

LOST MONUMENTS  
by  
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FADE IN:

EXT. VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

On a cold March afternoon, numerous TOURISTS and VISITORS make their way slowly through the walking monument. They are bundled up in thick clothing to protect them from the cold.

An old man in a bright yellow baseball cap, OSCAR, climbs a ladder in order to etch imprints of the engraved names.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN fails to suppress a faint tear as he touches one of the many names.

TWO YOUNG GIRLS jointly put a small bouquet of flowers down, next to a plastic bag holding the photograph of two twenty-year-old men.

A soft, feminine HAND places a simple notebook, placed in a zip-lock bag, down in front of the black marble wall.

The entire face of the memorial is revealed, impossible to ascertain the owner of the hand that left the journal.

The Lincoln Memorial sits off to the left with the enormous statue of Abraham Lincoln lurking menacingly in its shadows.

TITLE CARD

"MARCH 1998"

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DAY

A young Caucasian male, CARTER MALICK, occupies a window seat in the coach section of a commercial airplane. The plane is sparsely populated by other VARIOUS TRAVELERS. The seats next to Carter rest empty. Carter is what could be considered handsome, yet seems meek at first glance. He has unkempt hair and is wearing a worn navy blazer over an equally worn grey tee shirt. A sketchbook sits upon the tray attached to the seat in front of him. In it, Carter has drawn a detailed depiction of his present view: his tiny window, the wing, cloud coverage, the horizon. Carter contemplatively stares out at the scene he has drawn. A pretty STEWARDESS approaches him.

STEWARDESS

Please put your tray up for landing.

Her request rattles Carter from his meditation.

CARTER

Oh yeah. Sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carter goes to close his sketchbook. As he flips the pages to get to the front cover, two drawings are shown: one, a caricature of a young male shooting himself in the foot, the second, an extremely dark drawing of the head and shoulders of a young woman writhing in what could be either agony or ecstasy. After he closes his book, he places it under the seat in front of him and returns to his window. His face slowly expresses a look of fear and trepidation.

INT. PATRICK'S STATION WAGON - DAY

An older Caucasian male, PATRICK MALICK, is driving a beat-up station wagon on his way to the Ronald Reagan National Airport. Patrick's face conveys the appearance of strength and endurance. However, he looks to have aged prematurely; as if the weight of the world was placed on his shoulders at a very young age. Despite the poor quality of the vehicle itself, the interior remains free of dirt or debris. The radio is playing in the vehicle.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

(filtered)

And thank you for listening to D.C.'s home of soft rock, 96.9 WOJR. Up next is the big, big hit from that big, big ship, Celene Dion with "My Heart Will Go On."

PATRICK

I hate that damn song.

Patrick goes and changes the station. However, the first three stations he gets are each playing "My Heart Will Go On" at various points of play. On his fourth attempt, he finds "Sexual Healing" by Marvin Gaye and is content with that selection. He sits back and prepares to deal with the airport traffic.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL BOARDING GATE - DAY

CARTER is disembarking the plane via the jetway. Following him is a very robust MAN WITH HEADPHONES, who is singing along with the song playing on his walk-man, "Sexual Healing" by Marvin Gaye.

MAN WITH HEADPHONES

(singing)

It's getting stronger, inside of me.

Carter, oblivious to the singing, is slowly meandering towards the exit at the end of the hall, almost leery of what is waiting for him on the other side of the entrance. As he enters the crowded terminal, Carter begins looking in earnest for a familiar face in the crowd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

When he does not recognize any of the VARIOUS WELCOMERS greeting the VARIOUS TRAVELERS, he sullenly heads off towards the baggage claim area.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

Amongst the large crowd of VARIOUS TRAVELERS and their WELCOMERS, CARTER waits patiently for his bag to come along on the conveyor belt. A large olive green Army duffel with the name "P. MALICK" etched across the side in black stenciled letters appears at the far end of the belt. Carter stares intently at it, triggering feelings of nostalgia.

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

A slightly younger CARTER with a neater haircut folds his clothes in preparation for college. His room is wallpapered in only the trendiest of posters covering all forms of artistic expression; film, music, art, photography, literature. Stacks of books and CDs litter the floor in between piles of unfolded clothes. PATRICK appears in the open doorway. Unnoticed by Carter, Patrick begins to enter the room, then thinks twice about it. Instead, he gently knocks on the doorjamb. Carter remains focused on his folding.

PATRICK

How's the packing going?

CARTER

Pretty good, Dad.

PATRICK

Need any help?

CARTER

No, it's all right, but could I use your old army duffel?

Patrick hesitates for a moment.

PATRICK

Yeah, you can use it.  
(chuckles slightly)  
If you want.

CARTER

I wouldn't have asked if I didn't want it.

(beat, then turns to face  
Patrick)

Dad, I just want it because I can fit everything I'm bringing into it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER (CONT'D)

One bag to check at the airport. Don't make this out to be anything more than that.

PATRICK

Do you hate me or something?

CARTER

No. What the hell does that have to do with this?

PATRICK

Because you try so hard to be whatever I'm not.

Carter has heard this conversation before and is tired of it.

CARTER

Dad, I just don't need the army. I didn't need ROTC. They gave me a full ride. Full scholarship, Ivy League, all expenses paid. This has nothing to do with you.

PATRICK

I know, nothing at all. Let me get you that bag.

Patrick exits the bedroom leaving Carter to stare at the now empty doorway.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL BAGGAGE CLAIM - DAY

The slightly older, unkempt CARTER stares at the green duffel as it finally reaches his spot on the conveyor belt.

PATRICK (O.C.)

(disgruntled)

Here, let me get you that bag.

PATRICK steps in front of Carter and grabs the green bag from the conveyor.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I'm sure you have more pressing matters on your mind.

CARTER

Sorry, wasn't paying attention.

PATRICK

Head in the clouds again.

(beat)

Didn't they have barbers up at that school of yours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

It's no longer any school of mine.

Patrick lets the comment go unnoticed.

PATRICK

Come on. Let's get going before they tow the "Beast" away.

CARTER

You lead, I'll follow.

Patrick and Carter exit the baggage claim area.

INT. PATRICK'S STATION WAGON - DAY

PATRICK is driving while CARTER is riding shotgun, trying to find a decent radio station. He eventually gives up hope.

CARTER

You would think in our nation's capital, I could find a radio station that I like.

Patrick ignores his son's complaint.

CARTER (CONT'D)

So, did you tell Mom the whole story?

PATRICK

I glossed it over to make you seem more of the victim.

CARTER

Sometimes, I try to convince myself that I was a victim.

PATRICK

Well, you weren't.

Carter fails to offer any response to this statement.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

What you did was wrong, Carter, and don't look at me for any type of forgiveness or.. or..

CARTER

(meekly)  
Absolution.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK

Yeah, absolution. I didn't tell your mother the entire truth because she has enough to deal with, well, with your brother and all.

(beat)

She really doesn't need anything compounded right now.

CARTER

Have you heard from Ford?

PATRICK

Billy Mercer has been working as a bouncer over at O's, nights and all to make some extra cash. He says Ford stops in now and again.

CARTER

Is he OK?

PATRICK

How should I know? The kid hasn't spoken to me in two years. What are you going to do now that you're home?

Carter takes note of how quickly Patrick has changed the subject, but does not press the matter.

CARTER

Get a job for now. Start applying for colleges in the fall.

PATRICK

Are you looking locally?

CARTER

Basically, I just want to get in somewhere that I can afford.

PATRICK

You know I can't help you with that. But, if you need a job, I might be able to help you out.

CARTER

Where?

PATRICK

With me, working at the Parks Department.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

(extremely hesitant)

I was hoping to find something dealing with what I'm studying for.

PATRICK

(perturbed)

Well, good luck. I heard a year of art and English study opens up a lot of doors in the real world. Who knows? You might get lucky and get a job folding jeans at The Gap.

CARTER

Dad, come on. You know what I mean.

PATRICK

Actually, I'm glad to say that I don't.

Once again, Celene Dion's "My Heart Will Go On" comes on the radio. Patrick reaches to turn up the radio volume.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Now, if you don't mind, I'm rather fond of this song.

CARTER

(under his breath)

I hate that damn song.

The pair sit without uttering a word as the car makes its way through downtown D.C.

EXT. CONSTITUTION AVE., WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Patrick's station wagon, the "Beast", makes its way down Constitution Avenue. In the background, several large Federal buildings stand eerily devoid of life. The "Beast" fades slowly from view. Across from the tomb-like buildings, approaching the lively green expanse housing both the Vietnam and Korean War Memorials, two very feminine LEGS encased in sheer stockings and a brown skirt appear. They move expediently towards the memorials.

EXT. VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

The pair of feminine LEGS make their way through the sparse crowd of VISITORS gazing at the black granite wall situated on the right. Midway through the memorial, the legs stop and turn to face the wall. The owner of the legs bends over as a soft delicate HAND places a second plastic encased notebook at the base of the memorial.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The hand slowly retreats from the notebook. The legs remain steadfast for a moment, then slowly move away.

TITLE CARD

"FIVE WEEKS LATER"

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CARTER is asleep on his bed, buried beneath a mound of sheets, blankets, and down comforter. The nascent sunrise is inching its way through the window. There is a light knock at the door, causing no effect on the content sleeper. A middle-aged Caucasian female, CATHERINE MALICK, slowly opens the door and pushes her head through the tiny opening. Catherine is weary-eyed from just waking up, but still appears to be bursting with energy.

CATHERINE  
(delicately)  
Carter, time to wake up.

Her words cause a slight stir amid the pile of bedding. Catherine opens the door a little further and enters the room. She makes her way over to the bed, avoiding various discarded objects placed in her path.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)  
Come on, Carter, it's your first day.

Catherine sits down on the bed and pulls some of the coverings back to reveal Carter's head and shoulders.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)  
If you hurry, I can whip you up some breakfast before you go.

CARTER  
(groggy)  
What time is it?

CATHERINE  
5:30. Now, come on. Let's get you up and dressed.

CARTER  
Do I really have to do this?

CATHERINE  
I've been telling you for a month now to go find a job. What did you do? You moped around the house, saying,  
(faux deep voice)  
Don't worry, Mom. I'll handle it.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

(end fake voice)

Now, your father is looking forward to this and you should too. It'll be good for you.

CARTER

Yeah, I can feel my body yearn for some good manual labor.

CATHERINE

Don't you get flip with me.

Catherine stands up to leave.

CARTER

(mumbling)

Flip?

CATHERINE

Maybe a little hard work will teach you to respect what a good education can provide.

CARTER

Christ, I'll go. Just save the "value of a college education" speeches until after I get some coffee in me.

Catherine makes her way back to the door.

CATHERINE

(smiling)

I knew that would work. Downstairs in five minutes, OK?

Carter slowly gets out of bed, shielding his morning erection from his mother's view.

CARTER

Yes, Satan.

Carter picks up his alarm clock off the floor and shakes his head in disbelief.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

PATRICK is sitting at the kitchen table, nursing his second cup of coffee as he reads his morning paper. He is wearing his work clothes, a green, collared shirt with "Washington, D.C. Parks Department" embroidered upon his chest and a pair of matching slacks. The kitchen has a country feel to it, filled with various crafts and knickknacks. CATHERINE enters, Patrick remains focused on his paper.

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CONTINUED:

PATRICK

Is he up?

CATHERINE

He's getting ready.

PATRICK

Good, we can leave when he comes down here.

CATHERINE

Pat, I promised him breakfast.

PATRICK

If he wanted something to eat then he should have gotten up earlier.

CATHERINE

Today is going to be hard enough on him as it is. Can you cut the kid some slack for one, single day?

Patrick puts the paper down on the table and directs his attention at his wife.

PATRICK

Can't you think about how this is going to affect me?

CATHERINE

That depends. Can you for once think about someone besides yourself?

Patrick is offended by this remark and stands to leave.

PATRICK

I'll be out in the car. Once the boy wonder finds his way downstairs, can you send him outside?

CATHERINE

(losing her sunny disposition)  
Why do you always walk away from me?

PATRICK

I am not going to just sit here and have you bitch at me, telling me that all I ever think about is myself.

CATHERINE

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PATRICK

Jesus, Cat, it's not even six in the  
goddamn morning yet.

CARTER enters the kitchen, dressed in the same outfit as his  
father. Catherine does not notice her son's entrance.

CATHERINE

Well, when would you like to talk about  
this?

CARTER

From what I heard upstairs, I don't think  
he wants to talk about it at all.

Catherine seems a little bothered by her Carter's sudden  
appearance.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Listen, if this is causing a rift here, I  
can go find some other job.

PATRICK

No, come on. We should be on our way  
anyway.

CARTER

What about breakfast?

PATRICK

I can stop for you on the way.

Catherine has lost her desire to continue the disagreement.

CATHERINE

You should get going, Carter. Don't want  
you late on your first day.

Catherine gives Carter a peck on the cheek and ushers him out  
the kitchen door. She shares a brief glance with her husband,  
then nods for him to leave as well. Patrick exits.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

(murmuring)

I give it a week before they kill each  
other.

INT. PARKS DEPARTMENT GARAGE - DAY

CARTER and FREDDIE are walking through an extensive garage  
that houses various large trucks with snowplows attached,  
dump trucks, and unusually large lawn mowers.

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Freddie, a short, stocky Italian male, is instructing Carter in the lay of the land, while simultaneously showing how little intelligence or sense of decorum he might have.

FREDDIE

Well, those are the snowplows over there,  
but you shouldn't be needing them.

CARTER

Since we're midway into April.

Freddie starts to pick his nose while responding.

FREDDIE

Yeah, 'cause of that.

(beat)

Actually for the first couple of weeks,  
you'll probably just be doing garbage  
detail. At least, until the real evil  
starts.

CARTER

Real evil?

Freddie seems rather focused on the green object he just pulled from his nose.

FREDDIE

Weeds, I can not stand weeds. Always  
pulling them out, only to have them grow  
back.

CARTER

(mockingly)

Kind of like boogers, I guess.

FREDDIE

(unaware)

Exactly, and they're green, too.

Carter issues a slight chuckle and shakes his head in disbelief.

CARTER

It sounds like all I'll be doing is  
collecting garbage and pulling weeds?

FREDDIE

Pretty much.

CARTER

Remind me to thank my Dad when I see him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Freddie begins scratching his ass, inside his pants, with the same hand he just used to pick his nose.

FREDDIE

No problem. Let's go. I'll show you the rounds and we can stop for something to eat.

CARTER

I already ate breakfast.

FREDDIE

Me too. What's your point?

They start walking to one of the smaller trucks, Freddie with his hand down the back of his pants.

INT. WORK TRUCK - DAY

FREDDIE is driving while trying to devour a jelly donut without having the gooey insides spew all over him. CARTER is riding shotgun, nursing a cup of coffee as he watches Freddie with a mixture of awe and repulsion. Carter's visual signs of disgust reach their pinnacle when Freddie begins to speak with his mouth crammed with food.

FREDDIE

(mumbling due to food)

Normally, you start over by the war memorials.

(swallows, mumbling ends)

Get that area done before any of the mourners show up. Every other day,

(takes another bite, mumbling resumes)

you'll have to get all the flowers and mementos left at the walls.

CARTER

I can see why we get there before any visitors show up. Wouldn't want them see us throw their things away.

FREDDIE

Well, we only throw the flowers out. Everything else we have to put into storage.

CARTER

Really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FREDDIE

Yeah, someone thought it would make for good P.R., but hardly anyone knows we do it.

Carter nods in response.

FREDDIE (CONT'D)

Makes our job harder. To tell you the truth though, I'd have a hard time tossing those things away. You should see what some people leave there: letters, teddy bears, pictures, cigars. Well, we sometimes pocket the cigars. Why waste them, right?

CARTER

Yeah, why waste them?

Freddie starts to say something else but his voice is muted. Carter has ceased paying attention to him. His facial expression shows that his mind is somewhere else.

INT. CARTER & TENNY'S DORM ROOM - NIGHT

CARTER is sitting with his feet up on his desk in his old college dorm room, writing in his journal. The room is furnished like your typical male dormitory room; two beds, two desks and two dressers line the walls. The area of the walls unblocked by furniture are adorned with posters ranging from the Beastie Boys to Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly to those lovable scamps from South Park. TENNY, a tall, lanky Caucasian male with a permanent grin on his face is sprawled out across his bed, rummaging through an old, beat-up cigar box. From the box, Tenny withdraws two massive sized joints.

TENNY

I'm telling you, why waste them?

CARTER

How long will your brother be in Prague?

TENNY

Keats is over there for the whole semester. He has to take a class or two, so the fam will pay for his little excursion.

CARTER

Then, definitely don't let the pot go to waste, but I think everything else in there will keep until he gets back.

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CONTINUED:

TENNY  
(disgruntled)  
Yeah, I suppose.

CARTER  
Still don't know why he trusted you with  
his stash.

Tenny gets up off his bed and proceeds over to his dresser. He opens up the bottom drawer and takes out a thick bath towel.

TENNY  
Better me than Mom or Dad. At least I'll  
be courteous and leave him some.

Tenny rolls up the bath towel and places it at the bottom of the door to the hallway. He goes and opens the window for proper ventilation. The pair then begin smoking the first of the two joints.

TENNY (CONT'D)  
There's a party tonight over at Anderson.

Carter lets out a huge puff of smoke and coughs.

CARTER  
So?

TENNY  
I thought we could cruise on over there  
and check out the scene.

CARTER  
You can. I have to start working on  
Johnston's Faulkner critique.

TENNY  
Then, why you smoking up?

Carter just shrugs his shoulders and hands the joint to Tenny.

TENNY (CONT'D)  
Is it because Monica might be there?

CARTER  
(unconvincing)  
No, it's not.  
(beat)  
Tenny, I just can't go lose my  
scholarship because I want to go out to  
some party.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TENNY

You do realize that it's Friday.

CARTER

Yeah.

TENNY

Listen, you sound like a fool. I know you like this girl. It's obvious.

CARTER

How?

TENNY

Just shut up for a minute.

(beat)

I see how you act around girls you actually like. Typical product of an all boys school. You get all hesitant and shy. That's all right, some girls like that. But becoming a hermit when an opportunity like this is dropped in your lap, well, that's just delusional.

CARTER

But..

TENNY

(interrupting)

No buts. You need to relax and enjoy yourself. Well, besides the occasional visit from Mary Jane here, all you do is work and..

CARTER

(interrupting)

OK, I'll go. Just stop with the over-analytical view of my existence. Jesus, your parents write a self-help book and you become some type of prophet.

TENNY

A series of self-help books and, no, I just want to see my roomie have a good time.

Behind his back, Tenny reaches into the cigar box, takes out a small bag of light blue capsules and stuffs them into his rear pocket.

TENNY (CONT'D)

I just want everyone to have some fun tonight.

INT. WORK TRUCK - DAY

FREDDIE is driving the truck while CARTER occupies the passenger seat. Freddie is still engaged in the conversation, oblivious to the fact that Carter's focus is elsewhere.

FREDDIE

It's a good job, not exactly the most fun or exciting one, but I can't complain.

CARTER

(uninterested)

That's good.

FREDDIE

Why, your Dad's been here for, for.. How long has your Dad been here?

The question snaps Carter out of his contemplation as he struggles with the answer to the question.

CARTER

Since before I was born, probably before Ford as well.

Carter's response jars Freddie's memory.

FREDDIE

That's right, your mother had just gotten pregnant with your brother, so her father got your Dad this job. I remember now.

CARTER

I guess that was it. I really wasn't around for all the details.

Freddie brings the truck to a sudden halt, jerking Carter's head forward.

FREDDIE

Well, we're here. Let's get going.

The two men exit the vehicle.

EXT. PARK - DAY

CARTER is busy hauling a large container of trash over to the parked truck. Haggard and saturated in dirt & perspiration, he has obviously been working hard. FREDDIE is leaning on the rear bumper of the truck, eating a banana. Freddie looks as if he hasn't done any work all morning. A truck identical to theirs pulls up behind them and honks its horn. PATRICK is behind the wheel.

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CONTINUED:

PATRICK

You almost done here?

FREDDIE

We have a few more spots to hit. Why?

PATRICK

I'm meeting Joe and Mercer over at Lily's for lunch. You interested?

Carter finally manages to get the trash container over to the back of the truck and stops. He collapses on the rear bumper next to Freddie and wipes off the sweat on his brow with the bottom of his shirt.

CARTER

Hey, Dad.

Freddie finishes his banana and tosses the peel into Carter's container.

FREDDIE

Your father was just talking about going to grab something to eat. I could eat a horse. How about you?

CARTER

I could handle a break.

FREDDIE

OK, dump the trash into the back and bring the truck over to the Lily's Moonlight Cafe over on Carberry. I'm going to head over with your Dad.

Carter poorly attempts to hide his dissatisfaction with Freddie.

CARTER

Sure, Freddie. See you guys in a bit.

Freddie goes and jumps into the passenger side of Patrick's truck. Patrick watches Carter start his struggle with the over-sized trash can for a moment then drives off.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

PATRICK, clad in a horrendously gaudy Washington Redskins sweatshirt, is talking enthusiastically on the telephone while simultaneously preparing three rather large sandwiches.

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CONTINUED:

PATRICK

Joey, I don't care how cold it is. It's thirty-yard line seats, lower level.

(beat)

Well, it's as close to the fifty as your sorry ass is going to get. Plus, I'm making my sandwiches.

(beat)

Yeah, half an hour. Later.

As soon as he returns the phone to the receiver, it begins to ring again. He quickly picks the phone up again.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Listen Joey, just throw on some extra

(beat)

Oh, hey Carter. Thought you were Joe.

(beat)

Yeah, actually we got tickets to the game. So, I'm in a little bit of a rush.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - DAY

From outside the house, PATRICK is seen through the large kitchen window, continuing his phone conversation. He negligibly nods his head as he silently listens to the telephone. Slowly, his face begins emit an expression of anger and rage. Suddenly, he takes the receiver from the side of his head and hurls across the expanse of the kitchen, shattering it against the opposite wall.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The solitary figure of PATRICK stands silently in the center of the kitchen; staring at his infamous sandwiches as faint teardrops emit from his eyes. CATHERINE, dressed in an Annapolis sweatshirt and jeans, rushes into the kitchen; obviously drawn by the sound of the phone crashing.

CATHERINE

Pat, what happened?

PATRICK

I suppose you wouldn't believe that I was cutting up an onion.

CATHERINE

Sure, but it wouldn't explain the phone.

Catherine goes over to his side and gives him a hug; an act of compassion which he fails to acknowledge or respond to.

## INT. LILY'S MOONLIGHT CAFE - DAY

Lily's is a cozy little diner nestled a few blocks from the Capitol building. A half dozen ceiling fans circulate the air warmed by the spring sunshine entering through the front picture window. A row of booths line the far wall, while the floor is littered with tables for even-numbered parties. At a table for six, JOE, an extremely thin, balding, Caucasian male in his late forties, BILLY MERCER, a Caucasian male in his early twenties with the frame of a bodybuilder, FREDDIE, and PATRICK are sitting down, going over the menus. They all appear relatively clean and respectable, including Freddie.

JOE

Just no onions. They kill me.

BILLY

So, how's Carter doing on his first day?

FREDDIE

Well--

PATRICK

(interrupting)

He's doing all right, Billy. He's working with Freddie right now.

JOE

Well, Freddie, I guess you're having a helluva day then.

FREDDIE

Hey, I take offense to that.

JOE

You shouldn't, unless you're sitting back and watching the kid do all the work.

PATRICK

Why do you think I have him working with Freddie, Joe?

FREDDIE

(defensively)

Don't you guys go making me look like I'm some kinda lazy bum here. I'm doing Patrick a favor here.

BILLY

Hey, Pat, do you need me to do you any favors? Especially the ones which involve me sitting on my ass all day long.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FREDDIE

Hey!

PATRICK

Shut up. Here he comes.

FREDDIE

(mumbling)

Frigging always giving me crap.

CARTER enters through the front door, covered in sweat, grime, and dirt. He makes his way over to the table but does not sit down.

CARTER

Hey, gents. Joe. Mercer.

Billy and Joe nod a silent reply.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Is there anywhere I can wash up?

PATRICK

The bathroom is in the back on the right.

CARTER

Thanks, I can take it from there.

Carter makes his way towards the rear of the restaurant.

INT. LILY'S MOONLIGHT CAFE BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom at Lily's holds two sinks, two urinals and an over-sized bathroom stall. A large mirror is mounted over the two sinks as dispensers of soap, paper and air adorn the walls. Except for its exceptional cleanliness, it is a rather unremarkable room. CARTER enters through the sole door and makes his way immediately to the sink. He turns the water on to maximum output and pumps a copious amount of liquid soap into his palm. He begins to wash his hands with great vigor.

DEAN (V.O.)

Now, Mr. Malick, the University would like to just wash their hands of the whole affair.

Carter, upon hearing the words in his head, stops washing his hands and raises his eyes to meet those of his reflection.

MONICA (V.O.)

(crying)

Why, Carter? Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK enters the bathroom. Carter resumes washing his hand as Patrick steps up to one of the urinals. An uncomfortable silence hangs in the air as each sneak sequential glances at one another.

PATRICK  
Is Freddie working you hard?

CARTER  
Nothing I can't handle.

Patrick gives himself a good shake and flushes the urinal with his elbow.

PATRICK  
New guys always get it rough.

CARTER  
Especially when their fathers are trying to make a point.

Patrick stops closing his fly when he hears this accusation and turns his attention to his son.

PATRICK  
What?

Carter turns the faucet off and turns to face his father.

CARTER  
(rapid fire)  
Listen, Dad, I get it. You work hard. You wake up everyday and put in a honest day's labor and from that we have a roof over our heads and food in our bellies. Now, if you still feel the need to sick the glutton gestapo on me, hey, feel free. Maybe I deserve a little punishment after what happened. Just don't expect me to sit through you saying  
(fake dummy voice)  
"Uggh, I guess, Freddie's working you hard"  
(end fake voice)  
because we both know that's bullshit.

Patrick finishes zipping his fly and proceeds to the other sink to wash his hands with out making one mention or acknowledgement of his son's diatribe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to grab some lunch before my return to the salt mines.

Carter grabs a paper towel from the dispenser and makes his exit. Upon his son's departure, Patrick looks at himself in the mirror and smiles.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Exerting a great amount of effort, CARTER drags another large garbage container over to Freddie's truck.

B) In Carter's bedroom, CATHERINE tries to shake a slumbering CARTER awake.

C) Back in the park, CARTER stops sweeping to sit down on a bench.

D) At the Vietnam War Memorial, CARTER somberly collects the mementos left at the granite wall and places them into a medium-sized plastic container.

E) PATRICK walks up behind CARTER resting on a park bench and smacks his son in the back of the head.

F) PATRICK opens the door to Carter's bedroom and dumps a bucket of water on a sleeping CARTER. Carter awakes with an expression of utter shock.

G) In an unadorned office lobby, CARTER carries a plastic container filled with the objects he has taken for the Vietnam War Memorial. He heads over to the elevator only to find a sign declaring them "OUT OF SERVICE". He heads back to the lobby entrance, container still in tow.

EXT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

FREDDIE and his pick-up truck are stationed in front the entrance to a nondescript, Washington office building. The front doors open and CARTER exits the building carrying a container of the gifts and keepsakes collected from the Vietnam Memorial. He approaches the driver's side of the truck.

FREDDIE

What's the hold-up?

CARTER

The elevator is out of commission.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FREDDIE

So?

CARTER

Do you know how many stories that is?

FREDDIE

Yep.

(beat)

All of them. Don't worry, I'll wait.

CARTER

(disgruntled)

Yeah, you were my chief concern.

Carter turns around and heads to the entrance he just exited.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING STAIRWELL - DAY

CARTER, continuing to carry the plastic container, heads up the stairwell of the office building. The walls surrounding him are composed of gray concrete cinder-blocks and the stairs are metal, painted to blend with the walls. He passes a door marked "14th" and issues a sigh of fatigue. Carter puts the box down on the ground and plops down on the stairs leading to the fifteenth floor. He glances around the stairwell, searching for something to catch his eye. Carter leans forwards and begins to rummage through his box. He discovers one of the mysterious journals encased in a large plastic bag. Visibly intrigued, he opens the bag and withdraws the notebook. Carter selects a random page and begins to read.

GRACE (V.O.)

(outraged)

Can you believe the nerve of her? Her favorite author is Danielle Steele, yet she feels the need to critique my writing. Was she as critical with you as she is with me? Is this how she really is or is she trying to fill some type of parental role? I like to imagine that if you were here that you would side with me; that you would always have faith in your little girl.

Carter stops reading and turns quickly to the last page of the journal.

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

Another of these kooky journals come to an end. I would rather have you here, hearing my gripes and such in person.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE (CONT'D)

I'll just take what I can get. Love,  
Grace.

Carter starts to flip back to an earlier portion of the writings when the sounds of footsteps echo through the stairwell. Carter quickly tucks the journal into the back of his pants and bends over to pick up the box of mementoes. He starts up the stairs, container in tow, as a SNOOTY WOMAN and her BELEAGUERED COMPANION appear at the next plateau in the stairwell.

SNOOTY WOMAN

(oblivious to Carter)

Can you believe we have to take the stairs? I don't mind the exercise, but it seems like a complete waste of...

The Snooty Woman notices Carter standing midway through the flight of stairs, stops in mid-sentence and issues a glare to this unwelcome occupant of her stairwell. Even though, it would be easier for the pair to back up and let Carter pass, Carter retreats back down to the next level to furnish the two a clear path. As they pass Carter, The Snooty Woman fails to even acknowledge his mere presence as the Beleaguered Companion nods his silent thanks.

BELEAGUERED COMPANION

Well, at least we don't have anything heavy to carry like that young man.

SNOOTY WOMAN

Who?

Carter continues up the stairs.

INT. ARCHIVAL OFFICE - DAY

The office that the Parks Department have been allocated to store the various objects left by mourners and other memorial visitors is no larger than the average living room, yet it holds more trinkets than ten garage sales. A counter has been set up to greet any visitors. Three containers similar to Carter's rest upon the top of the counter, allowing one brief window into the main portion of the room. In the center of the area behind the counter, two large, metal desks sit, facing each other. The walls are hidden by various filing and shelving systems. Every square inch of available room has been filled to capacity with photographs, plaques, letters, newspapers and various objects personal in their nature. Seated at one of the desks is an elderly Caucasian woman, ETHEL, working dutifully at putting pictures into a generic, olive photo album. The door serving as the rooms main entrance opens and CARTER enters with his package still in hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER  
(louder than normal)  
Hey ladies, got another "something  
something" for you.

Carter manages to maneuver the heavy item in the sole available space on the counter as Ethel slowly gets up from her desk. Carter suddenly notices the empty plastic bag resting on top of the container. He quickly grabs the bag and stuffs it into his pants pocket before Ethel finishes her trek to the front counter.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Ethel, where is your partner in crime?

ETHEL  
She's out getting blood-work done. I'm  
telling you, kid, don't get old.

CARTER  
I'm trying hard not to, but it keeps on  
happening.

Ethel begins examining the new delivery.

ETHEL  
How's week number three treating you?

CARTER  
Well, I'm still going home smelling like  
garbage, but I'm surviving.

ETHEL  
You should go back to college. No need  
for you to be working with those  
ruffians.  
(beat)  
Your father excluded.

Carter chuckles.

CARTER  
Are you saying that because you mean it  
or because he's my father?

ETHEL  
Dear, once you reach a certain age, you  
always say what you mean. It's just  
easier.  
(beat)  
Your father has always been a true  
gentleman to Lucy and I.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

Yeah, that's my Dad, one big sweetie.

Ethel laughs slightly as she retrieves a clipboard from under the counter. She starts to log the receipt of Carter's box.

CARTER (CONT'D)

So, when is the elevator supposed to be fixed?

ETHEL

Hopefully soon. I'm not as spry as I used to be.

CARTER

(smiling)

Come on now. You'll always be spry in my eyes.

Ethel finishes noting the necessary information and hands the clipboard over the containers to Carter.

ETHEL

Save that flirting for a lady your own age.

Carter quickly signs the clipboard and returns it to Ethel. He then untucks the back of his shirt in order to cover up the stolen journal.

CARTER

I just have to find one worth flirting with.

ETHEL

I doubt you'll find one in here.

CARTER

You might be surprised what you can find in here.

Ethel cocks an eyebrow in response to his statement. Carter just smiles as he makes a graceful exit.

INT. MALICK FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CARTER is sitting in a large "Lazy Boy" recliner reading from the appropriated journal. The room is pitch black except for his immediate area; illuminated by a single lamp looming over him. Carter, all cleaned up and dressed for bed, is fully consumed by what he is reading.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE (V.O.)

I never let anyone know that these journals are addressed to you. It's not as if I am ashamed of you or worry that someone might think I'm crazy for communicating in such a manner with the deceased. It's not like my devotion to those damn horoscopes. I read them every day. Some days I honestly believe what they say only applies to me. I don't tell other people about them because I'm ashamed. But with these books - I just want to keep this our private thing; a shared secret. Secrets need not always be a bad thing.

CATHERINE enters Carter's "Circle of Light" and gently grabs his shoulder. Carter startles slightly from his mother's sudden presence, but immediately calms and offers her the warmest smile his personality can allow.

CATHERINE

I don't want to be a nag, hon, but you do have to be up early tomorrow.

CARTER

I know. Just want to read a bit more.

CATHERINE

What are you reading?

CARTER

Oh, just a...

(beat)

Just a story a friend of mine wrote. Wanted to see what I thought of it.

CATHERINE

I noticed you haven't been writing or drawing anything since you got back.

CARTER

I guess I haven't had anything inspire me lately.

CATHERINE

Well, my dad always say that we should learn from our mistakes or setbacks. Maybe you can use what happened to you as a source of material or inspiration.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

I don't know. I think I need to look ahead. You know? Maybe find something positive to latch on to.

(beat)

Plus, the whole thing is so "after school special" to begin with.

CATHERINE

The point of those specials was to teach people about right and wrong, Carter.

(beat)

I was always proud of your talents. Don't let them go to waste.

CARTER

I keep telling myself I won't. One of these days I just might start believing it.

Catherine leans over and gives Carter a slight kiss on his forehead.

CATHERINE

OK, don't stay up too late. It's a bitch waking you up in the morning.

Catherine starts to leave.

CARTER

Mom...

Catherine turns around to face her son.

CARTER (CONT'D)

When did you know that you and Dad were, well, that Dad was the one?

Catherine takes a pause to contemplate her answer.

CATHERINE

I wish I could say it was the day that we were married or when I gave birth to one of you guys. It didn't really hit me until a couple of years after we had you both. It was a Sunday in either September or October. The Redskins had just won, but it was still warm out. You, your Dad and Ford were out front horsing around with the football.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARTER

(smiling)

Me versus Ford, Dad as steady  
quarterback.

CATHERINE

Well, I was in the kitchen making dinner.  
When I came out to call you guys in, the  
three of you were on the ground  
wrestling, just smiling and laughing. I  
knew that I loved you all more than life  
itself. I knew that all the choices I  
made had been right ones, because they  
had brought me to that exact moment.

(beat)

Does that answer your question?

CARTER

I think so.

CATHERINE

Good. Now, not too late.

CARTER

Don't worry, Mom.

CATHERINE

Night.

Carter resumes reading the journal as his mother makes her  
way out of the room.

GRACE (V.O.)

Things sometimes become secrets in order  
to make them special. That way when they  
are shared they hold significance. I want  
to fall in love, Dad. I want that person  
that I can share all those special things  
I keep hidden. Does that sentence make  
sense? I need that specific moment when I  
meet someone and know that they are the  
one. That my life would not be fulfilled  
without their involvement in it. I keep  
waiting for that to happen. When I  
finally meet someone and, BANG, he's the  
one.

FADE TO BLACK

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

I just hope he's out there; out there  
looking for me.

TITLE CARD

"FIVE DAYS LATER"

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The door to the room is closed. Carter's bed is immaculately made. The approaching sunrise is inching its way through the window. There is a heavy knock at the door. PATRICK opens it and pops his head into the room.

PATRICK

Carter.

He looks around and notices that the room is empty. He exits and closes the door behind him.

INT. MALICK FAMILY BATHROOM - MORNING

The door to the family's minimalist bathroom is closed. The room is immaculately clean. Again, the approaching sunrise is inching its way through the window. Again, there is a heavy knock at the door. PATRICK opens it and pops his head into the room.

PATRICK

Carter.

He realizes his son is not in this room either. He exits and closes the door behind him.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

CATHERINE is sitting at the kitchen table alternating her drinking preference between a large glass of orange juice and a mug full of coffee. She is also reading a portion of the morning paper folded beneath her. The rest of the paper lies to her right. CARTER is at the stove, appearing to be preparing a substantial breakfast of bacon and eggs. PATRICK enters the room looking very displeased. He heads right towards his wife, failing again to notice his son's presence in the room.

PATRICK

Did Carter sleep here last night? If we're late because of him, there will be hell to pay.

Catherine just smiles and glances over to her son. Carter has finished his preparation and has begun to make his way over to the table with two dishes filled with bacon and eggs. A bottle of ketchup is wedged under his arm pit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

(mockingly)

Oh, but I was going into Tashi Station to pick up some power converters.

(beat)

Relax there, Uncle Owen, and have some breakfast. We're still on schedule.

Carter places a dish in front of his mother and the empty spot in front of his father.

PATRICK

What?

Carter heads back towards to the stove in order to retrieve a third plate.

CATHERINE

Just enjoy it for now, Pat. Who knows how long this might last?

PATRICK

(bewildered)

Who's Uncle Owen? Eggs, Tushy Station, what?

Carter sits down with his own plate and begins to eat.

CARTER

(mouth full of food)

Star Wars. Episode Four. A New Hope.

PATRICK

Did I forget somebody's birthday?

Carter and Catherine chuckle and continue with their breakfast.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE LILY'S - DAY

PATRICK and BILLY MERCER are making their along the sidewalk towards Lily's Moonlight Cafe. Both are dressed for work and, despite a bright noonday sun, are devoid of sweat and sweat-marks.

PATRICK

Yeah, he was up before me. Hell, he even made everyone breakfast. I really do not know what to make of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BILLY

I don't know, Pat. You know, I'm really not one for reading people, but maybe he just wants a fresh start. Especially if you consider what happened up at that school of his.

PATRICK

That could be it. I don't know.

(beat)

I'll tell you one thing though, your generation has a lot more problems to deal with than mine. All we had to worry about was getting the girl knocked up.

BILLY

Wasn't the pill all the rage back then? Started the whole sexual revolution and, you know, bang, bang, bang.

Patrick smiles and shakes his head.

PATRICK

Not if you were Irish Catholic. Hell, most of us are still waiting for that revolution to hit.

They arrive at the entrance to Lily's and turn to enter the cafe; laughing.

INT. LILY'S MOONLIGHT CAFE - DAY

PATRICK and BILLY enter the cafe only to find CARTER waiting at the cash register near the front entrance. Carter is dressed in his work clothes with a back pack slung over one shoulder; the scholastic janitor. Carter fails to notice his father and coworker enter the eatery. He is waiting impatiently for something else.

BILLY

Speak of the devil! Good afternoon, young Mr. Malick.

Carter turns to see Billy and Patrick.

CARTER

Hey, Billy. Dad.

LILY, a pint-size Asian woman in her forties, appears with a bagged lunch in hand and interrupts the trio's greetings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LILY  
(slight Asian accent)  
Here you go, one special to go.

CARTER  
Thanks, Lily. What's the total?

LILY  
Four fifteen. But, for you handsome, just  
give me four dollars.

Patrick, slightly perplexed, looks on as Carter pays the lady  
and starts to make his exit.

PATRICK  
Not eating here?

CARTER  
No, have some errands to run on my break.

PATRICK  
(dubious)  
Errands?

CARTER  
Well, mainly research for a story I'm  
working on.

PATRICK  
OK then, have fun.

Patrick walks off toward the back, headed presumably to the  
bathroom. Billy starts to follow.

BILLY  
Yeah, Carter. Catch you later.

CARTER  
Billy?

Billy stops and quickly returns his attention to Carter.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Which nights does Ford usually stop by  
O's?

BILLY  
Your brother? Almost every night. Why?

CARTER  
Need to talk to him. When you bouncing  
next?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BILLY  
Tomorrow night.

CARTER  
Think you can let me in.

BILLY  
Uh.  
(turns towards the back and  
Patrick)  
Yeah, just don't touch the hooch. You get  
caught drinking, I can get in trouble.

Patrick makes his way out of the bathroom and finds an open booth away from the young men.

CARTER  
No problem. Don't tell my dad about this,  
OK?

BILLY  
I try to avoid mentioning your brother to  
him.

CARTER  
Nonetheless, thanks.

BILLY  
Sure. Enjoy your lunch.

Carter leaves as Billy makes his way over to Patrick.

PATRICK  
What was that about?

BILLY  
(unconvincing)  
I don't know. He was asking about some  
bookstore. Like I know where the  
bookstores are in this town.  
(beat)  
So, catch that O's game last night. I  
tell ya' they're going take the division  
this year.

Patrick stares off, remaining focused on the doorway his son just vacated.

EXT. WAR MEMORIAL BENCH - DAY

CARTER is sitting on a park bench situated in viewing distance of the Vietnam War Memorial. On his lap rests a moderated-sized drawing tablet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

To his side, the remnants of his bagged lunch reside. Carter is busy sketching. On the page, there are depictions of four female faces as well as a detailed drawing of the actual monument. The four feminine visages all vary in facial shape and size, yet they seem to have something strangely familiar linking them together.

OSCAR (O.C.)

You really have a talent there.

CARTER

(distracted)

Huh?

Carter turns around to see OSCAR, the old man in the yellow baseball cap. Upon closer inspection, the hat reads "V.F.W.", acknowledging Oscar as a Veteran of Foreign Wars. Oscar sits down next to Carter.

OSCAR

I said that you have real talent there.

CARTER

Thanks.

OSCAR

I'm Oscar.

Oscar extends his arm in offer of a handshake.

CARTER

Carter, Carter Malick.

Carter shakes his hand and offers a warm smile.

OSCAR

You're Pat's youngest.

CARTER

That I am. You know my dad?

OSCAR

I've been volunteering here for a few years now. You get to know pretty much all the regulars; workers and visitors.

CARTER

Really? What do you do as a volunteer?

OSCAR

Well, I mainly help with all the etchings, especially the high ones.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

Etchings?

OSCAR

If you run some charcoal over the paper we have, while holding it against the wall, you're left with an impression of a name or names.

CARTER

I get it. You do this every day?

OSCAR

Only three or four days a week. I might still have my youthful looks, but I'm not as spry as I used to be.

Carter chuckles quietly to himself.

CARTER

I hear there's a lot of that going around.

OSCAR

(smiling)

Old age isn't something you catch like a cold.

(beat)

Let me take a gander at what you've drawn.

Carter hands the old man his sketch book opened to his current page.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I might not be as quick as I used to be, son. The pictures you drew of these girls.

(stops to indicate the four female faces)

Are they the same girl?

CARTER

What?

OSCAR

Well, their faces are all different I know. Different shapes, sizes, hair, what have you. Their eyes though are all the same.

CARTER

Maybe it's the way I draw...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

OSCAR  
(interrupting)  
How long have you been doing this?  
Drawing, I mean.

CARTER  
Most of my life.

OSCAR  
How often have you actually drawn the  
same eye? Since you got good enough to  
make what you create real to others, when  
have you drawn the exact same eye?

CARTER  
I guess I haven't. I never really...

OSCAR  
(interrupting again)  
It's like finding two people with the  
exact same eyes. It just doesn't happen.

CARTER  
What about when someone goes, "Oh, he has  
his mother's eyes."

OSCAR  
(rapid fire)  
That's just something people say so they  
don't have to go "Oh, you've got your  
dad's buck teeth" or "your mom's huge  
nose." It is just the polite thing to  
say. Doesn't really make it so.

The pair stop and examine the sketch book for a moment.

CARTER  
What does it mean though?

OSCAR  
I don't know. You drew it.  
(beat)  
They say the eyes are the windows to the  
soul. Maybe you don't know what she looks  
like yet, but you've seen her soul.  
Sometimes that's harder to do.

Carter is astonished at this conclusion. He begins to express  
an attempt to comprehend this new information as Oscar gets  
up to leave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
Well, I should get back to my grind. Tell  
your dad I said "Hi."

CARTER  
(still astonished)  
Yeah.

Oscar stops and turns back to the young man.

OSCAR  
And when you see her, tell her I said  
"Hi" as well.

Carter smiles broadly as the astonishment washes away from  
his face.

CARTER  
You can count on that.

Freddie pulls his pick-up truck behind Carter and leans  
heavily on the horn.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
(mumbling)  
Looks like the grind is calling my name  
too.

Carter begins to collect his belonging.

INT. WORK TRUCK - DAY

CARTER settles into the passenger side as FREDDIE puts the  
car in gear and drive the car away. In Freddie's lap, he  
holds the largest jelly donut Carter has ever seen.

CARTER  
You know, you shouldn't honk here.

FREDDIE  
(unclear)  
Honking? How else was I supposed to get  
your attention?

CARTER  
Could have walked over there to where I  
was.

FREDDIE  
(sarcastic)  
Yeah, right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

(defiant)

This is a war memorial. People come here for a hundred different reasons I can not begin to fathom. But I can guarantee none of them came here to hear some lazy bitch lean on his horn because he got tired walking twenty feet to fetch a damn donut.

Freddie just sits in amazement as his control of the working relationship is ripped away.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Now, let's get going, we have work to do. Enough of this "give the new guy a hard time" crap. We're each going to do our fair share.

FREDDIE

But...

CARTER

(interrupting)

Just drive before I make you do all of it.

FREDDIE

(weakly)

OK.

Freddie takes a small bite of his donut as Carter leans back with a knowing smile on his face.

EXT. O'FLANNAGAN'S PUB &amp; TAVERN - NIGHT

BILLY MERCER is sitting on a bar stool outside a typical blue-collar, Irish drinkery. Billy is deeply immersed in his role as a bouncer. He is wearing a jacket which protects him from the cool spring night while accentuating his massive frame. CARTER enters the scene wearing a pair of khakis, a grey T-shirt, and the trusty blue blazer.

BILLY

Good evening, Mr. Malick.

CARTER

Any sign of my brother?

BILLY

Not yet, but I expect him to show up any minute now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

OK, I guess I'll just wait inside.

BILLY

That's alright. I already let the bartender know the story.

CARTER

Thanks.

BILLY

Hey, I heard you finally lashed into Freddie today. Good for you.

CARTER

No biggie.

BILLY

I know. Just remember it wasn't all him.

CARTER

I knew that.

BILLY

So, after a couple days, there will be no need to give Freddie a hard time. He's a lazy slob, but he's still a good guy.

CARTER

You got it and, again Bill, thanks.

BILLY

(smiling)

No biggie.

Carter enters the bar.

INT. O'FLANNAGAN'S PUB & TAVERN - NIGHT

The interior of O'Flannagan's directly reflects its exterior. This is a typical local Irish bar. One long, narrow room holds a row of booths lining the left wall and one enormous bar encompassing the right. The wooden floor is definitely not the cleanest; many a drink has been spilt by drunken hand. The booths are all a little worn and many have simplistic carvings and permanent marker messages adorning them. The bar is inhabited by approximately a dozen VARIOUS CUSTOMERS; all intently focused on their drinks. CARTER is seated at the bar nursing a club soda as he examines the bar's variety of coasters. Behind the bar, LISA is busy dispensing alcohol. She is a perky, little blonde wearing a tight pair of jeans, an even tighter blouse, and a wonderbra that is doing wonders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LISA

Don't worry. He always ends up here at some point or another.

CARTER

Thanks.

(beat)

Lisa, can I ask you something?

LISA

Sure.

Carter flips the coaster he has been examining so intently in order to show the bar's moniker "O'FLANNAGAN'S PUB & TAVERN."

CARTER

Isn't it sort of redundant to call this place a pub and a tavern? Wouldn't just one moniker suffice?

Before Lisa can utter a response, a booming voice announces a new presence in the bar.

FORD (O.S.)

Would you look at my boy Jimmy? He gone went and grown up on me.

Carter turns around and sees his brother, FORD, standing in the bar's entrance with ALICIA, a severely bleached blonde, attached to his arm. Ford, a Caucasian male in his mid-twenties, looks as if he awoke that morning and tried to combine the looks of the Rat Pack and an Eighties Hair Band. He has long, voluminous brown hair with faint hints of aged, blonde highlights. He is wearing an extremely shiny, gray sharkskin suit, which not only looks out of place in this bar but ill-suited for Ford as well. His traveling companion is dressed in a black, stretch outfit that is so short and tight that her walking is impeded. She is limited to short, rapid steps.

CARTER

(sarcastic)

Geez Gerry, I'm just here to shop. I don't think I'm ready to actually buy a car yet?

FORD

Shut up, you little shit, and give your brother a hug.

The two brothers quickly embrace and release. Ford smiles broadly and addresses the rest of the bar's patrons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FORD (CONT'D)

What? You never see two guys hug before?

The customers at O's really do not seem to care about the reunion between the two brothers and remain focused on their individual alcoholic beverages. Ford's female friend finally catches up to him and makes her presence known by an over-emphasized brush of her platinum hair from her heavily made-up face.

FORD (CONT'D)

Andrea, this here is my brother, Carter.

ALICIA

(confused)

I thought you said his name was Jimmy.

(beat)

And my name is Alicia.

FORD

Yeah, right. Listen, why don't you go powder you nose and I'll explain these trivial details when you get back?

ALICIA

OK. Can you get me a drink? Something with cherries in it?

FORD

(inattentive)

Sure, whatever you want.

Alicia exits towards the rear of the bar.

FORD (CONT'D)

So, what brings you out on a school night, college boy?

CARTER

Oh, I heard my brother had become a pimp and I had to see it for my own eyes.

FORD

(faux jive accent)

Hey, I don't pimp no bitches.

CARTER

I was making a crack about your suit there, cool guy. Does Joey Bishop know you raided his closet?

FORD

Who's Joey Bishop?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARTER

I knew that reference was too obscure for you. I should have went with Dino.

FORD

Dino? From the Flintstones?

Carter is visibly exasperated at his brother's cluelessness.

CARTER

How about we keep it simple, Big Brother. What's the story with the suit?

FORD

I went to a wake. I had to borrow the suit from a client of mine.

CARTER

I was unaware sharkskin was in with the fashionable junkie crowd this spring. I thought it was a return to light cottons.

FORD

Did you only come here to make smart remarks?

CARTER

Well, you and your date have been monopolizing all the dumb ones. What's up with her?

FORD

Met her at the wake. She used to date Jackie, you know, from the band.

CARTER

Only you could pick up a girl at a wake.

FORD

Hey, it was an Irish wake, that's more like a party.

CARTER

Like the old joke, "What's the difference between an Irish wedding and an Irish wake?"

CARTER AND FORD

(simultaneously)

One less drunk.

Hearing the punchline of the joke, one of the more intoxicated customers adds his personal addition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DRUNKARD

And one more virgin.  
(mumbling)  
The wedding that is.

CARTER

Does that make sense?

FORD

I have no idea but I don't think he dates  
too many Irish girls.

The Drunkard starts to stand up to say something else, but the sudden movement makes him realize his high level of intoxication. He immediately returns to his seat and stifles back a thick belch.

CARTER

Who's wake was it?

Ford is trying to get Lisa's attention.

FORD

Jackie from the band. Hey, what's it take  
to get served in this dive?

CARTER

Christ, I remember Jackie coming over to  
the house all those nights. How did he  
die?

FORD

(to Lisa)  
Two Guinness Stouts.  
(to Carter)

I don't know. He was drunk or high or  
both. Wrapped his car around a tree.

CARTER

And you end up picking up his girlfriend  
at his wake. True friend there, Gerry.

FORD

She asked me here. Something about not  
wanting to be alone.

Lisa brings the two beers over to Ford.

FORD (CONT'D)

Even if I did "pick her up" as you say,  
you of all people shouldn't be passing  
judgment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

CARTER

What?

FORD

I might be just a drug-dealing wannabe musician, but even I know that colleges aren't out yet.

CARTER

Well, it's a long story.

FORD

Don't worry, I already heard it.

CARTER

How?

FORD

Just because I don't show up for family functions, doesn't mean I don't keep tabs on how our family functions.

(beat)

Now, have a beer with your older brother.

CARTER

I can't.

FORD

Why? You driving? You live two blocks away.

CARTER

No, I promised Billy. I don't want to get him in trouble.

FORD

Fuck Billy Mercer. I'm sick of him. Dad would trade either one of us for him in a heartbeat.

CARTER

How could he trade you, Ford?

FORD

What?

CARTER

You two don't even speak. You don't have any relationship to trade.

FORD

Just because I don't want to deal with him doesn't mean he's not my father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

CARTER

God, do you even know what you want?

FORD

(on cue)

Sex, drugs, and rock'n'roll, little brother.

On that note, Alicia returns from her epic trip to the bathroom. She quickly gives Ford a peck on the cheek, leaving a bright red imprint of her lips.

ALICIA

Honey, where's my drink?

FORD

Barkeep, can you throw some cherries in this Guinness for me?

Alicia's face issues a look of disgust.

INT. MALICK FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

PATRICK is seated in the large "Lazy Boy" recliner. The room is extremely dark except for Patrick's immediate area illuminated by the single lamp behind the chair and some light coming from the far room. Patrick, reading a book situated on his lap, is dressed in conservative pajamas, an equally conservative yet clashing robe and reading glasses. CARTER, still attired in his "bar" clothes, enters from the far room and starts to make his way upstairs. He stops when he notices his father's presence.

CARTER

Dad, up kinda late?

Patrick takes off his reading glasses and turns his attention to his son.

PATRICK

Couldn't sleep.

(beat)

How's your brother?

Carter is taken back by his father's inquiry.

CARTER

What? I...

(beat)

He doesn't seem to have changed much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK

That's what I thought. I wanted to tell you that no matter what I think of him, Ford is still your brother. When you want to see him, you don't have to keep it a secret from me.

CARTER

OK.

PATRICK

We don't need any more secrets in this family.

(beat)

And don't think I haven't noticed any positive steps you've taken recently. I just don't feel the need to jinx anything.

Carter chuckles slightly.

CARTER

Thanks, Dad. Good night.

Carter starts to head upstairs when something dawns on him.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Did you hear that Ford's buddy, Jackie, died?

PATRICK

Saw it in the paper.

CARTER

Makes me worry about Ford.

PATRICK

I know. Good night, Carter.

Carter nods his head slightly and continues on his way. Patrick puts his reading glasses back on and returns to his book.

EXT. WAR MEMORIAL BENCH - DAY

CARTER, dressed in his work attire, is sitting on the park bench with the Vietnam War Memorial situated in front of him. To his side, the remnants of another bagged lunch reside. He is examining the crowd of mourners as he pretends to read a book of Fitzgerald short stories.

OSCAR (O.S.)

Find her yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

And who am I looking for again?

OSCAR enters and takes a seat next to Carter on the bench.

OSCAR

The girl in your drawings, of course.

CARTER

Oh. No, I'm still keeping my eye out for that one.

OSCAR

I could tell. You really should be paying more attention to your book.

CARTER

You ever read anything by F. Scott Fitzgerald?

OSCAR

You get to be my age and you get to read a little of everything. Which story are you reading?

CARTER

Well, in between the glances at the ladies, I was reading "Babylon Revisited." Lately, I seem to relate to the subject matter.

OSCAR

Why? Some tragic mistake keep catching up to you?

CARTER

Maybe.

OSCAR

You're too young to have done anything too dire.

CARTER

I'd like to think that if I was older I would have known better and done the right thing.

OSCAR

Being older doesn't always mean you've learned right and wrong.

(beat)

Read the story, "Mayday".

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2) OSCAR (CONT'D)

Fitzgerald shows how random people can affect one another and bring things to their proper fruition.

CARTER  
Fruition? You go to college, Oscar?

OSCAR  
For a while. Never was able to graduate.  
Always a regret of mine.

Carter nods solemnly, completely understanding the man's dejection. He turns and stares out at the memorial. His eyes go wide.

THE ZIP-LOCKED JOURNAL

A composition book placed in a zip-lock bag rests up against a black granite wall etched with various names.

BACK TO SCENE

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
I tell you Carter, never regret anything in life.

CARTER  
Words to live by.

Carter quickly leaps to his feet and starts off towards the Memorial.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
(yelling back at Oscar)  
Watch my stuff for a minute?

OSCAR  
(slightly amused)  
Sure.  
(beat)  
I should start writing this stuff down.  
Write me one of those self-help books.

Oscar laughs slightly at his own joke.

EXT. VIETNAM VETERANS' MEMORIAL - DAY

CARTER is making his way through the crowd of TOURISTS and MOURNERS. His haste and impatience cause distraction among several members of the crowd. As he bolts in between various bystanders, his eyes are vividly darting left to right. Suddenly, something catches his eye and he instantly darts in that direction.

EXT. KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL - MOMENTS LATER

The Korean War Memorial stands opposite the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. Another "walk-through" memorial, this one is comprised of various marble statues of American soldiers crossing an expanse of interchanging strips of gray granite block and pine bushes. Acting as a backdrop, a granite wall rests with faint pictorial depictions of deceased American soldiers adorning it. A slim, attractive Asian woman, GRACE, dressed in a dark business suit and white blouse with a black leather bag adorning her shoulder, is quickly making her way through the crowd. A hand gently taps her on the shoulder, causing a halt in her progress. The hand belongs to CARTER.

CARTER

Pardon me, Miss.

GRACE

(slightly startled)

Yes?

CARTER

This might sound weird, like I'm hitting on you or that I'm some type of freak. But trust me, I'm just a nice, regular guy who has a nagging notion that he knows you from somewhere.

GRACE

(hesitant)

Well, that's real nice, but right now I'm a beleaguered, irregular girl who has a certain concept about how late she is.

So,

(beat)

yeah.

She turns to walk away, but stops. She slowly turns back towards Carter.

GRACE (CONT'D)

And yes, that did sound somewhat weird and it definitely did sound like you were hitting on me.

CARTER

(smirks)

I thought I was making my way up to hitting on. Was I that transparent?

Grace nods slightly as she tries to hide a smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER (CONT'D)

Well, my horoscope did say today was a good time to gamble on love.

GRACE

Really? Mine said I would meet a stranger with something important to tell me.

CARTER

You're a Leo? My mother is one, too.

Grace reaches into her leather bag and retrieves a pen and a pad.

GRACE

Well, Mr. Nice Regular Guy with a Leo for a Mom, write down your name and number on this.

Grace hands the pen and pad to Carter.

GRACE (CONT'D)

There's no way I'm giving my number to a complete stranger.

Carter quickly scribbles down his information.

CARTER

Just make sure you ask for Carter. It's a crazy house.

GRACE

I can relate to that.

CARTER

And which name should I be expecting?

GRACE

Grace.

Carter smiles broadly. He has found the one he was looking for.

EXT. WAR MEMORIAL BENCH - MOMENTS LATER

OSCAR is seated at the bench keeping a watchful eye over Carter's belongings. CARTER enters and makes his way over to the bench. There is a definite skip in his step as he tries in vain to contain his elation.

OSCAR

I would say that you found what you were looking for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carter arrives at the bench and begins to gather his things.

CARTER  
I think I just might have.

OSCAR  
Didn't think she'd be Oriental, huh?

Carter stops his gathering to give Oscar a quizzical look.

CARTER  
How did you know?

OSCAR  
I swear that's what I love about young people. I've lived three, maybe four times as long as you and here you are thinking me unaware. What if I don't know about the new Nintendo game or Beastie Boys tune, I must be some senile old man?

Carter smiles gamely as he sees his own discriminatory thoughts.

OSCAR (CONT'D)  
If my knowledge and experience grants me a better perspective on the situation, don't question it or act surprised. Just accept it and listen. You just might learn something.

CARTER  
OK.

Oscar stands up in quite the regal manner and the pair start to walk away together.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
So, you know who the Beastie Boys are?

OSCAR  
I remember when they were just a punk band.

CARTER  
What about video games?

OSCAR  
They rot your brain. Stick to the books. They're more entertaining.

The pair continue their stroll in silence.

## EXT. FORD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ford's apartment building resides atop a string of typical, urban storefronts. With the exception of some colorful graffiti and some gaudy SALE signs, it is a drab and gray neighborhood; definitely in a run down portion of Washington, D.C.

Dressed in a leather jacket, T-shirt and torn jeans, FORD exits the building and is immediately compelled to put on his sunglasses. The sun is just not a friend to his hangover. He quickly struts off to pursue the business of his day.

Across the street, PATRICK stands behind a pair of parked cars; watching his eldest son live a life unknown to him and he wonders.

## INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is brightly lit, fighting off the darkness seen outside the large bay window. The telephone is ringing throughout the house. CATHERINE enters the kitchen and picks the phone up from its wall location and answers.

CATHERINE

Yes, hello.

(beat)

Sure, one minute.

Catherine strolls happily over to the doorway and calls out to her son.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

(loud)

Carter. Telephone.

(beat)

It's a girl.

CARTER suddenly appears in the doorway and gives his mother a look of scepticism.

## INT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

CARTER and GRACE are slowly walking down an empty aisle in a rustic bookstore. Carter is dressed in his usual T-shirt and blazer combo, while Grace is dressed to party. Her black pants seem painted on, a baby tee allows glimpses of a tight mid-section, and a stylish jacket completes the outfit. They are surrounded by over-crowded bookshelves literally teeming with literary tomes. The environment invokes a feeling of claustrophobia. The pair appear trapped; separated from the outside world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER  
(apologetic)  
I'm really sorry. It seemed like a cool club.

GRACE  
Hey, it's not your fault. I was wrong to assume you were my age.

CARTER  
Is that a bad thing? Me not being your age?

GRACE  
I normally wait until the end of the date before I weigh the pros and cons.

CARTER  
So, it's a con?

Grace takes his arm and intertwines it with her own.

GRACE  
Relax. So far you seem to be a worthy of a second date.

CARTER  
Really?

GRACE  
As a rule, I don't sleep with men on the first date. But I constantly crave sex. So, do the math.

CARTER  
Really?

GRACE  
Kidding. Listen, you keep up the endearing, romantic side, I can guarantee you a second date. As long as you call me and ask me out.

CARTER  
Endearing?

GRACE  
Most guys hate being labeled as nice.

Carter produces an overdramatic wince on cue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRACE (CONT'D)

(acknowledging his grimace)  
See. Guys believe that girls want the  
jerk. That the nice men get overlooked.

CARTER

Don't they?

GRACE

By some women, yes. The same way most  
nice girls get overlooked by guys that  
think they are anti-vixens in the bed. I,  
for one, like nice guys.

CARTER

Anti-vixen?

GRACE

Frigid.

CARTER

Ah...

GRACE

So, Carter, are you what I'm looking for?

CARTER

A vixen?

GRACE

(smiling)

No. Are you a nice guy?

Carter contemplates the question and remembers.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

CARTER and TENNY stand side-by-side, drinks firmly in hand, amid a sea of REVELERS in Anderson House, one of their college's student residences. The room they all inhabit appears elegant and traditional in design. Intricate oak moulding and antique light fixtures adorn the walls. This is a building that has housed thousands of knowledge-seeking students in its tenure. Tonight though, the only knowledge being sought is of the carnal variety. A BAND is playing at an incredibly high decibel level. Carter and Tenny are required to shout in order to be heard.

TENNY

See your problem is that you're a nice  
guy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

What's wrong with that? I thought girls like nice guys.

TENNY

Sure, when it comes to marital vows and shit. When they look for a husband, they want sincerity and that sensitive, romantic nonsense.

CARTER

So, what's your point?

TENNY

What girl wants to meet Mr. Right at a college dorm party? None. They want Mr. Mysterious or Mr. Short-Term Adventure. You know the dark, dangerous guy that in all probability is a stallion in the sack.

Tenny takes a large gulp from his drink. Carter meekly follows his lead.

TENNY (CONT'D)

That way when she finally meets that perfect guy at, say, the grocery store or some art lecture, she'll be ready to settle down. She will have had her adventure.

CARTER

What am I supposed to do, then? Just spend my days hanging out at super-markets.

TENNY

No. First off, you can finish that drink you've been milking for the last hour. Second, be that dangerous guy. At least for tonight and see what happens.

Carter raises his drink and spends an extended amount of time consuming it. It is evident he is not a power drinker. When he finally finishes it off, he brings the glass down and is surprised to see MONICA, the girl he's been pining for, standing next to him. Monica is an attractive girl with short, stylish hair, flawless skin and an innocent smile which could stop traffic. She is dressed in an outfit intended to attract. Her blouse is opened to a point where she is hiding as much as she reveals. A tight, plaid mini-skirt rests on top of two well-toned legs as a clear drink rests in her right hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MONICA

Whoa there, tiger. No need for us to be carrying you home tonight. Is there?

Carter is taken back by her presence and momentarily speechless. Tenny jumps right in to pick up the slack.

TENNY

Now, Monica, don't go fretting over our young Mr. Malick. You can only imagine the size of his tolerance.

MONICA

(coyly)

Really now? Well, if anybody would know, it would be his roommate.

TENNY

Yep, big as a baby's arm.

Monica and Tenny chuckle proudly at their little innuendo. Carter joins in out of habit, but he hasn't really been aware of the actual conversation. He is still in awe of Monica's mere presence.

TENNY (CONT'D)

Well, it's my turn to go to the bar. And what would the young lady be drinking this evening?

MONICA

I do believe it is a gin-based concoction.

TENNY

Three gin and tonics coming right up.

Tenny exits and the young couple enter into an awkward silence. As a reflex action to the silence, they each attempt to take a sip of their drinks. Simultaneously, both realize that their cups are empty. Noticing the comic aspect of their actions, they share a nervous laugh.

CARTER

This really can't be that complicated.

MONICA

You're right. We talk every day.

CARTER

And just because we're in a social setting...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONICA  
...it shouldn't be any different.

CARTER  
Right.

Another awkward silence.

MONICA  
I'm really surprised you came tonight.

CARTER  
Yeah, but were you pleasantly surprised?

Monica suddenly sports the warmest smile Carter has ever seen.

MONICA  
Of course.

The look of elation on Carter's face says it all.

INT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

GRACE and CARTER stand facing one another amid the book-stacks, speechless. Carter's expression stresses his current state of intense reflection, Grace's emphasizes her concern and speculation.

GRACE  
Are you alright?

Carter rouses from his trance-like state.

CARTER  
Sorry, something you said...  
(beat)  
Well, it made me recall something.

GRACE  
I hope it was a good memory, because we're on a date here, mister. Good times need to be had by all.

Carter just smiles, but his eyes allude to the power his memories currently have over him.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE BAR - NIGHT

A large throng of COLLEGIATE ALCOHOL SEEKERS surround an actual, fully-functional bar and one besieged BARTENDER. Amid the crowd of drinkers, TENNY waits impatiently for his opportunity to be served.

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CONTINUED:

His visible disgust intensifies until he takes it upon himself to leap over the bar to fetch the drinks himself. The bartender's response displays his relief, rather than shock or surprise.

TENNY  
Want some help?

BARTENDER  
What do you think?

TENNY  
A "thank you" would have sufficed.

Tenny begins to mix a couple of gin and tonics. After finishing, he places them beneath the bar, out of sight. He slyly reaches into his back pocket and pulls out the plastic bag of blue pills. He takes out two pills and breaks each over the drinks. He stirs them quickly and, then, returns them to the bar top. He lifts his eyes from the drinks to see FARMER TED, an extremely large, young man dressed in a flannel shirt and overalls.

TENNY (CONT'D)  
Yo, Farmer Ted. What do you want to drink?

FARMER TED  
Four beers.

Tenny points off to his right.

TENNY  
See those two standing by the dance floor?

FARMER TED  
The two blondes?

TENNY  
No, the guy and the girl. Bring them these drinks and I'll get you those beers. Tell them I'll be tending bar for a while.

FARMER TED  
No problem.

Farmer Ted picks up the drinks and walks away. Tenny grants himself a self-congratulatory smile. He sees a GORGEOUS DRINKER heading up the throng of revelers and directs his undivided attention directly at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TENNY

And what can I do you for, fair lady?

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - NIGHT

On the edge of a crowded dance floor, MONICA and CARTER are conversing in a nice, slow manner, despite the resonant noise coming from the BAND.

CARTER

I can not believe you like McInerney.  
He's such a hack.

MONICA

Have you ever read "Brightness Falls"?  
That's, like, my favorite book.

FARMER TED enters before Carter can issue a retort. Farmer Ted just stands there between the two of them, holding the drinks in his massive hands. Carter and Monica exchange quizzical looks; trying to decipher the reason for their newfound companion.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Hey there.

FARMER TED

These are for you.

CARTER

Thanks.

Carter takes the two drinks from Ted and hands one to Monica; keeping the other for himself.

FARMER TED

Your friend says he's going to be tending  
bar.

CARTER

OK.

Farmer Ted just nods once, then slowly walks away. The pair chuckle as the large man exits.

MONICA

(sarcastic)

I was wrong. I thought you were the  
nicest guy I ever met. Now I know, you  
are only the second nicest.

Monica smiles and takes a large sip from her beverage.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

The front entrance of the bookstore is situated amid a row of stores on a busy D.C. street. Various SHOPPERS and WALKERS are making their way to and fro, enjoying the warm spring night.

CARTER exits the store and holds the front door open for GRACE as the pair exit the interior of the store. Amid the maddening crowd, the couple casually make their way up the street.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - NIGHT

GRACE and CARTER stroll casually down the city sidewalk; surrounded by various WALKERS. The pair divide their attention between themselves and the objects in the store window displays.

GRACE

You avoided my question.

CARTER

Just trying to fulfill my male duty and avoid all sincere inquiries.

(beat)

Kidding. Which question did I avoid?

GRACE

If you were a nice guy?

Carter takes a moment before he responds.

CARTER

(serious)

I guess it depends on who you ask.

Grace expresses a quizzical glance and almost launches into a query into his meaning when Carter interrupts.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Wait, that didn't come out right.

(beat)

I guess what I mean is, that...

(beat)

Well, even the nicest guys in the world must have one or two people who must think they are otherwise.

GRACE

(hesitant)

I guess.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

Sorry, my need for utter honesty got the best of me. All these tests, I feel like I'm up against an invisible scorecard here.

GRACE

Well, I can't provide the so-called "date" without the insistent emotional pressure related to dating.

CARTER

Well, at the very least, women could supply the male species with a rulebook of sorts. You girls have had one forever.

GRACE

Eve got one with the apple. Just don't pretend men don't play the same games though.

CARTER

What?

GRACE

The car door test?

Carter only stares at her unknowingly.

GRACE (CONT'D)

You know, the car door test.

(beat)

Ok, you're on a date and you're driving...

CARTER

(interrupting)

Hey, I offered to drive...

GRACE

(returning the interruption)

AND you and your date are making your way back to your car after a lovely dinner. You, being the consummate gentleman, open the passenger door for your nubile companion.

CARTER

(smiling)

Nubile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRACE

Don't paint too vivid a picture.

(beat)

Now, she settles into her seat. You firmly, but cautiously shut her door, paying strict attention to her hemline and limbs. Now, what would you think of this lovely lady with whom you just spent a wonderful evening, if you reach the driver side door and find it still locked?

CARTER

Utter bitch.

Carter and Grace stop walking as they reach Grace's car.

GRACE

See, guys have theirs games. Simplistic and predictable, but equally petty.

CARTER

I fear the maiden has proven herself wiser than the handsome suitor once again.

GRACE

(direct)

So, ever sleep with someone on the first date?

Carter's expression communicates an unique combination of pleasant surprise and hidden guilt. He is intrigued with Grace's whimsy and forwardness, yet the thought of intimacy raises torn feelings.

CARTER

(stammers)

Ah, no-o.

GRACE

Good. That was a test. You passed and now you know that no matter how cute and charming you are, I am not sleeping with you on the first date.

Carter takes it all in and suddenly realizes this girl has got his number. He smiles as he realizes he likes her even more for it.

INT. MALICK FAMILY LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

PATRICK is seated in the large Lazy-boy recliner, awaiting the return of his son. On his lap, rests a worn photo album. Patrick flips through the pages, viewing pictures of his family during more pleasant times. His face becomes less stern and a sense of sadness seems to pierce his stoic visage.

The sound of a door closing resonates into the dimly lit room. Patrick closes the album and places it behind his chair.

CARTER enters the room, fresh from his romantic evening.

CARTER

Up kinda late there, son. You do know it's a school night?

PATRICK

(hesitant)  
Is it late?

CARTER

Almost one. Just four short hours until labor calls.

PATRICK

Yeah.

CARTER

Well, I'm going to bed.

PATRICK

Your mom told me you had a date.

CARTER

Yeah. Went pretty good.

PATRICK

Good, good.  
(beat)  
Uh, Carter. I don't know how to...

CARTER

(interrupting)  
Nothing happened, Dad. The cops won't be here looking for me tomorrow.

Patrick stands up from the chair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK

(angered)

Hey, don't get short with me. I'm not the one...

CARTER

(interrupting again)

No, you weren't the one. You didn't do anything wrong, Dad. I did. I'm the bad son, I'm the bad person. So, just keep on making sure I don't forget that.

PATRICK

How is this my fault?

CARTER

Why don't you tell me? I mean if only one son became a criminal, well, maybe then you wouldn't be a bad parent.

Only Patrick's eyes display his rage by the comment.

PATRICK

(quietly)

Go to bed, Carter. Just go to bed.

Carter stares at his father for a moment and then turns to leave. He starts up the stairs and Patrick returns to his recliner.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

CATHERINE is sitting at the kitchen counter dressed in her usual "no frills" sweat-suit, sipping her morning coffee. Her face lacks any sign of joy or elation.

CARTER enters, visibly groggy. He is dressed in his work clothes.

CARTER

Good morning.

CATHERINE

(attempts happiness)

Morning, sweetie. Want some breakfast?

CARTER

Coffee's fine. Dad still sleeping?

Carter grabs himself a coffee cup and pours some coffee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

He had some trouble sleeping, so he went in early to get some paperwork out of the way.

CARTER

(disbelieving)

OK. How do I...

CATHERINE

(interrupting)

He asked me to take you down there.

Carter does not issue a verbal response, but the new-found wrinkles in his brow hint at some definitive hypothesis on the matter. He heads to the fridge to fetch some milk for his caffinated breakfast.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Carter, what's your dad like at work?

CARTER

Dad, well, he's Dad. You know, the big toughie. Why?

CATHERINE

I just worry about him. Wouldn't be the doting wife if I didn't?

(beat)

Your dad needs some part of his life to make him happy. I thought work was that part.

CARTER

Well, apart from fulfilling in some roundabout way his need to be the constant patriotic American, I don't see him taking great pleasure in his job. Maybe my being there doesn't allow him to relax and enjoy it?

CATHERINE

Patriotic American?

CARTER

Come on, Mom. He named all his kids after presidents. He votes in every election. Bipartisan, mind you. He served in the army and he cleans national monuments for a living. I'm surprised no one calls him Uncle Sam or something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHERINE

I never thought of your dad as patriotic though. I always saw him more as a dreamer.

CARTER

Dreamer? Come on, blue collar boy's feet are latched to the ground so hard it would take a, take a.. Well, it would take something strong to move him.

CATHERINE

(sarcastic)

Why don't you have a second cup there? I think you need it.

CARTER

Damn straight, I do.

Carter proceeds to get another cup of coffee.

CATHERINE

Your dad, by the way, joined the army more to see the world than to defend democracy.

CARTER

Really?

CATHERINE

Instead, all he saw was Alaska.

CARTER

In Alaska's defense, it is part of the world.

CATHERINE

Funny. Now, let's get you to work.

Carter attempts to finish his coffee in one gigantic swig.

EXT. WAR MEMORIAL BENCH - DAY

OSCAR and CARTER, both dressed in their working outfits, are sitting on their bench as Carter is devouring his bagged lunch. Various MEMORIAL VISITORS are making their way around the surroundings.

CARTER

(mouth full of food)

So, you haven't seen him all day?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

OSCAR

No, and remember chew, then speak.

Carter swallows his food.

CARTER

He told my mom he was going in early to work, but no one has seen him.

TENNY (O.S.)

(shouting)

Hey, Dr. Kimble.

Oscar and Carter turn towards the booming voice to see TENNY, dressed in his finest preppy attire, wildly waving his arm as he makes his way over to the odd couple.

Carter gets up and places the remaining portion of his lunch on his bench.

CARTER

Well, if it isn't 'mon frere'?

The two exchange an exaggerated handshake.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Who's Dr. Kimble?

TENNY

Sorry, just trying to seem witty by referencing a staple of 60s television.

OSCAR

The Fugitive.

CARTER

Right, Harrison Ford movie. I never saw it. Any way, Oscar, I'd like you to meet the Pancho Villa to my Man of La Mancha, Tennyson Ezekiel Stavendish.

OSCAR

(extending his hand)

Pleased to meet you, Tennyson.

TENNY

Actually, I go by Tenny. My parents are pretentious, not me.

(beat)

Don Quixote references? You still tilting at windmills, Mister Malick?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

Hey, even the maniacal put their pants on one leg at a time.

OSCAR

They're just not as sure where the fly will end up.

Tenny and Carter share a quizzical look.

INT. O'FLANNAGAN'S PUB & TAVERN - DAY

TENNY and CARTER are sitting at a booth in the near-empty bar, nursing two soda pops. The only other inhabitants are an OLD IRISH DRUNKARD and a beleaguered MALE BARTENDER wearing a heavy Irish knit sweater.

TENNY

(whispering)

I don't understand. We're in the quintessential Irish drinking hole. They're not carding. My heart and liver are simultaneously screaming out for a frosty beverage. So, why are we sticking with cokes?

CARTER

You said you wanted a place to talk, not a place to drink.

TENNY

Heaven forbid we combine the two.

CARTER

(frustrated)

Hey, if you want to drink, we can go across the street to the Japanese place. They've got Karaoke and my Dad is NOT friends with the owner.

TENNY

Oh, afraid of the wrath of Papa Malick.

CARTER

Just want him to become less privy to my illegal activities.

TENNY

Actually, that's what I wanted to talk to you about.

CARTER

My father?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENNY

No, your illegal activities.

CARTER

I knew it would take something serious to make you go south of Manhattan.

TENNY

Hey, I'm here for those crabcakes. Even McDonald's has them.

CARTER

Tenny, what are you here to tell me?

Tenny begins speak, but is shocked to find himself speechless.

INT. FORD'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

PATRICK walks down a drab apartment hallway. Refuse litters the faded-tile floor. Patrick approaches one of the antiquated doors. He goes to knock, but hesitates. After a moment of contemplation, he gently knocks twice on the door. Sounds of commotion emanate from behind the door. ALICIA, dressed in an over-sized terry-cloth bathrobe with her bleached hair going off in a thousand and one directions, answers the door. She doesn't say anything.

PATRICK

Is Ford Malick here?

ALICIA

Are you a cop?

PATRICK

No, I'm just looking for Ford Malick.

ALICIA

What do you want?

PATRICK

I want to speak to Ford.

ALICIA

He's not in, but what are you looking for?

Patrick realizes what she is actually asking him.

PATRICK

I should be going.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALICIA

Are you sure I can't help you with anything?

PATRICK

No.

Patrick turns around and heads down the way he came.

ALICIA

Ford will want to know who you are.

PATRICK

Tell him the police was looking for him.

Patrick exits.

INT. O'FLANNAGAN'S PUB & TAVERN - DAY

TENNY and CARTER are sitting at a booth in the near-empty bar, nursing their second round of sodas. Two OVERWEIGHT BUSINESSMEN have joined the OLD IRISH DRUNKARD and the MALE BARTENDER in their afternoon festivities. Carter and Tenny exchange several awkward looks before either of them say anything.

CARTER

How come you never told me about the drugs?

TENNY

Simple, I'm a chicken-shit.

(beat)

It took me longer than a decent human being to 'fess up. For that, I'm sorry, man.

CARTER

Do you know what I've been through?

TENNY

From you lovely working attire, I can only imagine.

CARTER

They made me leave, Tenny. They called me a..

Carter can not bring me to utter that final word.

TENNY

They were wrong. They did not know the whole story. Now, they do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TENNY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Listen, they all say it. College is a daunting experience, adapting to it is tough.

CARTER

Adapting? Tenny, stop regurgitating your parents' books.

TENNY

Listen, the point is you can go back. If you want to.

CARTER

I don't know if I can do that.

TENNY

I can understand that it might be hard and what I am about to tell you might make it too hard.

CARTER

What?

TENNY

Well, you can go back. Full ride. Start in the fall, second semester Frosh. You just need to do one thing.

CARTER

What?

TENNY

Get Monica's approval.

CARTER

How? I would have thought the school would do that before they even considered..

TENNY

(interrupting)

They did.

CARTER

What did she say?

TENNY

That you should ask her. Who knows? It may have something to do with her counseling. The point is you have to go to her.

Carter has no response.

EXT. O'FLANNAGAN'S PUB & TAVERN - DAY

TENNY and CARTER exit the bar and slowly make their way over to a parked BMW. The car appears to be brand new, without even a hint of dirt, and definitely does not fit in with its drab surroundings.

CARTER

You still have to explain the car.

TENNY

The Beemer? Well, Mom and Pop felt guilty about school forcing me into rehab, especially considering their own raging drug dependencies. So, viola, one shiny four-wheeled symbol of denial.

CARTER

And they say parents don't punish their children anymore.

(beat)

You'll be able to cope with rehab?

TENNY

Four weeks with chicks that love to party, that's easy. Coming down here, admitting the truth, that was the hard part.

CARTER

Well, I could say that I never want to see you again, but a rich friend I can guilt into servitude is something you just don't pass up.

TENNY

True.

(beat)

Listen, it may seem impossible right now, but I hope you're back at school in the fall.

CARTER

(non-committal)

I'll think it over.

Tenny opens his car door and enters the vehicle.

INT. ARCHIVAL OFFICE - DAY

CARTER enters the unorganized office with a large container of mementoes in tow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUCY, an elderly Caucasian lady with fiery red hair, sits at a cluttered desk, focusing all her attention on her lit cigarette.

CARTER

Hey...

LUCY

(interrupting)

If I get one more Ricky Ricardo impression from you, I'll use your colon for my ashtray. Got it?

CARTER

Good afternoon to you, too.

LUCY

Yeah, afternoon. Aren't you a little late there, junior?

CARTER

Friend of mine stopped by for lunch. You don't mention that I'm late, I'll forget that I caught you smoking again.

LUCY

Hey, nobody asked me if it was OK to change the smoking policy here.

CARTER

Where's your comic foil?

LUCY

She pulled her back out. Too much moving around this junk. Tell you kid, don't get old.

CARTER

You guys do need some help around here.

LUCY

Find a way to pay for another person, I'll hire one.

Carter gets an idea.

INT. LOW-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

With his back to a barren gray wall, CARTER is seated in a standard government-issued chair delivering his fevered pitch to an unseen government supervisor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

(passionate)

The question is simple. Why do we store these items in the first place? The answer however is threefold. One, it is a public relations tool. It helps present an image of the government as a caring maternal figure mourning the loss of her sons. But, does the public even know about it? No.

INT. MID-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

With his back to a minimally decorated gray wall, CARTER is seated in a slightly more plush government-issued chair continuing to deliver his fevered pitch to a second unseen government supervisor.

CARTER

(more zealous)

Secondly, these souvenirs are actual pieces of American history. They represent an important time for our country and the men who suffered the greatest sacrifice during this era. These modern-day artifacts need to be properly categorized and tallied.

INT. HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

With his back to a wood-panelled wall adorned with the usual government "handshake pictures", CARTER is seated in a plush government-issued chair finishing the delivery of his fevered pitch to a final unseen government supervisor.

CARTER

(frenzied)

Finally, the primary purpose of this whole thing, the monuments, the mementoes, everything is to show the value of the our way of life. By stressing the importance of the men who died to protect it, we, by reflection, see truly how great a thing the American Dream is.

Carter takes a moment to catch his breath.

CARTER (CONT'D)

The key thing is getting what I just said out to the public. Now, how we can we do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With that, Carter sighs, sits back and smiles confidently.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - EVENING

CARTER, CATHERINE and PATRICK are seated around the kitchen table, feasting upon an abundant dinner. Carter and Catherine are talking elatedly, as Patrick calmly focuses on his meal.

CATHERINE

So, what did he do then?

CARTER

Well, he said it would be difficult to find room in the budget to create such a position and then he went on about cutting through red tape and all that.

CATHERINE

But..?

CARTER

But he'll hire me for one month as an intern, pay me the same rate I get now, and see if he can get the powers that be to give their stamp of approval on the whole idea.

CATHERINE

(excitedly)

Carter, they're paying you to write. That's great.

CARTER

Well, they also want me to file and organize, but they want a weekly column that will be published in all the in-house papers. Plus, they'll try to get some of the local papers to pick up the stories.

CATHERINE

That's great.

PATRICK

When do you start?

CARTER

Monday.

PATRICK

Doesn't that leave us a little short-handed?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

I'm sure I'll be easy to replace. Hauling trash and picking weeds doesn't require skilled labor.

CATHERINE

I think your father is just upset about you leaving him.

The telephone rings. Carter jumps up from the table and grabs the phone from the wall.

CARTER

Hello.

(beat)

Hey..

(beat)

Can I call you back?

(beat)

Sure. Be good.

Carter hangs up the phone.

CATHERINE

Was that your friend? That girl Grace?

PATRICK

She calls every day. I think it's more than a friend, Cat.

CARTER

Yeah, it was Grace.

CATHERINE

Are things going well between you two?

CARTER

I'm taking things slow.

PATRICK

You better.

Carter just stares at Patrick for a moment. Then quickly finishes the last portion of food on his plate.

CARTER

Thanks, Mom. Dinner was great.

Carter gets up to leave.

CATHERINE

No problem, baby. I'm really happy about your job.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

Thanks.

Carter exits the kitchen. Catherine quickly turns her attention to her husband.

PATRICK

Don't yell. I know.

CATHERINE

Are you sure you know?

PATRICK

I know what I did. I.. I..

(beat)

I'm just not sure why.

CATHERINE

I just wish you knew how to keep it in check.

PATRICK

Want me to go..

CATHERINE

(interrupting)

No, I want you to talk to me.

PATRICK

But..

CATHERINE

You won't fix things with him right now.  
Try fixing things with me.

Patrick doesn't know what to say.

INT. GRACE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

GRACE is lying down on her bed, talking on her phone. She is dressed in a T-shirt and panties, ready for bed on a warm, spring night.

GRACE

I mean if Leia knew the Empire let them escape, why did they go straight to the Rebel base on Yavin 4? Why not try to mislead Vader or locate the homing device?

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CARTER is lying down on his bed, talking on his phone. Carter is still dressed in the same clothes as the prior scene.

CARTER

You, very well, could be a bigger geek  
then me.

INT. GRACE'S BEDROOM/CARTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

INTERCUT between the two sides of the phone conversation.

GRACE

Hey, you made the claim that Star Wars  
beats Trek. What am I supposed to do?  
Just sit here and look pretty?  
(beat)  
And I never hid my geek status from you.

CARTER

How could you? Its like it was tattooed  
on your forehead.

GRACE

I called you so you could woo me. I don't  
hear any woo coming my way.

CARTER

You come on so tough, but you sure can be  
one needy little lady when it suits you.

GRACE

You know what tomorrow is?

CARTER

Saturday?

GRACE

Date number four.

CARTER

I was getting around to asking you out.  
We were making our way to the romance  
portion of our phone conversation.

GRACE

Too slow again.  
(beat)  
So, are you going to give it up?

CARTER

Pardon me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

I was hoping to get some on our third date. Instead, I settled for my thumb and forefinger.

CARTER

Are we talking about sex?

GRACE

Yes.

CARTER

(mockingly)

Hey, just because I'm dating a big ho, it don't make me easy.

Silence.

CARTER (CONT'D)

That was a joke. And obviously a bad one.

GRACE

Are you a virgin?

CARTER

Let's just say that I'm out of the clubhouse but still on the front nine.

GRACE

Golf metaphors?

CARTER

More romantic than baseball analogies.

GRACE

Front nine? Now, does that refer to the number of holes you've been in or the total times your putter has been used on the green?

CARTER

The latter.

GRACE

Don't worry, I'm a pretty good golfer. I can teach you.

CARTER

That sounds like fun.

GRACE

Do you own clubs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER  
 (bewildered)  
 Clubs?  
 (beat)  
 Are we still talking about sex?

EXT. PUBLIC GOLF COURSE - DAY

GRACE is standing at the tee, eyeing up her first drive of the day as CARTER stands off to the side. A look of bewilderment remains situated on his face. The sun shines brightly on the casually-dressed pair.

CARTER  
 We're really playing golf?

GRACE  
 Yes.

CARTER  
 You do know that this confuses me?

GRACE  
 You're the one that started relating sex to golf. I just ran with it.

Grace slams her drive. The golf ball flies perfectly up the fairway.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
 Don't worry though, I'll still seduce you later.

Carter is not sure what instills him with more awe; the woman before him or her shot up the fairway.

CARTER  
 How long have you been playing golf?

GRACE  
 Are we done with your silly metaphors?

Carter nods gamely as the pair slowly walk up the fairway.

GRACE (CONT'D)  
 I've been playing since college.  
 Actually, it was about the same time that I started to enjoy sex.

CARTER  
 You lost your virginity in school? What were you? 18? 20?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

No, I was devirginized when I was 15. I just didn't start to enjoy it until college.

Grace looks at Carter's mixed expression and feels the need to elaborate.

GRACE (CONT'D)

I was starting my sophomore year. It was the first real party of the year, kegger no less. Enter one silver-tongued Senior, Andrew Stanton. He told me he liked me and got me to offer it up.

(beat)

Ten minutes later, he's back downstairs bragging how he banged an Asian girl. Not the best first time.

CARTER

Quality first sexual encounters are a rare breed.

GRACE

Yep, definitely an endangered species, hunted down for their furry pelts.

CARTER

(trying to make light)

So, you're Asian, huh?

Grace nods slightly and manages to crack a smile.

GRACE

Actually, only half. My dad was black.

Carter almost speaks, but hesitates.

GRACE (CONT'D)

Yeah, I don't see it either. Confronted my Mom one time about it. She yelled at me, said she wasn't a slut, then a bunch of Vietnamese too fast for me to understand.

CARTER

(wavering)

Did you ask your father?

GRACE

My dad died in Vietnam.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

Grace, I'm sorry. I..

Grace cuts him short.

GRACE

I'm sorry, too. From what I hear, he was a great guy.

Grace stops walking and points to a golf ball located off to the side of the fairway.

GRACE (CONT'D)

OK, slugger. There's your ball. How about you try reaching mine up there.

CARTER

Funny.

GRACE

I just want to see your putter out on the green sometime today.

Grace slaps Carter playfully on the ass.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is empty. The telephone is ringing. A sweatsuit-clad PATRICK enters the room to answer the phone.

PATRICK

Hello.

(beat)

No, he's out.

(beat)

Oh yeah, the roommate.

(beat)

No, he hasn't mention anything.

Patrick listens intently to the phone conversation.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - DAY

From outside the house, PATRICK is seen through the large kitchen window, continuing his phone conversation. He nods sharply, utters a brief comment and, then, hangs up the phone. He stands stoically as he contemplates the ramifications.

INT. GRACE'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

CARTER, still dressed in his golfing attire, sits impatiently on a large, plush sofa.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He scans the cluttered room, examining a coffee table buried in fashion magazines and legal texts. Nothing there seems to calm his uneasiness. He gets up and crosses the room towards an expansive entertainment center. Various audio and video components appear as filler among a mass of videotapes and laserdiscs. GRACE enters with her head wrapped in a thick towel and her body in a thicker robe. Carter remains fixated on the contents of the various shelves.

GRACE

I swear all you guys are the same,  
straight to the entertainment console.

(beat)

Not that I have a great deal of guys up  
here, mind you.

CARTER

You taped the Oscars.

GRACE

My geek side, yet again.

CARTER

I mean, why would you want to watch them  
a second time?

GRACE

The clothes.

CARTER

It's just painful to watch "Titanic" win  
all those awards. "Good Will Hunting" was  
robbed, especially Elliot Smith.

Carter finally turns his attention to Grace and is stunned by how sexy she looks, even with her head wrapped in cotton. Grace does not notice.

GRACE

"Good Will Hunting"? "L.A. Confidential"  
was the one robbed. They out  
"Chinatown"ed "Chinatown", which already  
was the perfect movie. Plus, Russell  
Crowe and Guy Pearce. I'm not into group  
sex, but I'll be the cream in that Oreo.

CARTER

Probably more like a Vienna Finger.

GRACE

True. Now, go shower.

CARTER

Shower?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRACE

You just walked eighteen holes. Your downstairs area probably resembles a swamp right now. Go shower or I will not go anywhere near your putter.

Carter nods slightly and lets out a sizable breath of exasperation.

INT. GRACE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The shower is running causing the cramped, cluttered room to slowly fill with steam. Various fashion and fitness magazines are stacked in one corner. The counter space is cluttered with skin, hair and facial care products. CARTER anxiously paces in the little walking area afforded to him. He finally stops and leans on the sink, facing the mirror. The steam has misted the mirror's reflection.

Carter uses the palm of his hand to wipe the mirror somewhat clean and looks sullenly at the distorted man in the reflection.

CARTER

(whispering)

Why?

Carter holds the gaze of his reflection.

INT. MONICA'S DORM ROOM - MORNING

The room is furnished like your typical female dormitory room; two beds, two desks and two dressers line the walls. The area of the walls unblocked by furniture are adorned with posters ranging from the Cure to Brad Pitt in "Legends of the Fall" to Monet. The floor is littered with the clothes Carter and Monica were wearing at the party. A sleeping CARTER is sprawled across one of the beds; naked except for a strategically placed sheet. MONICA, clad in a hockey jersey, sits on the other bed in a fetal position, legs pulled close to her chest. She rocks back and forth in a frantic manner.

MONICA

(whispering)

Why?

(louder)

Why?

(louder)

WHY?

Monica suddenly leaps to her feet, grabs a pillow and starts to pummel the sleeping Carter to consciousness. Her cries increase in volume and frenzy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONICA (CONT'D)  
 (maniac)  
 WHY? WHY? WHY?

Confused and groggy, Carter raises his arms in defense of himself. He manages to place one foot on the floor, but the other is entwined in the bedsheets. He stumbles and falls to the ground.

Monica continues her attack upon the prostrate Carter.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
 WHY? WHY?

CARTER  
 (beleaguered)  
 What? I don't understand..

Monica's pillow catches Carter square in the face, knocking him backwards.

MONICA  
 GET OUT OF HERE! GO! GET!  
 (beat)  
 JUST LEAVE!

Carter sees his clothes spread out on the floor. He makes a grab for his pants and anything else in reach.

Monica begins to use her feet as weapons, kicking Carter's legs and backside as he scrambles across the floor.

CARTER  
 Monica, just give me a..

MONICA  
 (screaming)  
 NO! NO! GO! LEAVE!

Monica hurls the pillow at Carter. She then grabs something harder, a clock radio.

Carter reaches the door and grabs the handle to open it.

The clock radio catches him right in the small of the back.

Carter, writhing in pain, pulls the door open and leaps outside to apparent safety.

He lands on his hands and knees, still naked. Slowly, he looks up to see a large group of PAJAMA CLAD FRESHMEN GIRLS staring down at him in horror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Carter blinks.

The group no longer consists of Freshmen girls. Although still dressed in young ladies' night garments, the group is now composed of PATRICK, FORD, CATHERINE, TENNY, ETHEL, LUCY, BILLY MERCER, JOE, FREDDIE, SNOOTY WOMAN, ALICIA, LISA, MAN WITH HEADPHONES, OSCAR and GRACE. They all glare at him disapprovingly.

Carter screams.

INT. GRACE'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

GRACE is sitting on her couch, using her remote control to surf through channels. Her foot is bouncing with nervous energy. She settles on a channel and tosses the remote on the coffee table.

Grace reaches down underneath the couch and pulls out a ziploc bag containing an eighth of marijuana, two rolled joints and a lighter. She takes one of the joints out of the bag and lights it up.

CARTER enters the room. He is agitated and unshowered.

CARTER

Grace, I.. I..

Carter stops. He does not know what to say.

GRACE

Carter, what's wrong?

Grace gets up and tries to do something with the lit cigarette. Carter heads toward the front door.

CARTER

Listen, I'm sorry. I thought I was ready for this. I'm not. I should.. I'm going.

GRACE

Not ready for what? Is this about having sex or making a commitment, Carter?

Carter stops and turns to Grace

CARTER

I.. I don't think I'm ready for anything right now. I just don't know.

(beat)

I just need some time to get my head straight. Can you give a day or two?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

You can have two, but after two, I expect answers.

(beat)

A lot of them.

Carter turns again towards the door, but stops. He goes to Grace and gives her a peck.

CARTER

Thanks.

Carter leaves through the front door, shutting it behind him.

GRACE

This is what I get dating a nineteen year old.

(beat)

But his ass is so cute.

Grace sits down and returns to her pot.

INT. ARCHIVAL OFFICE - DAY

The office has made a drastic improvement since its previous appearance. The front counter is devoid of any items. All the filing and shelving systems appear to be a little more organized and tidy. CARTER and LUCY sit at the two desks at the center of the room, facing each other. Lucy casually sifts through a stack of postcards and photographs, as Carter feverishly writes on a large yellow legal pad.

LUCY

Come on, just one?

Carter remains focused on his work.

CARTER

No, Lucy.

LUCY

You must have smoked before?

CARTER

No, Lucy, I never smoked before.

LUCY

I'm not talking about tobacco.

This statement gives Carter pause. Before he can fashion his retort, PATRICK enters with today's container of mementoes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER  
Dad? What happened to Freddie?

PATRICK  
Don't worry, he's working. I'm actually here for you.

CARTER  
Me?

PATRICK  
Yeah. Lucy won't mind if you take the afternoon off. Right, Lucy?

LUCY  
I could use a break from him.

CARTER  
You could use the nicotine.

LUCY  
Potato, potato.

PATRICK  
Come on, boy. We have a long drive.

Carter is utterly bewildered.

CARTER  
Drive?

TITLE CARD

"FIVE HOURS LATER"

INT. PATRICK'S STATION WAGON - EVENING

PATRICK and CARTER occupy the front seat of the station wagon. Patrick drives intently as Carter contemplates his current predicament. Boring, nondescript scenery drifts by behind them.

CARTER  
Well, we are either going to visit Aunt Martie or my college.  
(beat)  
Since you can not stand being in the same room as Aunt Martie since the Dukakis incident, my money is on school.

Patrick offers no explanation or response.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER (CONT'D)

So, you have nothing to say?

(beat)

No pleasant little comments or remarks?

PATRICK

Tenny called.

Carter realizes what his father has planned.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - EVENING

GRACE is waiting patiently at the front door of the Malick residence. CATHERINE finally opens the door and has no idea who this pretty Asian girl is.

CATHERINE

Hi. Can I help you?

GRACE

Actually, I'm looking for Carter.

CATHERINE

Grace?

GRACE

Yes.

CATHERINE

Carter went off with his Dad. I just made some coffee. Would you like some?

GRACE

I'm bordering on needing some.

Catherine smiles and welcomes Grace into her home.

INT. PATRICK'S STATION WAGON - EVENING

PATRICK and CARTER seated as earlier.

PATRICK

Well..

CARTER

Well, what?

PATRICK

I'm sure you have something to say, something to ask me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

I really don't. I really..

(beat)

Why did you decide to do this?

PATRICK

Long story.

CARTER

Long ride. So, drop the gruff and be honest for once.

Patrick raises his eyebrow at his son.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Come on now. You're taking me to certain roasting and ridicule. So, out with it.

PATRICK

(uncertain)

I think I..

(beat)

No, I wonder.. I wonder a lot about what I've given you and your brother in life. Like if I sat down and made a list, I could justify that I was a good father. When Tenny told me everything, what he did, what you have to do. I knew we have been focusing too much on blaming and not on fixing what was wrong. I forgot that being a good father meant you never stop being a father. You keep at it, good or bad.

CARTER

Dad..

PATRICK

(interrupting)

Don't stop me, I'm on a roll. I've seen you try to improve things at home, at the job. I should be happy about all you've done, but..

(beat)

Carter, you don't belong there. You belong up here. If you need a little fatherly push to get here, well, I'll push.

CARTER

I'm just not sure I can go apologize to Monica.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PATRICK

Carter, I know it wasn't all your fault. Other things were involved. Just don't try to skirt the responsibility on this. You can't..

CARTER

(interrupting)

I can't remember any of it. I woke up that morning with no recollection of it. Only what I can imagine happening. Sometimes it is this romantic, tender thing; other times it is a violent nightmare.

(beat)

I never made the conscious choice to do what I did. So, how can I go up to this girl, apologize and say it would never happen again? How do I know it won't happen? How do I know that same part of me won't do the same thing in the same set of circumstances? We can blame Tenny all we want, but it won't change the fact that I did do it. I raped that girl. It was me having the sex.

PATRICK

Carter, if I thought you were capable of such a thing, would I be here? Driving you back up here?

CARTER

But did you think I could rape someone in the first place?

Patrick looks at Carter with nothing to say.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Exactly.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - EVENING

GRACE and CATHERINE sit on opposite sides of the kitchen table; pretending to focus on their coffee instead of the uncomfortable silence.

Catherine smiles, Grace politely returns it.

CATHERINE

Carter tells me you guys met at work.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRACE

His work.

(beat)

I visit the Vietnam Memorial a lot.

CATHERINE

Really?

GRACE

Well, my father's body is buried at his family's home in Louisiana. So, the memorial is my closest connection to him.

CATHERINE

Your father died in Vietnam?

GRACE

Yes.

CATHERINE

Then you would be..?

GRACE

I turn twenty-seven next week. I'm a little older than Carter.

CATHERINE

I'd say you are.

GRACE

That's why I came here, I think with the difference in age, in experience, we're stuck at an impasse.

CATHERINE

Is this impasse sudden or something you saw coming?

GRACE

Don't ask me. If I could have seen this coming, well, I wouldn't be me.

CATHERINE

We have something in common.

GRACE

(coyly)

My condolences.

CATHERINE

You know it might not be all about the age gap, even though it is quite a gap. Carter has had a lot going on in life.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Between school, family, his new job, and his relationship with you, he's been performing a good juggling act. I just don't know..

GRACE

New job?

CATHERINE

Yeah, he got a new position at work. He now writes about the things left at the various monuments. I'm really happy for him.

GRACE

(confused)

He writes about what?

Catherine wonders why Grace begins to look angry.

INT. PATRICK'S STATION WAGON - EVENING

PATRICK stops the car and puts the transmission into park. CARTER squirms slightly in the passenger seat. A prestige college building rests in the background.

CARTER

I definitely need some more fatherly advice here.

PATRICK

I have none.

CARTER

What?

PATRICK

I can not imagine what I would do if I was in your shoes.

CARTER

Makes two of us.

PATRICK

No, it doesn't. It only makes one of us.  
(beat)

I know you, Carter. You already have had this conversation in your head a hundred times. Right?

Carter nods his agreement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Until you go up there and actually do it though, you won't get past this. Just go in there and be honest. You made a mistake. You might make more, but you are not a bad person.

CARTER

If you had a daughter, would you let her date me?

PATRICK

No.

CARTER

No?

PATRICK

I frown on the incest.

Carter chuckles.

CARTER

If this goes well, remind me to thank you.

PATRICK

You're welcome.

Carter tries to smile, he doesn't really succeed. Carter exits the car. As his son leaves, Patrick's supportive facade is replaced by one of concern.

INT. MONICA'S DORM ROOM - EVENING

MONICA lies on her bed reading "Lolita" by Nabokov. RACHEL, her roommate, studies intently at her desk. Both are dressed for bed. There is a knock at the door. Rachel, the closest to the door, gets up to answer it. She opens the door to reveal CARTER.

CARTER

Hey, Rachel.

RACHEL

(coldly)  
Carter.

CARTER

Is she here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MONICA  
I'm here, Carter.  
(beat)  
Rach, can we get a minute?

RACHEL  
I'll just be next door. If you need anything..

MONICA  
I know.

Rachel gathers her books from her desk and heads out of the room. On her way, she gives Carter an admonishing scan.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
So, either you have serious issues or Tenny paid you a visit?

CARTER  
One might say both.

MONICA  
(joking)  
One? Who is this one? Want me to take them out back and beat them with wooden sticks?

Carter is taken back by her lightheartedness.

CARTER  
I am here to apologize, you know.  
(beat)  
Shouldn't you be making it harder?

MONICA  
Sit down, Carter and I'll tell you a story.

Carter sits down on Rachel's bed.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
After you got kicked out, which we'll get to soon enough, I went back home for a little while. I had a lot of issues to work out. Being home helped, but I still dreaded coming back to school. When I came back, the hardest part was the trip here. Once I got here, all I got were kind words and warm wishes. Maybe you should get at least one warm reception?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

I don't know. In this scenario, I'm the..

MONICA

(interrupting)

Person without the benefits of months of therapy.

CARTER

Therapy?

MONICA

Expensive therapy which showed me that I was not really mad at you, but mad at myself. I allowed myself to get into a bad situation, just like you did.

CARTER

Then, why did you want an apology?

MONICA

I wanted to talk to you first, to make sure we can make this work out, make sure I could see you and not run for the hills or scratch your eyes out. Plus, I wanted you to experience that dreaded ride back.

CARTER

I still think I should apologize.

MONICA

Maybe I should apologize, I got you kicked out of school. Of course, I did think you slipped me a roofie at the time. But I never went to you. I never talked to you about it. That was wrong.

CARTER

I didn't come talk to you either. It was too..

(beat)

You do know I really did have feelings for..

MONICA

Me, too.

CARTER

And now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONICA

I went to a shrink, not a miracle-worker.  
I can share a college campus with you,  
maybe a classroom.

CARTER

But that's it?

MONICA

Yeah, that's it.

Carter nods his head in agreement.

CARTER

Then, thank you. Most people would never  
have done something..

Monica walks over to the door and opens it for Carter to  
exit.

MONICA

(interrupting)

You can thank Tenny for finally telling  
the truth. You can do that as you warn  
him that I'm going to kick his scrawny  
ass when I see him.

(beat)

As it stands now, every girl on campus  
thinks he has the clap. As well as having  
a dick the size of a Tic Tac.

CARTER

He is rather on the small side.

(beat)

I wish I could change all of this,  
Monica. I really do.

MONICA

I wish a lot of things were different,  
Carter. But they aren't and they won't  
be.

Carter offers a faint smile.

CARTER

Do we shake hands now? Hug?

Monica takes a cautious step backwards.

MONICA

No. We just part ways. No violation of  
personal space.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Carter nods and starts toward the door. Monica takes a hesitant step forward.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Carter..

CARTER

Monica, what..

MONICA

(interrupting)

Did we definitely..

(beat)

Did we have sex?

Carter takes a moment to find his answer.

CARTER

I honestly don't know for sure.

Monica stares at Carter.

She opens the door to let Carter exit. He goes to leave and stands in the doorway for a moment as if to say something more, but he doesn't.

Monica closes the door behind him and sinks down to the floor. She tries valiantly to hold back the tears, but she fails.

INT. PATRICK'S STATION WAGON - NIGHT

PATRICK is lounging in the driver's seat, trying to catch some rest before starting the long drive home. CARTER opens the passenger door and enters the behemoth vehicle. Patrick wakes from his nap and stretches out into an exaggerated yawn.

PATRICK

Well, you look like you're in one piece.

CARTER

I know. It was hard, but she tried to take it easy on me.

PATRICK

Really? I thought she was going to hand you your balls in a jar.

Patrick starts up the "Beast" and begins the journey home.

CARTER

And you let me go up there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK

I know how important this school is to you. If you had to get your ass chewed out to get back here, you take it. Like a man.

CARTER

If you didn't drive me up here, I may not have gone through with it.

PATRICK

I've been waiting for weeks for some way to help. When you handled the job, handled Freddie, I knew you weren't meant for this, for what I do. You'll never be happy there.

CARTER

Are you happy there?

PATRICK

I complain a lot. Your mom and I, having kids too young. I always wondered about what I gave up.

(beat)

Your mother, though, is the best woman, the best person I ever knew. You're not too bad, Carter, but I would live any life if it could be with her.

CARTER

Does she know that?

PATRICK

Yeah, but I'm tell her anyway when we get home.

CARTER

And Ford?

PATRICK

And Ford?

(beat)

We'll find a way to deal with Ford. We'll think of something.

CARTER

I'm sorry I misjudged you, Dad.

PATRICK

I think you and me have made a habit of that. I promise to keep it to a minimum if you do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER

I'll try.

The pair share a smile and realize that things might actually work out here.

PATRICK

(half-serious)

You know I used to worry you'd be a fairy.

CARTER

What?

PATRICK

Well, would it kill you to like football?

CARTER

Football is not watched only by heterosexuals, Dad. I sure many a gay man has sat down and enjoyed watching men run around wearing shoulder pads and tights.

(beat)

Probably why Billy Mercer watches it.

PATRICK

(shocked)

Billy's gay?

CARTER

Yep.

PATRICK

Gay?

CARTER

Still the same guy, Dad. Maybe now you'll stop trying to fix him up on blind dates.

PATRICK

Gay?

CARTER

Yes, he is.

(beat)

And I do like football. Just not the Redskins.

PATRICK

(even more shocked)

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CARTER  
I knew that would get you.

PATRICK  
How can you not like the Redskins?

The two drive on down the road, enjoying their moment.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - MORNING

The sun is making its way into the day, as PATRICK'S STATION WAGON makes it way into the driveway. CARTER hops out of the automobile and goes to open the garage door in order for PATRICK to maneuver the massive vehicle into the cluttered garage. CATHERINE, dressed in her pajamas and bathrobe, exits the house through the front door. She hurries over to her son.

CATHERINE  
Carter! Carter!

CARTER  
Mom, what's wrong?

CATHERINE  
(affected)  
I need your help inside, in the kitchen.  
Hurry. I'll stall your father.

CARTER  
What is..

CATHERINE  
(interrupting)  
GO! NOW!

Carter makes his way into the house, unsure of what exactly is going on.

INT. MALICK FAMILY LIVING ROOM - MORNING

CARTER slowly enters via the front door. The screen door slams shut behind him. He cautiously takes a few steps into the main area of the living room.

CARTER  
(timid)  
Hello?  
(louder)  
Hello?

MUDDLED VOICE (O.C.)  
In here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carter carefully heads off toward the kitchen.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - MORNING

CARTER enters the kitchen, guardedly scanning the room. FORD occupies the farthest seat at the kitchen table. He holds a cup of coffee as if it is life essence. His face appears exhausted and many days have passed since he shaved or bathed.

CARTER  
Ford?

FORD  
Hey, Jimmy.

Carter rushes over to his brother's side.

CARTER  
You alright?

FORD  
Not really. Alicia ODed yesterday. Spent the night downtown answering questions.

CARTER  
Are you in trouble?

FORD  
No. I wasn't there when it happened. They'll have a hard time making charges stick.

CARTER  
Listen, I'm going to go get Dad. I think you two should talk.

FORD  
Why I'm here, little brother.

Carter rushes out of the room. Ford hesitantly takes a sip of coffee.

PATRICK enters and occupies the doorframe. His face is devoid of emotion.

FORD (CONT'D)  
Dad..  
(beat)  
Dad, we need to talk. I think..

Patrick takes an audible step forward, causing the strung-out Ford to pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FORD (CONT'D)

(wavering)

I know most of my choices have disappointed you. They pretty much disappointed me, too. I need to change..

Patrick takes two more very audible steps forward. Their ominous tone again gives Ford pause.

FORD (CONT'D)

I don't think I can fix everything alone though.

Patrick crosses the remaining distance between himself and Ford. He envelopes his son into his arms and gives him bear-like embrace. Ford loses whatever composure he had left.

PATRICK

You don't have to do this alone.

Ford returns the embrace and buries his head into Patrick's shoulder.

FORD

(muffled)

I'm sorry, Dad. I'm so sorry.

PATRICK

It'll be ok, boy. Everything will be just fine.

The two hold their embrace. Neither wanting the moment to end.

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

CARTER, in front of his closet, is changing his clothes for work. CATHERINE enters and picks the shirt Carter was previously wearing off the floor.

CATHERINE

You're going into work?

Carter, not having noticed his mother's entrance, is taken off guard.

CARTER

(uncertain)

Yeah, I..

(beat)

Dad should stay here. I'll go in and explain things.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

That's probably best. So, how was the trip to school?

CARTER

Good. Surprisingly good actually.

CATHERINE

You'll have to tell me about it over dinner.

CARTER

Definitely, but I might be home a little late. I need to stop and see Grace after work. I think I'm not done apologizing.

CATHERINE

Actually, Grace stopped by last night.

CARTER

Really?

CATHERINE

You two have a fight?

CARTER

No, I just..

(beat)

I think that I let my baggage get in the way.

CATHERINE

She seems like a solid girl. She might be able to handle your "baggage".

CARTER

I hope so.

Catherine starts to make her way to the door.

CATHERINE

Just be sincere with her. Openness and honesty are important to us ladies.

(beat)

Like, she seemed upset that you didn't tell her about your new job.

Carter's eyes widen at the last comment.

CARTER

(unsettled)

My new job?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHERINE

Yeah, I thought you would have told her everything about it. It is very exciting, you know.

CARTER

I guess.

CATHERINE

She seemed very interested in it actually. Talk to her about it.

CARTER

I will.

(beat)

I should get ready for work.

CATHERINE

I'll go check on your Dad and Ford.

Catherine exits.

Carter weighs all the information his mother has given him and collapses on his bed in exasperation.

INT. GRACE'S FRONT ENTRANCE - EVENING

The hallway leading to Grace's apartment is barren except for a series of bland, beige doors. CARTER, dressed for work, appears at the far end of the hallway and slowly walks up to Grace's front door, quietly talking to himself.

CARTER

The hardest part is actually summing up the courage to make the trip there. Once I'm inside, everything will be a piece of cake. All I need is to knock on the door and be honest to her.

Carter finally reaches Grace's door, but hesitates. He is not ready to knock.

CARTER (CONT'D)

She'll forgive me. She has to forgive me. Right?

He tentatively knocks on the door.

TITLE CARD

"FIVE MINUTES LATER"

## INT. GRACE'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

An absolutely livid GRACE is in the middle of her berating of CARTER, standing meekly near the front entrance. Grace, dressed in her business attire, can not manage to stand still. She paces the full length of the room, waving her arms as she orates to an imaginary jury.

GRACE

(shouting)

You know that I value honesty above all else. Not only have I repeatedly expressed this to you, but I'm sure you have read it IN MY JOURNALS. I suppose I should have known this. I knew you worked there. I always wondered what they did with them. I just never thought someone would use them to try to get IN MY PANTS.

CARTER

(humbly)

Grace, I never..

GRACE

(interrupting)

Good thing you never slept with me. At least, I won't have that black cloud hanging over me.

CARTER

I was going to say that I never intended to use them to sleep with you.

GRACE

How can I know that?

CARTER

Well, I..

GRACE

(interrupting again)

Well, I what? Well, I completely caused you to lose your faith in me, Grace. I also managed to force you to reconsider if you ever really liked me at all.

CARTER

Grace, I came here to apologize.

GRACE

So, go ahead and apologize. I'm not stopping you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

Actually, with your yelling, you kinda were.

Grace throws Carter an evil glance.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Which really is not important right now. The entire point that I want to make is that I found those books and, yes, I read them.

GRACE

(sarcastic)

Really? I'm glad you cleared that..

CARTER

(interrupting)

And I liked what I read. I found the words of a person that interested me, that invigorated me. Then, I actually saw you and..

(beat)

and I fell for you on the spot. Sort of.

GRACE

Sort of?

CARTER

Well, the person I saw in those journals was a warm, loving person.

GRACE

Now I'm not warm and loving?

CARTER

I meant, what I saw was a daughter. You were your father's daughter in those books, but you weren't the whole you. For better or worse, I will always be my father's son, but that is only one aspect of who I am.

(beat)

The Grace that I got to know, though, always shocked and surprised me. She was more than I could have expected. She's someone I would like to still share a relationship with.

GRACE

I don't think I can do that. You invaded a very personal part of me. A part I was going to slowly reveal to you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GRACE(CONT'D)

Over time, Carter. Not all at once and not before you even knew me.

CARTER

I don't think that's true.

GRACE

(affronted)

What?

CARTER

I think part of you wanted someone to read those journals. I mean, why else would you leave them out for anyone to find them? You have all these defense mechanisms up. You always need to be in control, which makes it hard for you to open up. I used to think our age difference was going to be a problem, but I think you enjoyed that. You liked me being naive, easy to manipulate.

Grace's face clearly shows her rage starting to boil. She is a volcano waiting to erupt.

TITLE CARD

"FIVE SECONDS LATER"

INT. GRACE'S FRONT ENTRANCE - EVENING

Grace's bland, beige door swings open and CARTER jettisons himself out of her apartment. He is followed by a veritable barrage of legal texts hurled through the air. Carter bangs into the opposite wall and uses his hands to keep himself from falling over.

CARTER

(pleading)

Grace, wait..

Before he can finish his desperate plea, the door slams shut. Carter sinks to the ground, desponded.

CARTER (CONT'D)

(to himself)

Why do I date girls with good throwing arms?

The head of a NOSY NEIGHBOR pops out of a nearby door, investigating the commotion. Carter just shrugs, gets up and walks away.

EXT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Amid a sea of GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, all cloaked in standard issue gray or navy suits, CARTER sluggishly strolls up to the entrance of his workplace. His mind is definitely elsewhere, probably the same place as his desire to work.

INT. ARCHIVAL OFFICE - DAY

LUCY and CARTER sit at their respective work stations, neither doing one iota of actual work. Carter breathes a huge sigh and starts to casually flip through the photo album in front of him.

Something catches his eye, a group shot of various soldiers.

CARTER

Lucy, how would I request some army records?

Lucy's grimace insinuates a slim likelihood of that happening.

INT. LOW-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

With his back to a barren gray wall, CARTER is seated in a standard government-issued chair delivering his fevered pitch to an unseen government supervisor.

INT. MID-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

With his back to a minimally decorated gray wall, CARTER is seated in a slightly more plush government-issued chair continuing to deliver his fevered pitch to a second unseen government supervisor.

INT. HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

With his back to a wood-panelled wall adorned with the usual government "handshake pictures", CARTER is seated in a plush government-issued chair finishing the delivery of his fevered pitch to a final unseen government supervisor.

INT. ARCHIVAL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

CARTER deposits several large manila folders upon the top of his desk and himself into his standard government-issued office chair. He is short-winded from his recent travels, but looks rather pleased with himself. LUCY sits at her station, unimpressed.

LUCY

They say anything about the cigarettes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER  
Still banned.

LUCY  
Crap.

Carter starts to work on his newly acquired files.

EXT. WAR MEMORIAL BENCH - DAY

CARTER sits on his familiar bench, various files at his side, and is writing heatedly onto a yellow legal tablet. VARIOUS TOURISTS meander by and take notice of the young man's frantic work pace.

EXT. PUBLIC GOLF COURSE - DAY

A group of ASIAN GOLFERS sit along a long bench awaiting their chance at the tee. At the far end, GRACE sits and contemplates. There is something missing and not even golf can fill that void.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - DAY

PATRICK is pulling the "Beast" out of the garage and directs it down the driveway in reverse. FORD, with his hair tied back, exits the house with a small suitcase in tow and starts to walk towards his father and the car. CATHERINE comes to the doorway. She is upset, not wanting her eldest to go away again so soon. Ford opens the back door to the car and deposits his baggage. As he closes the door, he notices his mother's distraught and goes to her.

FORD  
Mom, don't worry. I'll only be gone for four weeks.

CATHERINE  
(sobbing)  
I know, I know.

FORD  
When I'm back, everything will be really good. This is a good thing. So, don't cry.

Catherine gives Ford a peck on the cheek.

CATHERINE  
You hurry home. And stay away from loose women.

Ford cracks a smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FORD  
I will, Mom. I swear.

Ford heads back to the car.

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - DAY

A slightly older CARTER with a neater haircut folds his clothes in preparation for college. PATRICK, dressed in his work uniform, appears in the open doorway with a large grocery bag at his side. Unnoticed by Carter, Patrick begins to enter the room, then thinks twice about it. Instead, he gently knocks on the doorjamb. Carter remains focused on his folding.

CARTER  
You ever have deja vu?

PATRICK  
Sometimes. Normally, I think I'm just getting old.

CARTER  
You are.

PATRICK  
Funny. Oscar stopped me today. Wanted me to give you something.

Patrick hands Carter the grocery bag. Carter opens it and pulls out a bright yellow hat, same as the one Oscar always wear. Carter and Patrick both smile.

CARTER  
I don't think I've ever been so happy about something so ugly.

PATRICK  
He read the article.

CARTER  
He say anything?

PATRICK  
Only that it was sincere and honest writing and that you better not have done it just to get the girl back.  
(beat)  
I agreed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER

I never thought I could get her back. I just knew I could do the right thing. For her and her father.

PATRICK

Good. Now hurry downstairs. Ford is craving his first home cooked meal.

CARTER

How was he at work? I hope Freddie gave him the same treatment he got.

PATRICK

Freddie did. Although, Ford didn't complain once. Not even that mute pouting you were so famous for.

CARTER

Mute pouting?

PATRICK

(interrupting)

And he didn't bitch me out in the bathroom at Lily's either.

CARTER

Hey, you deserved that.

PATRICK

What did you call Freddie? The Glutton Gestapo?

CARTER

I think I did.

The two share a warm chuckle as FORD appears in the doorway. He is clad in the dirt-covered Parks Department uniform. His hair is now cut extremely short, his skin has a nice golden tan and he looks to be twice the man he once was.

FORD

Can we have dinner now or what?

PATRICK

Not until you clean yourself up.

FORD

Come on, Dad. I'm hungry here. Freddie ate my damn lunch.

Carter chuckles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PATRICK  
(mockingly)  
When you're in my house, you will obey my  
rules. Now, go get yourself cleaned up.

FORD  
But..

Patrick busts into the warmest smile we have seen him have  
yet.

PATRICK  
Just go shower.

CARTER  
Ford, come on.

FORD  
I was going to shower anyway, just wanted  
to hear the "when you're in my house"  
line again.

Ford heads out of the room and up the hall.

CARTER  
Freddie ate his lunch?

Patrick laughs and nods his reply.

INT. MALICK FAMILY KITCHEN - DUSK

FORD, PATRICK, CARTER and CATHERINE are seated around the  
dining table, fully satiated after their dinner. The remnants  
of a well-enjoyed meal lay spread on the tabletop.

FORD  
We should get a dog.

CARTER  
Yeah.

CATHERINE  
Your dad's allergic.

CARTER  
I thought he was allergic to cats.

FORD  
Yeah, it was cats.

PATRICK  
I was allergic to having to brats having  
pets that they wouldn't care for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

You are allergic to cats, Pat. You remember the hives.

PATRICK

Yes, I remember the hives.

FORD

That settles it we're getting a dog.

PATRICK

We'll see.

FORD

That's a yes.

PATRICK

That's a "we'll see". Now, change the subject.

FORD

We should get a fish tank, too.

Carter and Catherine laugh as Patrick starts to get riled up.

PATRICK

Change the subject to something not involving animals.

FORD

Geez, first dinner home and all I get..

CATHERINE

(interrupting)

Carter, when is your flight?

CARTER

Nine-thirty. I should go finish packing.

FORD

Who's taking you?

CARTER

Yeah, which lucky Malick gets to drive me?

PATRICK

Not my turn, I picked him up last time.

FORD

I can't. My license is still suspended.

Patrick gives Ford a quizzical look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FORD (CONT'D)

Long story.

CATHERINE

And I'm normally in bed by nine-thirty.

FORD

Looks like Carter is taking a cab.

CARTER

(shocked)

What?

Catherine, Ford and Patrick all smile ear to ear.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - EVENING

PATRICK and FORD stand at the bottom of the front entrance, the army duffel at their feet, waiting for the baby of the family to make his exit. It is a pleasant, early summer night. Everything is warm and clear, yet not too humid. CATHERINE leads the downtrodden CARTER out of the house.

CARTER

(distraught)

I don't believe none of you can drive me to the airport. I mean, here we are, two steps away from being the damn Waltons..

Something at the end of the driveway has caught his attention and stopped his complaining.

GRACE is leaning up against her parked car.

FORD

(sly)

Sucker.

Patrick picks the duffel bag off the ground and hands it to Carter.

PATRICK

She called us.

CATHERINE

I think she read your article.

PATRICK

Wanted to talk to you before you went to school.

CARTER

I don't know..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATRICK  
(interrupting)  
Yes, you do.

Catherine goes over and gives Carter a hug, yanking him down to her level.

CATHERINE  
(heavyhearted)  
You go on and you do good. Know that we're all proud of you.

CARTER  
I know, Mom.

CATHERINE  
Love you.

CARTER  
I love you, too.

The pair end their embrace. Carter goes to offer Ford his hand for a shake as Ford sweeps and picks him up in a bear-hug.

FORD  
You kick ass. You got that.

CARTER  
Yes, got it. Now, down.

Ford returns his brother to his proper footing.

FORD  
And I call dibs on the first trust-fund princess you find up there.

Patrick takes Carter by the shoulder and directs him down the driveway.

CARTER  
Dad..

PATRICK  
(interrupting)  
Nothing sappy now. Just go on and keep doing what you feel is right.

The pair stop just meters from Grace and turn to face each other. Before Patrick can say anything else, Carter drops his bag and embraces his father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARTER  
(whispering)  
I love you, Dad.

PATRICK  
I said nothing sappy.

Patrick embraces his son in a firm hold and closes his eyes.

PATRICK (CONT'D)  
I'm proud of you, Carter.

The two end their embrace. Carter wipes what might be a tear away from his eye. He holds his glance on his Patrick for an extra moment, then turns his attention to Grace.

INT. ANDERSON HOUSE - EVENING

On the edge of the dance floor filled with REVELERS, MONICA and CARTER are standing with their altered Gin & Tonics.

MONICA  
(sarcastic)  
Now I know, you are only the second nicest.

Monica smiles and takes a large sip from her beverage. As Carter raises his glass, a large DRUNKEN JOCK collides with him. The drink crashes to the floor.

CARTER  
Bastard!

The Drunken Jock continues on, oblivious to his blunder.

CARTER (CONT'D)  
Thank you! THANK YOU!  
(beat)  
I guess I'll go get another.

MONICA  
No, wait.

Monica chugs her drink and tosses her cup to the ground.

MONICA (CONT'D)  
Let's dance. We can get more later.

Monica grabs Carter's arm and drags him to the dance floor.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - DUSK

GRACE is waiting for CARTER to make his way to her car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARTER (V.O.)

I really do believe the biggest obstacle  
for people to obtain happiness is  
(beat)  
themselves.

Carter proceeds to the car as Grace heads slowly to the driver's side. PATRICK stops Grace at the front of the car and tries to offer her gas money.

INT. DORM HALLWAY - EVENING

CARTER is carrying a severely intoxicated MONICA. The awkward pair make their way down the hall and reach the familiar door to Monica's Dorm Room.

Monica pulls the key out of her pocket and hands it out for Carter.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - DUSK

CARTER opens the car door and slides the passenger seat forward. After managing his bulky bag into the back seat, he then readjusts his seat and deposits his posterior into the chair.

CARTER (V.O.)

When we think joy is for other people,  
something we don't deserve, we allow  
ourselves to close up. We wallow in our  
guilt and doubt.

Carter slams his door closed. Grace politely rejects Patrick's offer of money and continues on to her door.

INT. MONICA'S DORM ROOM - EVENING

MONICA collapses upon her bed. The door to her dorm room remains wide open. A clear-headed CARTER stands in the doorway, deciding his course for the evening.

Carter enters the room and closes the door behind him.

EXT. MALICK HOUSE - DUSK

CARTER sits in the passenger seat of Grace's car and watches GRACE approach the locked door.

CARTER (V.O.)

Only when we can be honest with ourselves  
and others, only when we can actually  
open ourselves up to another..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Carter reaches over and unlocks Grace's door, passing the "car door test". Grace smiles.

CARTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Only then can happiness find us.

FADE OUT.