and Natalie springs to her feet and runs to answer it. She reaches the phone and pulls it off the receiver.

NATALIE

Hello?

TELEMARKETER

(Over the phone)

Are you tired of ridiculous loan payments? Why not take out a loan for your soul. Donate to the Church of God's True Purpose.

Natalie hangs up the phone and sighs. She sits down and taps her nails on the counter. She gets about halfway out of the room when the phone rings again. She pauses and waits.

It rings again and she hesitates. Finally, she grabs the phone.

NATALIE

Hello?

There's a pause and the person on the other line hesitates before talking.

TRISTAN

(Over the phone)

Hey.

Natalie smiles.

NATALIE

Hey.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER -- LATER

Natalie paces back and for outside the movie theater. People are filing in and out all around her.

NATALIE

(To herself)

He called you. That's a good sign. He tried to sleep with you, that's an even better sign...

She sees Tristan coming across the parking lot.

NATALIE

...Act cool, be hot. For once in your life Natalie, don't be weird.

TRISTAN

Hey.

NATALIE

(trying to be cool)

Hey.

Tristan shoots her a funny look.

TRISTAN

You been here long?

NATALIE

No...just...you know...chillin'...

Tristan is all out smiling now.

NATALIE

...What?

TRISTAN

Just chillin'?

Yeah, you know how people...

She trails off.

NATALIE

...nevermind, I'm a loser.

Natalie turns and walks into the theater.

INT. MOVIE THEATER -- CONTINUOUS

They wait in line to get tickets. Natalie eyes the snack line.

NATALIE

(To herself)

No food, he'll think your a cow.

TRISTAN

What?

Natalie starts. She turns around quickly.

NATALIE

Nothing...just nothing...

TRISTAN

You said something.

NATALIE

It was just an A...A...conversation. So you can just B...out of it.

TRISTAN

Nervous?

NATALIE

No...you?

Tristan laughs a little and smiles.

NATALIE

...What are you smiling about?

TRISTAN

What smile?

NATALIE

That smile, you smiled like you were laughing at me.

TRISTAN

I'm at a total loss. Did I smile?

NATALIE

You smirked and that's even worse.

I'm sorry, I won't do it again.

NATALIE

Good.

TRISTAN

Excellent.

Natalie pays for her ticket and steps off to the side.

NATALIE

Amazing.

TRISTAN

Fantastic.

NATALIE

Stop it.

TRISTAN

Stop what?

NATALIE

You know what I'm talking about.

TRISTAN

No idea.

NATALIE

Go to hell...

They look at each other for a moment and a smile grows on both their faces. She looks at Tristan sticks out her tongue.

NATALIE

...loser.

TRISTAN

You want food? Popcorn, candy, pretzels, veal, pastrami, crab cakes. I don't know if they have yorkshire puddings but I can ask.

NATALIE

No, you'll think I'm fat.

TRISTAN

I won't think you're fat.

NATALIE

I don't want anything, but you should get something and then I can steal from you.

TRISTAN

I see. What do I want then?

Junior mints, cherry coke, and if you get popcorn make sure they put butter on it.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER -- EVENING

They walk out of the movie. Natalie is desperately clinging to Tristan's arm and looks like she's been through hell.

TRISTAN

You know? We didn't have to see a scary movie.

NATALIE

(Raspy and weak)

I know.

TRISTAN

We could have seen anything. Chick flick, action.

NATALIE

You're lucky usually I break down somewhere between when the black guy dies and when the girlfriend dies.

TRISTAN

I'm proud of you.

NATALIE

Don't humor me. Get me to a car. NO! Don't take the car. That's how the black guy died. Let's walk.

TRISTAN

You wanna walk home?

NATALIE

I didn't say home, I said walk. And if you leave me, I swear to God once my heart retracts back into my chest cavity and out of my throat I'll cut your balls off.

TRISTAN

Wouldn't think of it.

EXT. PLAYGROUND -- NIGHT

Tristan leads Natalie to a playground.

TRISTAN

You think this is safe?

NATALIE

This will work.

Natalie sits down on the merry-go-round and catches her breath.

TRISTAN

You seem to be getting your color back.

NATALIE

You seem to be back to being an asshole.

TRISTAN

Ouch.

Tristan sits down.

NATALIE

You don't even like scary movies do?

TRISTAN

Why would you say that?

NATALIE

You feel asleep.

Tristan chuckles.

TRISTAN

Not my favorites.

NATALIE

You quit your job yet?

TRISTAN

What? Oh that! Not yet, but I was supposed to work today.

NATALIE

You just didn't show up?

Tristan thinks about it for a moment.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

NATALIE

You think you'll get fired?

TRISTAN

Maybe.

NATALIE

That doesn't...bother you at all?

Tristan thinks about his for a while.

TRISTAN

No.

Not even a little?

TRISTAN

It was your idea for me to quit my job.

NATALIE

I know. But I really wasn't thinking when I said it. I just said it.

TRISTAN

It's just a job.

NATALIE

What? Are your parents rich or something?

TRISTAN

No. My dad just go laid off at the school he teaches at.

NATALIE

Then...how are you gonna pay bills?

Tristan shrugs.

TRISTAN

I don't know.

NATALIE

But...how will you survive?

TRISTAN

I'll get by.

Natalie shakes her head.

NATALIE

You're crazy.

TRISTAN

I guess.

Silence.

NATALIE

I can't believe I'm unemployed.

TRISTAN

Scared?

NATALIE
I horrified. I don't have any money! If I don't find a job...I don't know what I'll do.

You'll find a job.

NATALIE

Where?

TRISTAN

I dunno, but you'll find one.

NATALIE

And if I don't?

TRISTAN

You'll find one.

NATALIE

You can't be sure of that. Maybe there's no jobs to be had. Maybe, I'll end up on the street.

TRISTAN

If you end up in the street you can come stay with me.

NATALIE

You do need someone to clean for you.

Tristan laughs a little.

TRISTAN

You go to college at all?

NATALIE

No, there was no time. My dad died almost as soon as I graduated and after that I just had to take care of mom. You?

TRISTAN

My parents want me to go to college, my sister wants me to go to college, my roommate wants me to go to college. But, I don't know what I'd do. I don't know what I'd study. I don't know where to start.

NATALIE

Then just enroll.

Tristan shakes his head.

TRISTAN

I don't think so.

NATALIE

What's wrong with you?

Excuse me?

NATALIE

You're so stagnant.

TRISTAN

And you're way too uptight.

NATALIE

Haven't you ever wanted to just do something?

TRISTAN

Do something?

NATALIE

Anything.

TRISTAN

And you?

NATALIE

What about me?

TRISTAN

What are you going to do?

NATALIE

I dunno. Paint.

TRISTAN

Paint?

NATALIE

I'm gonna paint.

TRISTAN

Just like that?

NATALIE

Just like that.

Tristan starts to wander away.

NATALIE

Isn't it that simple? I mean like you told me. You just find something.

TRISTAN

I'm not good at doing something. I'm good at doing nothing. That's what I do, nothing.

NATALIE

Well, are you happy?

Pause.

No.

NATALIE

Then what do you have to lose?

(A beat)

You didn't decide you were good at nothing, Tristan. People decided that for you.

TRISTAN

You want me to do something?

NATALIE

Yes.

Tristan kisses her. As he pulls away we see Natalie's shock.

TRISTAN

Is that something?

NATALIE

Yeah...Yeah, that's something.

Tristan kisses her again, she draws him closer. Tristan pulls away. Natalie watches him wondering what she did wrong.

TRISTAN

No.

NATALIE

What is it?

Tristan runs his hands through his hair.

TRISTAN

Shit, no. No.

NATALIE

Tristan?

TRISTAN

FUCK!

NATALIE

Tristan, what is it?

Tristan looks at Natalie, his face growing soft.

TRISTAN

We have to talk.

NATALIE

Yeah?

TRISTAN

Yeah...we need to talk.

Tristan, you're making me nervous.

Silence.

TRISTAN

I have a girlfriend.

Pause.

NATALIE

A girlfriend?

TRISTAN

Yeah.

NATALIE

I guess now's a good time to mention her.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

NATALIE

So I'm what? You're side fuck? I'm not even a side fuck cause we don't fuck...I'm lower. I'm like a side...date? God that's low.

TRISTAN

You're not a side anything.

NATALIE

Being how she was there first, I think she gets to stake her claim as girlfriend which makes me...God know what...

Tristan doesn't know what to say. He sticks his hands in his pockets and stares at the ground.

NATALIE

...What is this then? If this isn't some sort of side...cheating...weird thing, then what is this?

TRISTAN

I don't know.

NATALIE

Neither do I.

TRISTAN

You know. I was drunk, I was stoned.

NATALIE

Do you love her?

Tristan is speechless. He stumbles over words for a few seconds.

TRISTAN

Y-Y-yes.

Natalie nods.

NATALIE

Then I guess that's it, isn't it?

TRISTAN

Natalie.

NATALIE

Yeah?

TRISTAN

I didn't know what would happen, coming out here. I didn't know what would happen when we took a walk. I still don't know what's happening.

NATALIE

Maybe you should figure it out and call me then.

Natalie gets up from the merry-go-round.

TRISTAN

This isn't easy for me! I'm not some player.

Natalie turns back and points at Tristan.

NATALIE

You are not the victim here. You are the cheating scum.

TRISTAN

It's not technically cheating, we never slept together.

NATALIE

No, we didn't share physical intimacy, but we share...shared emotional intimacy. So you tell me, which is more important?

Natalie walk away as Tristan sits down on the merry-go-round and pounds the metal.

TRISTAN

FUCK!

He shakes his hand in pain.

Ow.

INT. NATALIE'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Natalie walks in to the kitchen and sits down on the stool next to the counter. She sees that she has nine messages on her machine. She presses the play button.

TRISTAN

(over the phone)

Listen, don't delete this...

Natalie deletes the message and the machine goes to the next message.

TRISTAN

...Yeah, I had a feeling you'd delete that. But just listen...

Natalie deletes the message.

TRISTAN

...Yeah, I'm not gonna let you not listen to what I have to say so you can keep deleting these...

Natalie gives a frustrated sigh and deletes the message.

TRISTAN

...Come on, please just listen to me...

Natalie deletes the next message.

TRISTAN

...Natalie...

Natalie deletes the message.

TRISTAN

...You know this isn't going to help anything...

Natalie deletes the message.

TRISTAN

...You're gonna have to listen to me eventually...

Natalie deletes the message.

TRISTAN

...Natalie, please-

Natalie deletes the message. The next voice we hear is that of a gruff male, this is the Stop and Shop MANAGER.

MANAGER

Hi Natalie, this is Jim from Stop and Shop.

Natalie deletes the message out of habit.

NATALIE

No, no, wait...damn it!

Natalie screams and sits down on a stool. She tries to hold back her tears and rocks backward on the stool that gives out under her.

Natalie falls to the floor. She rolls on her back and stares at the ceiling as tears come streaming down her face. After a beat she curls into a ball and continues to cry.

INT. TRISTAN'S LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Tristan walks into his living room and sees Michelle sitting on the couch watching T.V.

TRISTAN

What's up?

MICHELLE

Hey.

Tristan walks over to the couch and sits down next to her.

TRISTAN

What are you doing here?

MICHELLE

I called you.

TRISTAN

I know.

MICHELLE

Where were you?

TRISTAN

Out.

MICHELLE

Out where?

TRISTAN

No where.

MICHELLE

Please don't lie to me.

TRISTAN

I just needed to figure things out. Just...

MICHELLE

Just what?

TRISTAN

I don't know.

Silence.

MICHELLE

I'm sorry.

TRISTAN

For what?

MICHELLE

I've been pretty depressing lately,
haven't I?

TRISTAN

You're going through a tough time.

MICHELLE

I know but...

TRISTAN

Don't worry about it.

MICHELLE

I'm worried about you.

TRISTAN

Don't be.

MICHELLE

No, I am.

She rubs his knee gently.

TRISTAN

You have enough problems without worrying about me.

MICHELLE

I love you, Tristan.

TRISTAN

I know.

She turns his face toward hers.

MICHELLE

You know I love you. You know that, right? That there's not single thing I wouldn't do for you?

Tristan smiles a little.

I know.

MICHELLE

And I wish you'd just tell me what's wrong, because together there is nothing we can't work out. Not one thing in the whole world, that we can't over come. Together there is nothing that can defeat us...

Michelle straddles Tristan.

MICHELLE

...Because that is how much I love you.

Michelle kisses Tristan. He puts his arms around her and she runs her hands through his hair. As they make out Tristan begins hearing the voice of Natalie in his head.

NATALIE (V.O.)

(Distant)

It's that simple...do something.

FLASHBACK

Natalie kissing Tristan in his apartment.

BACK TO SCENE

Michelle takes off her shirt.

NATALIE (V.O.)

(Distant)

Do you love her?

Tristan kisses Michelle again.

NATALIE (V.O.)

(Distant)

Do you love her?

FLASHBACK

Tristan kissing Natalie at the playground.

NATALIE (V.O.)

(Distant)

It's that simple, isn't it? Do you love her?

BACK TO SCENE

Tristan starts gently pushing Michelle off of him.

TRISTAN

Get off me.

MICHELLE

What?

Tristan continues to try and get Michelle off of him.

TRISTAN

Get off me.

MICHELLE

Tristan?...

Tristan shoves Michelle off of him onto the floor.

MICHELLE

... Tristan? What's going on?...

Tristan walks away from Michelle.

MICHELLE

...Tristan what is going on?

TRISTAN

Nothing.

Michelle grabs Tristan's wrist.

MICHELLE

No Tristan, tell me.

TRISTAN

There's nothing wrong.

MICHELLE

No, something is definitely wrong, Tristan. You can't even kiss me. What is going on?!

TRISTAN

Let go of me.

MICHELLE

Not till you talk to me.

Tristan pulls his wrist but Michelle has a tight grip.

TRISTAN

Stop acting like a child.

MICHELLE

Tell me what's going on with you?

TRISTAN

I just need time to think.

MICHELLE

I can't handle this, Tristan. Not now!

This isn't about you.

MICHELLE

No Tristan, this is about us! About our lives and our love and if you can't fucking talk to me about it...

TRISTAN

What do you want me to say!? I'd tell you anything if there was something to tell. But right now I don't know what's wrong. I don't know what to say to you. So let go of me!

Tristan yanks his hand away and turns to leave.

MICHELLE

Don't walk away, Tristan! Don't walk away, please! I'm begging you, please!...

Tristan leaves the room. Michelle gets up and follows him.

MICHELLE

...Whatever it is we can fix it. We can make it right, just don't leave me.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan slams the door to his room and Michelle tries the doorknob, but it's locked.

MICHELLE

Please...baby please open the door. I'm sorry I got mad. Please open the door.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan sits on his bed and stares at the floor.

MICHELLE (O.S.)

Tristan? Tristan?

FLASHBACK

Natalie sits in the park.

BACK TO SCENE

Tristan stands up and screams.

TRISTAN

GET OUT OF MY HEAD!! GET OUT OF MY HEAD!!

Tristan collapses at the foot of his bed.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Michelle sits against Tristan's door, tears streaming down her face.

INT. NATALIE'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

Natalie lies on the kitchen floor sleeping just like we saw her last night. Except now there is a pillow under her head, a blanket over her, and a cup of coffee sitting next to her.

Natalie slowly comes to and hears the T.V. in the background. She slowly rolls on her back and stares at the ceiling.

VIRGINIA (O.S.)

Either your amazingly hung over or performing some sort of odd ritual.

NATALIE

(still on her back)
I think I'm dead.

VIRGINIA

Nonsense.

Silence.

NATALIE

I'm not hung over.

VIRGINIA

Really?

NATALIE

I just hate my life.

Virginia nods slowly.

VIRGINIA

I see.

NATALIE

You were right, mom. Somehow you happened to be right about the one good thing I had in my life.

(Natalie shakes her

head)

The one time you were right.

VIRGINIA

There have been numerous times that I've been right.

NATALIE

Nope, it was only once and it happened at the worst possible time.

VIRGINIA

Get up and come over here. Then we can talk all about it.

NATALITE

I think I'd rather lie here on this floor until I die.

VIRGINIA

Before that would happen the mortgage would be overdue and they'd come in here and kick you out of the house. Probably take you court and then you'd end up in jail.

NATALIE

Jail's fine.

VIRGINIA

Get up and come sit with me.

NATALIE

No, I'm good.

Virginia gets up and slowly walks over to Natalie. She stands over her and looks down.

VIRGINIA

This is your last chance.

NATALIE

Do your worst...

Virginia kicks Natalie in the shins.

NATALIE

...Ow!...

Virginia kicks Natalie again.

NATALIE

...Stop it!...

VIRGINIA

Get up!

NATALIE

NO!

Virginia kicks her again.

NATALIE

OW! STOP IT!

VIRGINIA

You getting up?

NO! I WANT TO DIE HERE, JUST LET ME DIE HERE!

Virginia kicks her again.

NATALIE

...OW! Okay! I'm getting up, I'm getting up.

Natalie gets to her feet. Virginia hands her some coffee and Natalie takes it as she rubs the spots where her mother kicked her.

VIRGINIA

Now come and sit with me...

Virginia returns to her spot and Natalie sits down next to her.

VIRGINIA

... Now what's troubling you?

NATALIE

Nothing.

VIRGINIA

So you just decided to see if the kitchen floor was more comfortable then you're bed?

NATALIE

Something like that.

VIRGINIA

Is it this boy?

Pause.

NATALIE

Yeah.

VIRGINIA

Does he need to be assassinated?

NATALIE

What?

VIRGINIA

I've always wanted to have someone knocked off.

NATALIE

What are you talking about?

VIRGINIA

Whacked, scratched, murdered.

(MORE)

VIRGINIA

There's this guy at the coffee shop, he says he's a lawyer but I'm pretty sure he moonlights as a hitman.

NATALIE

We don't need to kill him.

VIRGINIA

Damn.

NATALIE

Badly maiming him might be more appropriate.

VIRGINIA

We could arrange that too.

NATALIE

I was joking.

VIRGINIA

Don't toy with me like that, Natalie.

Natalie gets up.

NATALIE

No mom, I'm fine. Don't worry about me.

She walks away as Virginia watches her.

VIRGINIA

I'm going to kill that boy.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Aaron sits up in bed and watches as a different girl gets read in a hurry.

GIRL #3

You told me you loved me.

AARON

I never actually said that, I said I loved your boobs.

GIRL #3

No, you told me you loved me. You said in those exact words, "I love you."

AARON

But if you were paying attention you would have noticed I was actually looking at your boobs when I said it.

GIRL #3

I hate you.

AARON

I figured.

GIRL #3

I can't believe I you slept with Crissy.

AARON

And Laura, don't forget her.

GIRL #3

AND Laura!

AARON

I know they're you're roommates, but that kind of makes it okay, doesn't it?

GIRL #3

No, it doesn't.

AARON

I tried.

GIRL #3

I can't believe you, Aaron.

AARON

Yeah...you know, you should just pick me up McDonald's while your up.

The girl leans over the bed and gets right in Aaron's face.

GIRL #3

You know what? You're gonna grow up to be old, wrinkled, and alone. You're gonna be the creepy guy that sits alone in the old folks home and hits on the disgusted nurses all day. And you'll wonder why you're so alone. And when that happens, think back to this day. Remember this day, Aaron.

AARON

Right...I'll do that.

The girl turns and walks out of the room.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan rolls over in bed and looks up at the ceiling. He reaches for the phone and dials a number.

Hey, Mark? I quit. Yep, I hate you and I quit. I hate you, I hate the job, and I quit.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan walks down the hallway as Aaron comes out of his room.

AARON

Tristan!

Tristan blows by him causing Aaron to follow.

INT. TRISTAN'S KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan rushes through the kitchen, Aaron is still following him.

AARON

Tristan, where are you going?

TRISTAN

Out.

AARON

Out where?

TRISTAN

Somewhere.

AARON

Where is somewhere?

TRISTAN

I don't know.

AARON

What did you do to Michelle?

TRISTAN

I don't know.

AARON

You don't know? She was balling in front of your room last night for like two hours.

TRISTAN

I know.

Tristan grabs his car keys and Aaron steps between him and the door.

AARON

What are you doing?

I don't know, Aaron. I haven't the slightest idea, I just know I have to do something.

AARON

Do something?

TRISTAN

It sounds weird, I know.

AARON

No, no, no. Tristan shut up and look at me, okay? Michelle was sitting in front of your door crying last night. Do you have a soul? The girl was balling her eyes out.

TRISTAN

I know.

AARON

You know?

TRISTAN

I know.

AARON

I don't wanna be a bastard-

TRISTAN

I need to talk to her.

AARON

Yeah...wait, you mean Michelle, right?

TRISTAN

No.

AARON

No, what?

TRISTAN

Not Michelle.

AARON

Not Michelle?

TRISTAN

No. I have to talk to Natalie.

AARON

This other girl?

TRISTAN

Yeah.

AARON

Why?

TRISTAN

Cause I love her.

AARON

What?

TRISTAN

I love her.

AARON

HOW?

TRISTAN

I don't know! And I need to find out.

AARON

That makes no sense.

TRISTAN

I know!

AARON

What about Michelle?

TRISTAN

It's over.

AARON

It's over?

TRISTAN

I love Natalie.

AARON

Boy, you've lost your damn mind.

TRISTAN

Yes! YES I HAVE! I have gone completely fucking bonkers! And you know what!? I love it! I'm finally doing something!

Pause.

AARON

Alright. I'll see you in a bit.

TRISTAN

Yeah...in a bit.

Tristan walks out the door.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Natalie is talking on the phone.

NATALIE

Yeah, I'll be there for the interview on Tuesday...Great...Thank you.

Natalie hangs up the phone. She sits down in front of her easel and resumes the painting that she had already started. The door bell rings.

VIRGINIA

If it's that whore that wants John Winters for Mayor I'm gonna bitch slap her straight past the election season.

We hear the door open and Virginia SMACKS someone really hard. Tristan CRIES out ion pain and the door SLAMS shut. Natalie pauses and takes in what she just heard.

NATALIE

Mom, was it that whore?

VIRGINIA

Worse, it's that guy that made you sleep on the kitchen floor...

The door bell rings again.

VIRGINIA

...Don't worry, I'll get my mace.

Natalie gets up and runs for the door.

NATALIE

Don't worry mom, I can handle it.

INT. NATALIE'S ENTRY WAY -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks to the front door, her mom is on the stairs, mace in hand.

VIRGINIA

Oh please, I haven't used it in months.

NATALIE

It's okay, mom.

Natalie opens the door and Tristan stands outside holding his face in pain.

TRISTAN

Natalie.

Tristan, it appears you met my mother.

Tristan nods and sees Virginia standing on the stairs, holding the mace.

TRISTAN

Yeah...we met.

NATALIE

What do you need?

TRISTAN

I need to talk to you.

NATALIE

Okay...talk.

TRISTAN

You get my messages?

NATALIE

No.

TRISTAN

I'll leave more.

NATALIE

Tris-

Natalie looks at her mother on the stairs and then shoves Tristan backwards and steps outside. Shutting the door behind her.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie composes herself.

NATALIE

It would be great if you'd just leave me alone.

TRISTAN

I-

NATALIE

You what? What are you even doing here, Tristan?

TRISTAN

I...I can't...

NATALIE

You can't what?

TRISTAN

I can't stop thinking about you.

Tristan covers his mouth in shock.

NATALIE

What about your girlfriend?

TRISTAN

Listen...her father just died in Iraq.

NATALIE

I'll send flowers.

TRISTAN

No...just...

NATALIE

So instead of letting her down now, you're gonna crush her when she finds you've been cheating on her?

TRISTAN

No that's...it's not that simple...and that's not it...it's complicated, okay?

NATALIE

Okay...

Pause

NATALIE

...go on.

TRISTAN

It's...god damn it. You know what? Nevermind.

NATALIE

Fine.

TRISTAN

Good.

NATALIE

Great.

TRISTAN

Excellent.

NATALIE

Perfect.

Tristan hesitates for a moment and then walks away. He gets about half way through the yard, then stops, and gritting his teeth and uttering a animalistic growl he turns around.

TRISTAN

You're so difficult.

What?

TRISTAN

I'm leaving now.

NATALIE

Go.

TRISTAN

I'm going to go.

NATALIE

Then go.

TRISTAN

That's what I'm doing.

NATALIE

THEN DO IT!

Tristan gives another animalistic growl and turns around. Again about halfway to the car he stop and starts walking back.

TRISTAN

No. You leave.

NATALIE

What?

TRISTAN

You leave.

NATALIE

It's my house.

TRISTAN

Then you walk to my car and walk away from me.

NATALIE

What is wrong with you?

TRISTAN

Scared?

NATALIE

Will you leave?

TRISTAN

Yes.

NATALIE

Fine...

They walk to Tristan's car and pause.

...I'm leaving.

TRISTAN

Fine...

Natalie turns and starts to walk away.

TRISTAN

...Why can't I stop thinking about you? What the hell have you done to me? What do I have to do to get my soul back?

Natalie continues to walk away and then about halfway to the house she turns around and walks back toward Tristan.

NATALIE

This is all your fault.

TRISTAN

What?

NATALIE

It's all your fault. Everything that has ever happened to make me miserable is all your fault.

TRISTAN

I think that's an overreaction.

NATALIE

No it's not. Now go to hell.

TRISTAN

Wait, can't we just talk or something?

NATALIE

What do you want to talk about?

TRISTAN

I just want to stop thinking about you.

NATALIE

Well so do I! Want you to stop thinking about me and me to stop thinking about you. I have never been in such an awful point in my life. I lost my job...my mom has become completely bent...I'm having my period. But, it didn't matter because I was in love. From the moment we kissed I fell in love with you. And sometimes the most obvious reason to fall in love is that it doesn't make sense.

(MORE)

And that doesn't even make sense. But when I was with you it didn't matter. And now...

Natalie catches her breath.

TRISTAN

And now?

NATALIE

Just leave me alone.

TRISTAN

Natalie...

NATALIE

Just go.

Tristan gets to his car on opens the door and pauses.

TRISTAN

Someday it'll make sense.

NATALIE

Whatever.

Tristan drives away. Natalie starts to tremble and then turns around and goes inside.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie is trying to paint again. She gets frustrates and throws the brush and screams. She screams again and picks up the painting and takes it outside.

EXT. NATALIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie dumps the painting in her lawn. Virginia comes to the door and watches her.

VIRGINIA

Natalie?...

Natalie walks into the their garage.

VIRGINIA

(shouting)

... Natalie, what are you doing...

Natalie reemerges with a can of gasoline and dumps it all over the painting.

VIRGINIA

... Natalie, I think you should come back inside.

Natalie goes into the house.

VIRGINIA

...Thank you...

Natalie walks out of the house with a pack of matches.

VIRGINIA

... No, Natalie where are you going?...

Natalie strikes a match.

VIRGINIA

...Come inside, we'll watch Full House reruns or do something fun. Stop scaring me. Stop it now!...

Natalie is about to drop the match.

VIRGINIA

...NATALIE GRACE MARKS!...

Natalie starts the painting on fire. Virginia screams and begins running around the yard.

VIRGINIA

... Natalie the hose where is the hose?!!...

Natalie stares at the fire. Virginia grabs the hose screaming bloody murder. She turns it on spraying water everywhere and finally gets control of the hose. She points it at the fire dosing Natalie and the fire.

Natalie and her mother look at each other for a moment.

VIRGINIA

...You feel better?...

Natalie nods.

VIRGINIA

...Good...now come inside.

Natalie goes to her mother who takes her hand and takes her inside.

INT. NATALIE'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Virginia sits Natalie down and smacks her.

NATALIE

OW! What are-

VIRGINIA

Don't ever do that to me again!

NATALIE

Okay. Ow...

VIRGINIA

I'm the crazy bitch. You're the nerdy, overly nervous, child. Don't go off doing my job. I've got enough crazy in me for the both of us. GOT IT!

NATALIE

Fine. Fine.

VIRGINIA

If this boy isn't good enough for you or you're not good enough for him...or whatever the hell it is I don't care! It's not enough for my baby to go off and set things on fire! Don't set things on fire!

NATALIE

Okay. I'm sorry I scared you.

VIRGINIA

It's not that you scared me. It is that you scared me. But it's just not worth it. He's not worth it. If you can't be happy with who you are when you're alone how could you expect to be happy when you're with someone? You're value is not determined in that bastard child. It's determined in who you are. For the love of Christ, have you lost your mind?

NATALIE

Okay, mom...

Virginia and Natalie suddenly realize they're holding hands and retract quickly acting as if it never happened. Natalie waits for a beat.

NATALIE

Thank you.

VIRGINIA

(points herself)

Crazy bitch.

(points to Natalie)
Quirky child. Don't forget that.

NATALIE

No...I won't.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Tristan sits looking out into space. Seth and Aaron and passing a pipe back and forth, smoke fills the room.

AARON

No way dude, Aquaman sucked. Arguably the worst comic book character ever.

SETH

You think about that statement hard. Worse then Captain America?

AARON

Dude, Captain America was bad ass.

SETH

He's government propaganda.

AARON

So is Aquaman.

SETH

Propaganda how?

AARON

That whole save the Earth shit.

SETH

You mean to stop polluting the Earth? That's not propaganda, it's just a good idea.

AARON

That's what all propagandalists say.

SETH

That would be a pretty kick ass story line. Aquaman comes from the deep and takes his revenge on oil companies and other dumb shits who dump toxic waste into the waters. Aquaman vs. the Dumb shits.

AARON

Golden, you write that down.

Aaron tries to pass the pipe to Tristan who is still off in dreamland.

AARON

Tristan?

Tristan doesn't move. Aaron shrugs and passes the pipe to Seth, who give Tristan punch in the arm.

TRISTAN

What?

SETH

You okay?

Yeah, I'm fine...

He takes the pipe from Seth.

TRISTAN

...I just need some more of this...

Tristan takes a hit and then looks to Aaron.

TRISTAN

...Where's the beer?

AARON

It's gone, Tris. It was gone like an hour ago.

TRISTAN

We didn't drink an entire twentyfour back of beer already.

AARON

Yeah we, did.

TRISTAN

Fuck!

SETH

What's wrong with you?

TRISTAN

Don't try to tell me that something's wrong with me. What's wrong with you?

SETH

Chill out man.

TRISTAN

No!...

Tristan gets up.

TRISTAN

...Don't tell me to chill out.

AARON

Tristan, sit back down.

TRISTAN

Aaron! I love her.

AARON

What?

I do, love her and it doesn't make sense. Because the sense that's to be made is in my heart and that's not corny.

AARON

What the hell are you talking about?

TRISTAN

NO! I don't love Michelle anymore, I love Natalie.

AARON

Natalie?

Looks to Seth and shrugs.

TRISTAN

I need to see her again. I need to do what I need to do and you will not stop me from going through with what I intend to do.

SETH

Tristan you're way to wasted to do anything. Go get a glass of water.

TRISTAN

FUCK YOU!

Tristan turns and walks out of the room. Seth and Aaron exchange glances.

SETH

What the hell is wrong with him?

AARON

Some girl, at some party, that did something...I dunno I've forgotten the details already.

SETH

Even if he did take off he's way to drunk and stoned to make it to her. I mean he'd wind up in an accident, or arrested, or god knows what else.

AARON

Yeah, it'd be pretty stupid.

EXT. ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan stumbles through the alley. He crashes into a garbage can, regains his footing, and continues to plow ahead.

TRISTAN

Natalie, gotta find Natalie...

Tristan looses his footing and falls on his back, we can hear NATALIE'S VOICE laughing in the distance.

TRISTAN

...Natalie...gotta, gotta, gotta...gotta find her.

Tristan rolls to his side and pushes himself to his feet. He stumbles to the wall and vomits.

TRISTAN

...Natalie...

He runs to his car and tries desperately to open the door. Finally, he gets it open.

INT. TRISTAN'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Aaron is lying on the bed staring at the ceiling as Seth shuffles a deck of cards.

AARON

You know he's been gone a pretty long time for getting a drink of water.

SETH

Yeah, no joke.

Suddenly it dawns on them.

AARON

Oh shit.

They look at each other and run out the door.

EXT. TRISTAN'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Seth and Aaron come running outside just in time to see Tristan pulling away in his car. Seth runs after him down the street.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Seth continues to chase Tristan.

SETH

STOP! Tristan! Stop!...

Tristan slams on his brakes at an intersection and Seth starts to relax. Then Tristan flies forward and another car smashes into his side.

SETH

...NO!

Seth starts running toward the car, but trips over his own feet. He falls to the ground, crying and screaming.

Aaron catches up to him.

AARON

We gotta get outta here, Seth. If the cops come, we're in deep shit.

SETH

Fuck the cops.

AARON

We have to go, Seth.

Seth pushes Aaron away.

SETH

Fuck you!

Aaron grabs Seth.

AARON

There's nothing we can do. We'll call nine-one-one and then we'll get the hell outta here. There's nothing else we can do.

SETH

Let go of me. Get off me!...

Aaron drags Seth away from the crash.

SETH

...TRISTAN!

BLACK OUT

We hear paramedics talking back and forth. Then the sounds of hospital equipment. In the background there's a heart monitor beeping.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- DAY

Tristan lies in bed, staring up at the ceiling. There is a knock on the door and his father stands in the entry way. His expression changes from a forced smiles to sadness for only a second and then changes back.

He walks slowly toward Tristan and sits down next to him. He runs his hand through his thin veil of hair and then sets it back in his lap.

MR. STEVENS

The doctors told me that you're... (He swallows and then

smiles)

You're going to be alright.

TRISTAN

What does that mean?

Mr. Stevens struggles with how to reply. He swallows hard again and his lips quiver a bit.

MR. STEVENS

The good news is that your alive.

TRISTAN

What's the bad news?...

Mr. Steven's chokes back tears.

TRISTAN

...Dad?

MR. STEVENS

They don't...they don't know if you'll walk again.

Tristan's face goes limp. He is overcome with shock and simply lies back in his bed.

TRISTAN

Oh...

MR. STEVENS

I'm so sorry...

Mr. Stevens reaches out and takes Tristan's hand. Tristan grits his teeth as tears well up in his eyes.

MR. STEVENS

...It's okay...

Tristan starts to cry.

MR. STEVENS

...It'll be okay.

TRISTAN

Oh God!

Mr. Stevens brings Tristan's head to his chest as Tristan cries.

MR. STEVENS

You'll be alright.

TRISTAN

I didn't-

Mr. Stevens hushes Tristan.

MR. STEVENS

Don't worry about it, now.

TRISTAN

I fucked up, dad. I fucked up so bad.

MR. STEVENS

It's okay. It's gonna be okay.

TRISTAN

I'm so sorry. I don't-

MR. STEVENS

There's nothing to be sorry for. We all make mistakes, Tristan. We all do.

TRISTAN

Oh God!

Tristan breaks down in his father's arms.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LATER

Tristan's father is asleep in the chair as Tristan watches T.V. Mari walks into the room and stands in the doorway.

TRISTAN

You win.

MARI

Oh God, Tristan. Don't say that.

Tristan flicks the channels on the T.V. Mari sits down next to him.

MARI

...Don't say that.

TRISTAN

I didn't ask how the other guy is.

MARI

He's fine. Don't...don't worry about him.

TRISTAN

You were right. You were right about everything, Mari. I'm just one big loser in the end.

Mari takes his hand.

MARI

This isn't about being right or wrong. This isn't some victory for me. I don't care who said what and what happened. I just want to make sure you're okay.

Tristan looks at her.

I could have died, Mari. I could have died in that car crash. I mean, have you ever been afraid for you life? Like you were one step away from dying?

MARI

Six inches, Tristan...you were six inches.

TRISTAN

Six inches...

Tristan holds up his fingers, approximately six inches apart.

TRISTAN

...That close...

Mari nods.

TRISTAN

... God that makes you think.

Mari pause and looks away from Tristan.

MARI

One night...I found myself puking in some dark room. Choking on my own vomit. My body aching with effort to get the booze out of my system.

(A beat)

Everything in me told me that I would die that night. And I prayed to God, with all my might, to save me. To give me one more chance. And then I woke up in a hospital. Like a miracle.

(She takes Tristan's hand)

It's at points like these in our lives, Tristan. That we need to look within ourselves and realize that we need to do something...

Tristan stares at the T.V.

MARI

...I'm sorry. I didn't mean to preach.

She gets up.

TRISTAN

How's mom?

MARI

Rough, but she'll be okay. I think she's gonna chain Seth to his bed.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

MARI

Michelle's out there too. She's....

TRISTAN

I can imagine.

MARI

Do you wanna see her?

TRISTAN

I have to. I'm gonna break up with her.

MARI

Wow.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

Pause.

MARI

Really?

TRISTAN

I have to.

MARI

Let her down easy. Tact, Tristan. I know it's not your specialty, but...try.

TRISTAN

Yeah.

MARI

And you might want to thank James for footing you hospital bill and handling all your legal trouble...

Tristan nods.

MARI

... Thank God for Corporate paychecks, huh?

Tristan chuckles.

TRISTAN

Thank God.

MARI

I'll send Michelle in.

INT. DINER -- MORNING

Jamie and Natalie sit across from each other. Each have a cup of coffee sitting in front of them with a fruit bowl.

JAMIE

So tell me about this boy.

NATALIE

What boy?

JAMIE

This boy you met at this party?

NATALIE

What do you want to know?

JAMIE

What he's like? What does he do?

NATALIE

I don't think it's going to work out.

JAMIE

Why not?

NATALIE

Complications, complications that I just couldn't deal with.

JAMIE

Oh God...he's gay.

NATALIE

No, he's not gay.

JAMIE

Bi?

NATALIE

No, he's not bi.

JAMIE

Married?

NATALIE

NO!

JAMIE

Then what? What is so awful about him that you can't date him?

Nothing, let's just not talk about it, okay?

JAMIE

Okay.

NATALIE

How's the office?

JAMIE

The same, I got a promotion.

Natalie looks at a happy couple sitting across the room.

NATALIE

Wow.

JAMIE

There was some merger or buy out or something.

Natalie stares at the couple.

NATALIE

Huh.

JAMIE

So what are you doing?...

Natalie isn't paying attention.

JAMIE

...Natalie?

NATALIE

That's great?

JAMIE

Natalie!

Natalie snaps back into the conversation.

NATALIE

What?

JAMIE

Never mind.

NATALIE

I'm sorry. I've just been spacey lately.

JAMIE

I see.

Not because of the guy. He has nothing to do with it...Okay, because of the guy, but...

JAMIE

What?

NATALIE

Nothing, it's nothing. I'm painting now, did I tell you that?

JAMIE

No, I didn't know you liked to paint.

NATALIE

Yeah, no one really does. My own mother didn't remember that. But I like it. I like it a lot.

JAMIE

Good, good.

Silence. Jamie is thinking to herself, Natalie notices her pondering.

NATALIE

Don't do it.

JAMIE

Do what?

NATALIE

I know what you're thinking.

JAMIE

What?

NATALIE

Don't bring it up.

JAMIE

Bring up what?...

Natalie looks Jamie over suspiciously.

JAMIE

... I haven't said anything.

Natalie continues her suspicious glare.

NATALIE

Alright.

JAMIE

I don't under stand what's wrong with this guy-

AH HA! I knew it. I knew you were going to bring him up again.

JAMIE

I just don't understand, Natalie.

NATALIE

You don't have to understand.

JAMIE

You just sounded so happy.

NATALIE

Jamie.

JAMIE

And I was so happy, because I mean, how many times did I set you up with someone you hated?

NATALIE

Jamie, drop it.

JAMIE

I mean you usually hated them, they hated you. It was just awful and now...

NATALIE

Jamie, stop it.

JAMIE

And I didn't want you to be one of those old creepy ladies with the cats. There was one who lived on my street, Alice Baker and she had cats and she was lonely and I always felt bad for her.

NATALIE

Jamie!

JAMIE

And I didn't want you to be Alice Baker. I wanted you to be Natalie Marks, this happy, happy, happy woman. Cause you deserve it, Natalie. You deserve to be happy. You just deserve...

NATALIE

No I don't, Jamie! No, I don't. I have never been happy in my life and I've gotten used to it.

(MORE)

You're looking at girl whose father was a raging alcoholic until his dying day. Which was when she was seventeen years old. Since then she has been working job to job just trying to pay the bills. No friends, no lovers, just her and her life. And that's okay...I'm okay with that.

Jamie takes Natalie's hand.

JAMIE

I'm your friend.

Natalie smiles.

NATALIE

I know...let's just not talk about him...

The people sitting the booth behind the girls leave.

NATALIE

...see if they have a newspaper.

JAMIE

What?

NATALIE

See if they left their newspaper, I saw the man reading one.

JAMIE

I'm not going to steal their newspaper.

NATALIE

It's not stealing. They left it here. They clearly meant for someone else to have it.

JAMIE

What if they just forgot it?

NATALIE

Who forgets a newspaper? It's fricking huge?

JAMIE

I'm not stealing their paper.

Natalie looks around, then quickly darts over to the table, and grabs the newspaper. She begins to flip through it.

We see a picture of Tristan on the cover the headline next to it says, CAR CRASH SURVIVOR.

News, news, news, sports, funnies.

Natalie takes the comic page and leaves the rest of the paper on the table.

Tyler's picture faces up just waiting to be seen.

JAMIE

You don't even read the news?

NATALIE

The news depresses me.

JAMIE

That's why the paper is made. It's a NEWSpaper.

NATALIE

If they wanted me to read the news they shouldn't make it so depressing.

JAMIE

They don't make the news...they just report it...

Natalie shoots Jamie a skeptical look.

JAMIE

...What?

NATALIE

Nothing.

JAMIE

What?

NATALIE

If you want to be naive you just go ahead. But don't blame me.

JAMIE

You're ridiculous...

Jamie picks up the rest of the paper.

JAMIE

...I'm sure there's some uplifting stories in here.

(A beat)

Here, listen to this one. Tristan Stevens was on his way home Friday night when he was hit by 34 year old Cameron Roberts. Both driver's were under the influence, but Roberts left the crash relatively unscathed.

(MORE)

JAMIE

Stevens, however, lost both his legs in the crash. Doctors are calling this a miracle, though, do to...

NATALIE

Jamie, I'm not even listening to you.

Jamie sighs.

JAMIE

Fine...

Jamie looks at the picture of Tristan.

JAMIE

...He's cute though.

NATALIE

Who's cute?

JAMIE

The boy on the cover here.

NATALIE

Who's that?

JAMIE

I don't know this boy who lost his legs.

NATALIE

He's disfigured, you really want to go for a disfigured person? Oh look, Sears is having a sale on toaster ovens.

Jamie holds up the picture at Natalie.

JAMIE

You'd say, "no" to this guy?

Natalie sips her coffee, not looking at the picture.

NATALIE

You better believe it.

JAMIE

You're not even looking.

NATALIE

I don't have to. Lost two legs? Does this mean I have to carry this guy around? I'm not into that at all. JAMIE

Your loss.

NATALIE

My loss?

JAMIE

Your loss.

Natalie snatches the paper.

NATALIE

Fine, I'll look at your deformed...

Her eyes grow wide while looking at the picture.

EXT. TRISTAN'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- DAY

Natalie stands at the door. Her finger points at the doorbell.

NATALIE

Do it...do it, Natalie...Natalie...DO IT!...

The door opens and Tristan is sitting there in a wheelchair.

NATALIE

...Oh God it's you! I mean...I brought you cookies...I don't know why I brought you cookies, but it seemed like a good idea at the time. God, I'm an idiot...but...here.

Tristan takes the cookies and smiles.

TRISTAN

You wanna come in?...

Natalie nods. They stand at the door.

TRISTAN

...Any time now.

Tears well up in Natalie's eyes.

NATALIE

I'm sorry.

TRISTAN

For what?

NATALIE

Everything.

TRISTAN

There's nothing to be sorry for...

A moment passes.

TRISTAN

...you should really come in.

Natalie kisses Tristan. He kisses her back and she tires getting on the wheelchair straddling him. However her weight causes the wheelchair to tip over backward.

NATALIE

Oh God!

INT. TRISTAN'S PARENT'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Tristan and Natalie lay on the couch.

TRISTAN

How did you know where I was?

NATALIE

Your roommate told me...

Pause.

NATALIE

... How did you know I was at the door?

TRISTAN

I heard you working up the courage to ring the doorbell...

Pause.

TRISTAN

I quit my job.

NATALIE

Really?

TRISTAN

Yeah, just like you told me.

NATALIE

What are you gonna do?

TRISTAN

I dunno. I'm scared, I guess. For the first time in my life I'm scared cause I'm doing something...

Pause.

TRISTAN

... My parents are going to be home soon.

I guess I should go.

TRISTAN

You don't have to.

NATALIE

I should.

Natalie sits up on the couch.

TRISTAN

When will I see you again?

NATALIE

I don't know.

TRISTAN

Dinner tomorrow?

NATALIE

I don't think so.

TRISTAN

Busy?

NATALIE

Kind of.

TRISTAN

How about Friday?

NATALIE

No. I can't.

TRISTAN

You can't?...

Pause.

TRISTAN

...What's wrong?

NATALIE

Are you happy with yourself?

TRISTAN

What?

NATALIE

Do you love yourself?

TRISTAN

I guess.

A beat.

I'm not sure I do.

TRISTAN

You don't love...you?

NATALIE

If you were alone would you be happy, Tristan?

TRISTAN

What does it matter?

NATALIE

It matters.

TRISTAN

I'm happy to be with you.

NATALIE

And I'm happy to be with you. But, before I can ever be truly happy I have to be happy with myself. And I'm getting there...I'm just not there yet.

TRISTAN

So...

Natalie looks down at Tristan and strokes his face.

NATALIE

I need to learn to be alone, Tristan. I love you, but...I need to learn to be happy when I'm alone. Do you understand?

TRISTAN

No.

NATALIE

I guess I shouldn't expect you to.

TRISTAN

You want just want me to wait?

NATALIE

You do what you have to. There's something for you, Tristan. I know you don't think it's there, but you'll find it. Someday, I swear to God that you'll find it. And when that day comes and you look around and you see you're truly happy...you find me. Or maybe I'll find you...

Tristan nods.

...Goodbye, Tristan.

Natalie kisses Tristan and then stands up and starts to walk away.

TRISTAN

I love you.

NATALIE

I love you too.

Tristan watches Natalie leave. After she's out of the room he runs his hand through his hair and then pounds the arm of the couch.

TRISTAN

Ow.

EXT. TRISTAN'S PARENT'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

Natalie walks away from Tristan's house wiping tears from her eyes.

INT. PARENT'S LIVING ROOM -- LATER

Tristan sits on the couch watching TV. Seth walks into the house.

TRISTAN

Hey.

SETH

Hey.

TRISTAN

Excited for school?

SETH

Of course...like waiting to pass kidney stones.

Tristan nods.

TRISTAN

You know what would make it better?

SETH

A stun gun?

TRISTAN

Being roommates.

SETH

How are we gonna pull that off?

TRISTAN

I'm gonna go to school.

SETH

And study what?

TRISTAN

I dunno. But I'll figure it out.

SETH

Really?

TRISTAN

It's time to do something...

Pause.

TRISTAN

... Any complaints?

SETH

Just a little surprised.

TRISTAN

It could be fun.

SETH

It would be fun.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICES -- FIVE YEARS LATER

A BOY sits in front of an office looking over his ACT scores. A cop watches him, standing in the doorway. A slightly older Tristan wheels himself into the room.

TRISTAN

Hey, David.

BOY

Hey, Mr. Stevens.

TRISTAN

(to the cop)

We're good, Rob.

The cop leaves.

TRISTAN

How'd we do?

BOY

I got a 22...

Tristan smiles.

BOY

...I'm going to college.

TRISTAN

Why don't you step in my office and we'll talk about it.

The boy gets the door for Tristan and the step into the office and close the door.

INT. SECRETARY'S DESK -- CONTINUOUS

The school SECRETARY is on the phone talking to parents while kids rush in and out of the office.

SEC

Yes Mr. Newmann, I'll let him know.

A woman whose face we cannot see walks to the desk.

NATALIE (O.S.)

Is Mr. Stevens in?

The End