

POLITE PEOPLE

by

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Narbonne High School

2008 First Place
The Sally Picow Foundation
Student Screenwriting Awards

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POLITE PEOPLE

FADE IN:

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

A decent-looking two bedroom apartment; not too poor, not too grand; it's just right. Boxes are everywhere.

A cute 26 year-old girl, AMY, is carrying boxes and taping them up. ELI POLITE, 28, follows her around. He is a pretty good-looking guy and he's clean-shaven.

ELI
What did I do? Why are you breaking
up with me?

AMY
I told you.

She stops with the boxes and looks at Eli with annoyance.

AMY (CONT'D)
I decided to go black.

She continues with the boxes.

ELI
Black? What the hell does that
mean!?

AMY
Eli, cool it.

ELI
You're making me sad, you know
that? Jesus Amy, you're throwing
five years away.

AMY
Don't be so dramatic. It was only
three.

ELI
It was five.

AMY
Well, it doesn't matter now.

Eli tears up.

ELI
I can't believe you're doing this
to me.

AMY
(annoyed)
Are you crying?

ELI
What do you care.

Eli goes outside his apartment. He SLAMS the door closed.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Eli's back is to a wall. He cries heavily, collapses into a bundle on the floor, and cries more.

A YOUNG GIRL, 8, sits down next to Eli and cries. Eli, notices her after awhile and stops crying. He looks at her confused. She looks at him.

YOUNG GIRL
Did your boyfriend break up with
you too?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's dark. Eli is wide awake in bed. His forehead is soaked with sweat. His hair is matted and he has a slight beard. It looks as if he hasn't showered in ages.

Eli turns the light on. His room is ordinary: bed, a desk, basic things, but it's messy.

Eli is in his boxers. He sits on the bed with a blank expression on his face.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Lights on. Eli is reaching for things under his bed. He has Amy's underwear in his hand. He smells it.

Eli puts it up to his nose and inhales the underwear.

ELI
It's still fresh.

After a brief moment, Eli quickly pulls it away from his face in disgust and shock at what he's doing.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli, wearing only his pants, is sitting on a couch. He looks miserable. His beard is thick.

He is watching a program on the ill effects of cigarette smoking. It mentions the high risk of lung cancer.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli is sitting at a desk marking up a manuscript with a pen. His phone RINGS a couple of times. The answering machine picks it up.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Hey, Eli. It's me, Charlie. I just wanted to make sure that you're going to the wedding.

(beat)

Can you believe it? I'm getting married! Well, I hope you can make it, buddy.

The machine BEEPS, signaling the end of the message.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Eli is sleeping on the couch. We hear a KNOCK on the door. His cell phone RINGS. Eli wakes up. The knocking grows LOUDER. Eli gets up and goes to the door. He looks through the peep hole.

Eli sees his friend, SAM. Sam is in his mid-20s and is a good-looking guy. He's holding a brown paper bag.

Eli opens the door.

SAM

Whoa.

ELI

What?

SAM

You look like shit.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Eli is sitting on the couch. Sam is on a chair facing Eli.

Silence. Sam fidgets nervously. Eli seems to be off in another planet. Sam notices his paper bag.

SAM

Oh. Hey.

Eli's attention is to Sam.

ELI

What?

SAM

I got you soup.

Sam gets out a container of soup from the bag and hands it to Eli.

ELI

I don't like soup.

SAM

You don't?

ELI

No.

SAM

Oh.

(beat)

Um, can I eat it then?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Eli is talking to Sam now. Sam is eating the soup.

ELI

I didn't expect it. It happened out of nowhere.

SAM

They're hard. These break ups. Look at the positives. You're a good-looking guy... and a lot of girls dig beards. You're a free man, Eli. You can do whatever you want.

(beat)

Did you get a chance to look at the manuscript?

ELI

I'm still working on it.

SAM
 Okay, cool. Don't sweat it.
 (beat)
 It's just these publishing bastards
 have a deadline, you know? They're
 on my nuts with this shit.

Eli looks at him, upset.

ELI
 I'll finish it when I finish it.

SAM
 Okay. Yeah, you bet.

Sam looks down and frowns. Eli sees this.

ELI
 Hey. I've been your editor for a
 good three years now. Have I ever
 let you down?

SAM
 No.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Eli and Sam are by the doorway. Sam is walking away, but
 stops and looks at Eli.

SAM
 Eli, seriously, forget Amy. Go
 outside. Take a walk.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

An ordinary small liquor store. LIQUOR STORE WORKER, a fat,
 dorky looking man, is at the cash register.

A horrible, scruffy-looking Eli walks in. A bell CHIMES. Eli
 walks up to the Liquor Store Worker.

LIQUOR STORE WORKER
 Hi. How can I help you?

ELI
 Do you have cigarettes?

LIQUOR STORE WORKER
 Yes. What brand would you like?

ELI
Brand?

LIQUOR STORE WORKER
Yeah, what brand do you want?

ELI
I don't know. I don't smoke.

Liquor Store Worker gives Eli a look of confusion.

LIQUOR STORE WORKER
I'm going to have to see some I.D.

INT. ELI'S CAR - DAY

Eli opens the pack of cigarettes. He takes one out and examines it. He lights it with a lighter. He puts it in his mouth. Inhales. Coughs. He takes it out of his mouth and stares at it.

EXT. PARK - DAY

A spacious park filled with KIDS playing, running. PARENTS watching their kids. FAMILIES with picnics set up.

Eli watches the park people as he walks. He sits down on a bench.

Something catches his eye. From a distance, Eli sees the back of a little girl, 7, flying a kite. He is fixated on the girl and her kite.

Something breaks his concentration. Eli looks down and sees a big wolf-looking DOG panting at him.

ELI
Hi.

The Dog turns his head sideways like he's confused. After a few seconds, the Dog jumps on the bench and sits next to Eli. The Dog still pants. They stare at each other. The Dog moves over and sits on Eli's lap.

Eli looks around confused. The Dog jumps off and runs away. Eli looks down and sees a wet puddle on his crotch. He SIGHS heavily.

EXT. PARK PARKING LOT - DAY

Eli walks toward his car, trying unsuccessfully to cover his crotch. PEOPLE pass by and giggle. At Eli's car, Eli takes one last look at the park and sees the flying kite soaring in the air. He gets in his car.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

An ordinary laundromat. Laundry machines are running. It's pretty empty.

Eli is sitting. A PRETTY LADY, 20s, is sitting across on the other side. She's wearing a shirt with a joke on it: "Irish I Were Drunk." She's reading a magazine. Eli stares at her shirt. She looks at Eli looking at her chest. She looks angry. She throws her magazine at Eli.

PRETTY LADY

Pervert!

Pretty Lady walks away. Eli looks confused.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli is at his desk. He's writing on a piece of paper. He stops. He takes his pen and stabs his hand. He jumps in pain.

ELI

Ah!

Eli rubs his hand. He continues to write.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ROOM - NIGHT

Eli drags a chair to the middle of the room. He looks up at the ceiling, pondering. There's a noose on the ceiling. He gets up on the chair. He puts his head through the noose.

Eli looks like he forgot something. He removes the noose from his neck.

He takes a note out of his pocket and puts it on a chair. He stands on the chair and puts the noose through his head again.

He takes a deep breath. He kicks the chair. He's dangling and choking in the air. He looks in pain.

He tries to remove the noose from his neck. He gets it after a while. He falls down, gasping for air.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Eli opens his mirror cabinet. He takes out a small bottle of Tylenol. He opens the bottle and tosses 15 in his hand. He looks at them curiously. He puts a few back in. He looks at them again. Pours a few more onto his hand. He looks panicky.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Eli is sitting on the toilet. There are two pills in his hand. He swallows them. He looks down ashamed.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli is sitting on the couch watching TV. He looks like a mess. The only light comes from the TV. He has a deadpan expression. Someone KNOCKS. Eli looks at the door not sure if he heard a knock. Another KNOCK. Eli gets up.

Eli opens the door. It's Amy. She looks like she's been crying. She has a white paper bag. Eli looks angry, hurt, and confused.

AMY

Hi, Eli.

ELI

What are you doing here?

AMY

I came to see you.

(beat)

I miss you.

ELI

No, you don't.

AMY

Shut up.

ELI

What?

AMY

Nothing. Can I come in?

ELI

No.

AMY

Please, Eli?

Eli moves so she can come in. He closes the door. Amy looks around the place.

ELI
What are you doing here?

AMY
My boyfriend broke up with me.

ELI
You have a boyfriend?

AMY
I wanted to see you again.

ELI
No, you didn't.

Amy gets closer to Eli. She touches his face.

ELI (CONT'D)
Don't touch me.

Amy kisses him.

AMY
You should shave your beard. It's hideous.

ELI
I like it.

AMY
It scratches my face.

She sits down on the couch. Eli sits down on a chair by her. Amy notices her white paper bag. She takes out a container from the bag.

AMY (CONT'D)
Here. I remember you liked soup.

Amy hands it to Eli. Eli takes it.

ELI
Uh, thanks.

Silence.

AMY
So, are we going to fuck now?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Amy are having sex under the covers. It is not passionate.

ELI
Do you like it?

AMY
What?

ELI
Does it feel good?

AMY
No, why?

A pause.

ELI
Why not?

AMY
Shut up.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli is sleeping in his bed. Amy is dressing. Eli wakes up. He raises his head to watch her.

ELI
Where you going?

AMY
Nowhere.

ELI
Do you want to go out and have
coffee with me?

Amy is done dressing. She looks at Eli.

AMY
I'm sorry, Eli. I just need someone
with a vagina right now.

Eli looks at her confused.

AMY (CONT'D)
I'll try not to see you again. Bye,
Eli.

She walks out. Eli falls back down onto the bed. He gulps miserably.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli is cleaning his apartment. He's looking at a framed picture of him and Amy. His cell phone RINGS. Eli checks to see who it is. It says "Adam is calling." Eli picks it up.

ADAM (V.O. ON PHONE)
(morose)
Eli...

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Passengers are exiting from the plane and entering the airport terminal. Eli, carrying a bag, comes out. He's wearing a brown suede jacket. He sees his older brothers, ADAM, early 30s, and CHARLIE, late 20s. They look sad. They see Eli.

They force smiles. They walk toward Eli and hug awkwardly.

CHARLIE
Nice beard.

ELI
Thanks.

ADAM
It's good to see you.

ELI
Thanks.

Silence.

ADAM
I guess we should get going now.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

Another part of the airport terminal. The brothers pass a souvenir shop. Eli stops and looks at the shop. The brothers see this and stop.

ADAM
Eli?

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - LATER

Eli is walking with his brothers. Eli is holding a stuffed bear.

ADAM
Why'd you buy that?

ELI
I don't know. I feel weird visiting
without anything to give.

CHARLIE
Why didn't you just get him some
flowers then?

Eli attempts to say something, but gives up.

INT. TAXI - MOVING - DAY

Eli is sitting between Adam and Charlie. He stares blankly forward. Adam and Charlie are looking out their windows.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The brothers are walking fast. They reach the door to a room.

ADAM
Ready?

Eli and Charlie nod.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

GRADY POLITE is in bed. He is in his 60s. He is unconscious and has bandages on his wrists. Eli is with his brothers. They are sitting on chairs facing Grady. The stuffed bear is on Grady's bed.

ADAM
Let's go outside. I can't look at
him like this.

Adam attempts to get up but sees Eli and Charlie not moving. He sits back down.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Eli and Charlie are facing Adam. HOSPITAL WORKERS pass by the halls.

CHARLIE
What happened to him?

ADAM
He cut himself.

ELI
On purpose?

ADAM
Yeah.

ELI
Is he alright?

ADAM
He cut himself. How do you think he
is?

CHARLIE
Well, why'd he do it?

ADAM
I don't know.

ELI
Who found him?

ADAM
The maid.

ELI
He has a maid?

ADAM
Yeah.

ELI
What are we going to do with Dad?

DR. SMITH, 40s, walks toward them.

ELI (CONT'D)
Hey Roger.

DR. SMITH
(irritated)
What did you call me?

ELI
Roger.

DR. SMITH
Does it look like I spent nine
years of schooling to be called
Roger?

Eli looks stunned.

ELI
No, no. I'm sorry. Uh, Dr. Smith.

Silence. Dr. Smith looks serious.

DR. SMITH
Your Father. His wounds, they were
self-inflicted.

CHARLIE
We're aware of that.

DR. SMITH
Oh.

ELI
What do we do with him?

DR. SMITH
There's a variety of options. We
have a mental rehabilitation
center. There's psychology. Group
therapy. A variety of options.

ADAM
What do you suggest?

DR. SMITH
I can't say. I don't know your
Father.

The brothers glance at each other, wondering what to do.

DR. SMITH (CONT'D)
Oh. This was in your Father's
pocket.

Dr. Smith takes out a note from his pocket and hands it to
Adam. Dr. Smith walks away. Adam looks at the note. Eli and
Charlie look over Adam's shoulder.

ELI
What is it?

ADAM
It's his suicide letter.

CHARLIE
What's it say?

ADAM
I can't read it. It's all bloody.

Charlie takes it. He's squinting, trying to read it.

CHARLIE
It looks like gibberish. I can't
make it out.

Eli takes it. He tries to read it too.

ELI
I wrote one too.

Adam and Charlie look at him confused. Eli tries to play off his slip of the tongue.

ELI (CONT'D)
...Uh, for a writing project.

Adam takes a step back. He looks stressed out.

ADAM
I can't believe our Dad tried to
kill himself.

INT. HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Eli is at the sink. The water is running.

Eli splashes water on his face. He looks at himself in the mirror. He looks exhausted. He turns the faucet off.

INT. HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The brothers are sitting at a table. Cups of coffee are on the table.

Charlie laughs a little as he says:

CHARLIE
Hey Eli. Remember that time you
pushed Dad down the stairs?

Eli looks uncomfortable.

ELI
No. I don't think that was me.

CHARLIE

It was you, I remember. But, why'd you do it? Why'd you push Dad down the stairs?

ELI

I--

ADAM

I remember why he did it. Eli started punching everything after Mom threw away his doll collection.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah, and then Dad got in his way. Fucking Eli, man. He's so wild.

Adam laughs. Eli looks around, obviously very uncomfortable and embarrassed.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Oh, and that time when Eli hit Dad with a baseball bat.

INT. HOSPITAL - CAFETERIA - A LITTLE LATER

As before.

CHARLIE

Why do you think Dad tried to kill himself?

ADAM

You think it's because he misses Mom?

CHARLIE

No, they hated each other.

ADAM

What do you think, Eli?

ELI

About what?

ADAM

Dad. Why do you think he tried to kill himself?

ELI

I don't know. I guess he was lonely.

CHARLIE
Does he even have any friends?

The brothers ponder this. Eli gets up.

ADAM
Where you going?

ELI
I need some fresh air.

ADAM
What? Why?

ELI
It's hot in here.

ADAM
We're having a family crisis, Eli.
Sit back down.

ELI
Why would you bring up me pushing
Dad down the stairs then?

Eli walks away. Adam watches, upset.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Eli is smoking. He's looking at the night sky. Charlie approaches him.

ELI
Adam send you?

CHARLIE
No.

ELI
What the fuck's wrong with him?
Just because he's the oldest, he
thinks he's the boss.

CHARLIE
You smoke?

ELI
I just started.

CHARLIE
You should quit. Mom--

Eli interrupts.

ELI

I don't even know why I'm here.
It's not like he's dead.

CHARLIE

Look. We're all that's left for
Dad. He has no one. No friends, no
nothing.

(beat)

I know he wasn't the ideal Father,
but he's still our Dad.

(beat)

And we love you, Eli. You're our
brother.

Charlie walks away. Eli smokes a little longer. He kicks the
air in frustration, then heads back in.

EXT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The brothers are whispering as they walk. Dr. Smith is
approaching them.

CHARLIE

What are we going to do?

ADAM

Maybe one of us should take him.

CHARLIE

But who?

They meet Dr. Smith.

DR. SMITH

Have you guys made a decision?

ADAM

We're taking him.

DR. SMITH

Mr. Polite, look we--

CHARLIE

We're taking him. We're all he's
got. We're not having him stay in a
mental prison. He's our Father, for
chrissakes.

DR. SMITH

It's not a ment--

CHARLIE

We're very loving sons. We'd get an award. We know we can do this.

DR. SMITH

I--

CHARLIE

We're taking him. That's that.

Dr. Smith sighs. He looks concerned.

DR. SMITH

I'm not supposed to do this, but I'll let you guys take him.

CHARLIE

Thank you.

DR. SMITH

Make sure you watch him constantly. Never leave him alone, keep him away from anything that may harm him; knives, razors, anything. And remember, *never ever leave him alone.*

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Grady is asleep. The brothers are in chairs away from the bed.

CHARLIE

Who's taking him?

ADAM

I will.

CHARLIE

You have a baby on the way. I don't think it's really the right situation for Dad.

(beat)

I'll take him. I can postpone the wedding.

Eli looks at Grady meaningfully.

ADAM

No, no. I'll take him. Don't worry.

CHARLIE
Okay, fine. I'll help in whatever
way I can.

ADAM
Okay, it's settled.

ELI
Shut the fuck up!

Adam and Charlie look at Eli. Eli gets up.

ADAM
What?

ELI
Why are you guys ignoring me? I can
take him.

Charlie laughs a little as he says:

CHARLIE
You?

ADAM
Are you even capable of taking care
of yourself?

ELI
Yes.

ADAM
What about someone else?

ELI
Yes. Jesus Christ, Adam.

ADAM
You pushed Dad down the stairs.

CHARLIE
And hit Dad with a bat.

Eli paces around. Adam and Charlie watch.

ELI
Stop bringing that up! That was
like twenty years ago. Let me do
this. You guys are busy. I don't
have a lot going on. I'll take him.

Adam gets close to Eli.

ADAM
This is serious business, Eli.
Don't fuck up.

ELI
I won't.

ADAM
This is another human life form.

Charlie gets up.

CHARLIE
He's not a dog.
(to Adam)
I don't know. I'm having second
thoughts.

ADAM
Me too.

ELI
I can do it. I know I can.

ADAM
Yeah, but how do we know that?

ELI
Trust me.

ADAM
How can we do that? You're never
around. We live in the same goddamn
city and you never visit. This is
the first time we've seen you since
Mom's funeral.

ELI
I'm sorry. But please, let me do
this. I won't mess up.

CHARLIE
(to Adam)
Can I talk to you outside?

ADAM
Yeah, sure. We'll be right back,
Eli.

Adam and Charlie walk out. Eli walks and looks around the room. He makes his way to Grady. He sits down in a chair by Grady. Eli looks at Grady's bandaged wrists. He touches them gently. They twitch a little.

Adam and Charlie walk in. Eli gets up, startled. Eli walks toward them.

ELI
What is it?

ADAM
Fine, you can take him.

Eli nods.

CHARLIE
Eli, you sure you can do this?

ELI
Yeah. How bad can it be?

Grady wakes up. The stuffed bear's lying on top of him.

GRADY
Why is there a bear on me?

The brothers stop talking and walk toward Grady.

CHARLIE
Dad?

GRADY
Charlie.

Grady looks at his sons.

GRADY (CONT'D)
Adam. Eli. What are you guys doing here?

ADAM
You tried to kill yourself.

Eli says, sounding guilty:

ELI
No, I didn't.

They all look at him. Eli looks at them, embarrassed. He looks at Grady.

ELI (CONT'D)
Yeah, you tried to kill yourself.

GRADY
I'm sorry. If I could reverse time, I would have used a gun so you guys wouldn't have had to make the trip.

CHARLIE

Dad, you know you don't mean that.

GRADY

Yes, I do.

ADAM

Dad, Eli's taking you with him.
He's going to take care of you.

Grady looks at Eli.

GRADY

Eli?

ADAM

Yeah.

A pause. Grady sounds a little scared.

GRADY

Wh--why?

ADAM

We didn't want you in a psychiatric
facility.

GRADY

But, why Eli?

ELI

I got you that bear.

Grady looks at the bear, then at Eli, then back at Adam.

GRADY

I won't do it again. I promise.

INT. TAXI - MOVING - NIGHT

Eli, Charlie, and Grady sit in the back. Eli is in the middle. He looks uncomfortable and upset. Adam is in passenger seat. He looks back at them.

ADAM

What's with the sour face, Eli? You
have to use the bathroom or
something?

They all look at Eli.

ELI

I'm just a little nervous.

ADAM
Dad, you okay?

Grady ignores him. He looks out the window.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Okay, then.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

It's noisy and crowded. The taxi is parked. The brothers are helping get luggage out of the trunk. They try to talk over the noise. They are done with the luggage. They're standing together. A good-bye moment.

ADAM
That's everything.

CHARLIE
I guess this is good-bye.

ELI
Yeah.

Silence. Charlie hugs Eli.

CHARLIE
I'll see you at the wedding. Take
care of Dad.
(to Grady)
Dad, be happy.

Charlie hugs Grady. Grady is like a statue not putting his arms around Charlie.

ADAM
Have a nice flight. Bye, guys.

Eli and Grady walk toward the airport entrance. Grady looks back at Adam and Charlie with a scared look on his face. Adam and Charlie wave.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Eli and Grady sit next to each other. They both are staring straight ahead with expressionless faces. It's awkward.

ELI
What?

GRADY
What?

ELI
I thought you grunted.
(beat)
Did you grunt?

GRADY
No.

ELI
Oh.

Silence.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The airport parking lot. It's busy. Lots of cars and people.

Eli is carrying two bags. Grady is following him. They reach Eli's car.

ELI
Okay. This is it.

GRADY
You live in your car?

ELI
Oh, no. I meant this is it as in...
never mind.

INT. ELI'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Eli is driving. Grady is in the passenger seat. He seems out of it, staring off. Eli looks over at Grady.

ELI
Hungry?

Grady looks at Eli.

GRADY
Are you talking to me?

ELI
Yeah. Do you want some food?

GRADY
No.
(beat)
Do you want to eat?

ELI
I'm fine.

GRADY
Okay.
(beat)
This is a comfortable seat. Is it
leather?

ELI
No.
(beat)
Do you like leather?

GRADY
It's an okay fabric.

ELI
Yeah...
(beat)
I don't like how leather gets
really hot in the summer though.

GRADY
Yeah. Or really cold during the
winters.

Silence.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli opens the door. Grady enters. He looks around the apartment. They both just stand there not knowing what to say or do.

ELI
I, um, I have to check on
something.
(beat)
You can sit on the couch if you
want.

Grady walks over to the couch and sits. Eli goes to his room. Grady feels the couch material and then starts crying.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Eli is sitting on his bed with his head buried in his hands. He takes his hands away and takes a deep breath.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Eli comes back out and stares at Grady, confused.

ELI

Dad?

No response.

ELI (CONT'D)

Dad? Are you okay?

No response. More crying.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli is on the phone.

ELI

This is going to sound odd, but
what do you do when somebody cries?

SAM (V.O. ON PHONE)

What do you mean?

ELI

How do you make it stop? Or, I
don't know, cheer the person up?

INT. ICE CREAM STORE - DAY

A simple, friendly-looking store.

Eli and Grady are seated at a table. They look serious;
awkward together. They are eating their ice cream silently.

ELI

How's your ice cream? Is it
cheering you up?

GRADY

It's good.

ELI

Do you want more?

GRADY

No, I'm fine.

Silence.

ELI
I'm taking you to a support group.

GRADY
No.

ELI
What do you mean no?

GRADY
I'm not going to one.

ELI
But--

GRADY
Eli, I'm not going to one.

ELI
Okay. Sorry.

Silence.

GRADY
Um, I have to use the restroom.

Grady gets up.

ELI
Wait.

Grady stops and looks at Eli confused.

INT. ICE CREAM STORE - BATHROOM - DAY

Grady is peeing in a urinal. Eli is watching Grady from behind. They look very uncomfortable. Grady is done.

ELI
Sorry. It's just, you know, I...
I'm not supposed to leave you
alone.

A man opens the door. He sees Eli watching Grady. He slowly closes the door and goes back outside.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Eli and Grady are walking to Eli's car. They pass a YOUNG FATHER, 30s, and his YOUNG SON, 6, holding hands and smiling. Eli and Grady see this, then continue walking looking uncomfortable and awkward.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli and Grady walk in the house. Eli looks at Grady.

ELI
I'm pretty tired. I'll see you in
the morning.

Eli walks away, then stops.

ELI (CONT'D)
Don't do anything to yourself.

Eli walks to his room and shuts the door. Grady looks around.

GRADY
Where do I sleep?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli is sleeping on his bed. Eli's cell phone RINGS. It wakes him up. He answers it.

SAM (V.O. ON PHONE)
Want to get some lunch?

ELI
(wearily)
Okay.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Grady is sleeping awkwardly on the couch. His legs are extending over the side. It looks like it hurts. Eli walks in. He looks at Grady strangely.

ELI
Dad?

No response. Eli walks over to Grady and nudges him. He slowly wakes up.

GRADY
What? What is it?

ELI
You know, there's another room.

Eli motions to the other room. Grady looks.

GRADY
Oh.

ELI
I have to go out now.

GRADY
Okay.

Beat.

ELI
You have to come with me.

GRADY
Wh-why?

ELI
You're not supposed to be alone.

Grady sighs and reluctantly gets up.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

An average restaurant; not classy.

Eli, Grady, and Sam are sitting at a table. Grady is eating.
Sam impersonates Marlon Brando.

SAM
"You don't understand! I coulda had
class. I coulda been a contender. I
could've been somebody." Good, huh?

Grady stops eating and looks at Sam like "who is this idiot?"

ELI
What are you doing?

SAM
It's my Brando.

GRADY
Brando?

SAM
Yeah. It's pretty good, huh?

GRADY
No.

ELI
Sam, just stop.

SAM
Why? I'm trying to cheer you guys
up.

ELI
Well, don't.

Silence.

SAM
(to Grady)
So, what's it like being Eli's
father?

Eli covers his eyes, not enjoying Sam's presence.

GRADY
I don't know. It's fine, I guess.
(beat)
Why are you asking me that?

SAM
I'm interested. And I don't know
what else to ask.
(beat)
Why're you here? Visiting?

GRADY
Yeah. Sort of.

Silence.

Sam's eyes move to Grady's bandaged wrists.

SAM
What happened to your wrists?

Grady stops. He shows sadness. Eli shoots a "Shut up!" look to Sam. Eli tenses up.

SAM (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Grady looks at his wrists.

GRADY
I...um, I cut them.

SAM
Shaving accident?

Eli looks away. He can't take it.

GRADY
No. I tried to kill myself.

SAM
Oh my God. Are you okay?

GRADY
No. I tried to kill myself.

SAM
Why?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli is working on a manuscript at his desk. He looks at Grady watching TV. The phone RINGS. Eli answers.

ELI
Hello?

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
Hey, it's Charlie.

ELI
Oh, hey, what's up?

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
How's Dad?

ELI
Good.

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
No incidences?

ELI
No.

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
That's good.
(beat)
You're coming to my wedding, right?

ELI
Yeah.

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
Great. Listen, I got you help.

ELI
I don't need a shrink.

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
Huh? Oh, no. Someone to help with
Dad.

ELI
Why? I'm doing fine.

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
She's a friend of Jane's and
doesn't have a job. So, I figured I
can get her a job. This is the job.

ELI
What can she do?

CHARLIE (V.O. ON PHONE)
I don't know. Look, I got to go.
Tell Dad I said hi. Bye.

Charlie hangs up. Eli stands with the phone to his ear. Grady
looks at him.

GRADY
What is it?

ELI
Charlie got you a nurse.

GRADY
Oh.
(beat)
Is she cute?

ELI
Uh...I don't know.
(beat)
Cute?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The TV is on. It's dark except for the light from the TV. Eli
walks out of his room and sees that no one is watching the
TV. He gets panicky.

He sees light coming from the partially closed bathroom door.
He quickly opens it to see:

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Grady has shaving cream on his face. He's shaving. Grady gets
startled.

ELI
Why are you shaving so late?

GRADY
I always shave at night.

Eli spots a razor blade on the counter. Grady sees Eli looking at it.

ELI
(concerned)
Why's that there?

GRADY
I was shaving.

ELI
You can't be going off in the middle of the night like that. Look, I can't have you sleeping alone. The doctor said.

GRADY
Where will I sleep then?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Grady are lying next to each other in bed. Grady is sleeping. Grady farts. Eli wakes up. His eyes are wide open. He sniffs, not enjoying the smell. He looks at Grady.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Grady is awake. Eli wakes up. He's wearing a surgical mask over his mouth. They're looking at the ceiling.

ELI
What do you want to do?

GRADY
Don't you work?

ELI
I don't have to go to an office.

GRADY
Why not?

ELI
Freelance.

GRADY

Oh.

ELI

Sam's one of my clients.

Silence.

ELI (CONT'D)

Breakfast?

GRADY

Okay.

(beat)

Why are you wearing a mask?

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Eli and Grady step out of the apartment. LITTLE KIDS are playing baseball with a wiffle ball. The PITCHER throws the wiffle ball. The BATTER swings. Grady gets startled. He jumps.

ELI

What's wrong?

GRADY

It scared me.

ELI

What did?

GRADY

I don't know. The swing.

ELI

Why?

GRADY

It reminded me of that time you hit me with a baseball bat.

Eli looks guilty. JORDAN, mid-20s, a pretty girl, approaches them. She's carrying a container of food and wearing sandals.

JORDAN

Hi, excuse me, are you Eli Polite?

Eli and Grady look at Jordan.

ELI

Yeah. Do I know you?

JORDAN
No. Um, Charlie sent me?

ELI
Oh. Um, hi.

JORDAN
Hi. I'm Jordan.

ELI
Oh, like the basketball player.

Jordan looks at him confused.

JORDAN
No, like the Jordan River.

Awkward silence.

ELI
Yeah, I'm sorry. I didn't know when you were showing up. Charlie never told me.

JORDAN
Oh. Well, I'm here now.

ELI
I can see that.

JORDAN
Are you guys going somewhere?

ELI
We're getting some breakfast.

JORDAN
Mind if I tag along?

ELI
Sure. What's in the container?

Jordan looks at the container.

JORDAN
Oh, it's--

Jordan accidentally drops it on the floor. Some cookies fall out. Eli and Jordan bend down to get them.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
It's okay. I got it.

ELI
No, I'll get it.

JORDAN
No.

They pick up the dropped cookies.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
I got it.

Eli accidentally steps on Jordan's foot while picking up the cookies. She looks in pain.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Ah, fuck, man! Fuck! It hurts!

Jordan rubs her foot. Eli steps back, looking foolish. Grady watches the whole thing. He looks around to avoid watching the scene.

ELI
Oh my God. I'm so sorry.

Jordan continues to moan in pain.

ELI (CONT'D)
Well, you shouldn't have been wearing sandals.

JORDAN
Get me a bandage!

INT. DINER - DAY

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are sitting at a booth. Eli and Grady are sitting by each other. Jordan on the other side. She looks pissed. Eli is looking down at his food, eating quietly. He looks up.

ELI
I'm sorry. I was trying to be nice.
(beat)
So, you're a nurse?

JORDAN
No.

ELI
I thought Charlie said you were helping out with my Dad.

JORDAN

Well, I can clean and cook, I guess.

ELI

So, you're a maid then?

JORDAN

No.

ELI

I was trying to be funny.

JORDAN

Really?

ELI

(shyly)

Yeah.

JORDAN

I didn't think it was very funny.

(to Grady)

Do you know how to talk? Why aren't you talking?

GRADY

What?

JORDAN

(imitating Grady)

What?

(beat)

God, I'm sorry. I'm being kind of bitchy right now, huh?

ELI

(sarcastically)

No. I hadn't noticed.

JORDAN

You didn't? Are you stupid?

ELI

Oh, no. I was being sarcastic.

JORDAN

Oh. God, I'm awful. I'm having the biggest period right now. And you stepped on me, and God, I just keep talking, talking. Please shut me up. I'm nuts, I swear.

ELI
Are you sure you can take care of
my Dad?

JORDAN
Yes. Absolutely. Why wouldn't I?

ELI
I don't know. You seem a little
jumpy.

JORDAN
Well, I told you why I was. I'll be
back to normal tomorrow. Promise.

ELI
You're strange.

JORDAN
Oh, thank you.

ELI
That wasn't a... nevermind.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Eli finishes brushing his teeth. He exits.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli sees Grady on the floor. Grady is moaning. Eli rushes to
him.

ELI
Dad? What's wrong?

GRADY
I feel like shit.

ELI
I'll take you to the hospital.

Eli tries his best to pick Grady up.

ELI (CONT'D)
I'll call Jordan.

He dials her number on his phone. It constantly rings.

ELI (CONT'D)
Dammit, she's not answering.

Eli tries to pick Grady up again.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Eli's car drives to the front of the hospital.

INT. ELI'S CAR - DAY

Eli sees a MEDIC at the front. Eli rolls down the window.

ELI
Hey!

The Medic walks over to Eli's car.

ELI (CONT'D)
My dad's feeling a bit sick and
he's heavy. Can you help?

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

Eli is sitting down in a chair reading a magazine. A LITTLE BOY, 9, stands in front of him, glaring. Eli puts down his magazine and looks at the Little Boy.

ELI
What?

LITTLE BOY
(annoyingly)
Are you gay?

ELI
No.

LITTLE BOY
You look like you are.

Eli attempts to read his magazine but his attention is back at the Little Boy.

ELI
How do I look gay?

LITTLE BOY
Your face.

ELI
I like girls.

Eli reads his magazine as he says:

ELI (CONT'D)
You look gay.

Little Boy makes a face like he's about to cry. Eli puts down his magazine.

ELI (CONT'D)
(panicky)
Don't cry. Please. I'm sorry. You look really straight.

Little Boy cries. Eli stands up, looks around, and quickly walks out.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Eli takes out a cigarette from his pack and lights it. He smokes. CINDY, mid 20s, a skinny, pretty girl, is smoking at a distance. Eli looks at her. She notices it.

CINDY
What?

ELI
What?

CINDY
Why'd you look at me?

ELI
What do you mean?

CINDY
You looked at me.

ELI
I don't think I did.

CINDY
Oh.

Cindy walks toward Eli.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Hi. I'm Cindy.

Cindy sticks her hand out for a handshake.

ELI
Eli Polite.

He shakes it.

CINDY
Polite? That's an interesting last
name.

(beat)
Why are you here?

ELI
My Dad.

CINDY
Ah. Cancer?

ELI
No. Why do you assume it's cancer?

CINDY
I don't know. I just always do.

ELI
Oh.

CINDY
What's wrong with him?

ELI
I don't know. I found him on the
floor.

CINDY
Oh. That's cool.

Eli looks at her confused.

CINDY (CONT'D)
Sorry. I don't know why I said
that.

(beat)
What was your name again?

ELI
Eli.

CINDY
Eli. Okay.

Silence.

ELI
So, why are you here?

CINDY
I'm waiting for a buddy of mine.
She's getting checked out.

Grady comes out of the hospital. Eli does not realize this and he jumps when he sees Grady.

ELI
Whoa. You scared me.

GRADY
Sorry.

ELI
(to Cindy)
This is my Dad, Grady Polite.

CINDY
Hi, I'm Cindy.

GRADY
Hi.
(to Eli)
You smoke?

ELI
Yeah. I started recently.

GRADY
It killed your Mother.

Awkward. Eli drops his cigarette and crushes it. Grady walks away toward the car.

ELI
Sorry.
(to Cindy)
I guess I have to go now. It was nice talking to you.

CINDY
Ditto.

Eli walks away. Eli frowns as he turns away from Cindy. He stops. He turns around and walks toward Cindy.

ELI
Hey.

CINDY
Hi.

ELI
Um, would you like to go out with me for dinner or something?

CINDY
I have a boyfriend.

ELI
Oh. Sorry. I'm so sorry.

CINDY
Yeah.

Silence. They stare at each for five seconds.

ELI
Okay. I guess, bye again. Sorry.

Eli walks away embarrassed.

INT. ELI'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Eli is driving. He looks mad. Grady is in the passenger seat. He's looking out the window. It's quiet for a moment, until:

ELI
Fuck! You stupid fuck!

Grady looks at Eli, angry.

GRADY
What did you just call me?

Eli looks at Grady.

ELI
Oh, no. I was talking to myself.

GRADY
Why'd you say that?

ELI
I don't know. I guess I'm a little
upset with myself.
(beat)
So, what happened at the hospital?

GRADY
I have kidney stones.

ELI
Jesus Christ. Does it hurt?

GRADY
It hurts so much that I want to
kill myself.

Silence.

ELI

Dad, don't, don't say that. Some people might take it the wrong way.

GRADY

I don't give a damn what people think. It's how I feel.

ELI

Dad--

GRADY

Why'd you start smoking?

ELI

I don't know. Why did Mom?

Grady is about to say something, but Eli's phone RINGS. He takes it out and hands it to Grady.

ELI (CONT'D)

Here. Answer it.

Grady answers the phone.

GRADY

Hello?

JORDAN (V.O. ON PHONE)

Hi, Grady?

GRADY

Yes.

JORDAN

Sorry, I didn't pick up. What happened? Everything okay?

GRADY

Yeah, I just collapsed. It's nothing.

JORDAN

Oh my God! Do you need help?

GRADY

I don't think so.

JORDAN

I'll come anyway.

Jordan hangs up.

GRADY
Jordan's coming over.

ELI
Why?

GRADY
I'm not sure.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli and Grady approach the door to find Jordan waiting there with a big brown bag. Jordan walks to Eli and Grady.

JORDAN
(to Grady)
You okay?

GRADY
I think so.

ELI
What's in the bag?

JORDAN
I brought some fruit.

ELI
Why'd you bring fruit?

JORDAN
It's healthy.

ELI
Okay, well, do you want to come in?

JORDAN
Okay.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

They walk in. Jordan looks around. Grady walks to Eli's room.

JORDAN
Cute place.

Eli takes the bag of fruit.

ELI
I'll take this.

He walks to the kitchen.

ELI (CONT'D)
So, why are you here?

Eli puts the fruit in the refrigerator.

JORDAN
I thought maybe your Dad needed help. I heard he collapsed.

ELI
He says he's fine.

Grady walks to the couch and sits. He turns the TV on.

JORDAN
Want me to cook something or clean?
I've been told I make a mean macaroni and cheese.

ELI
No, it's okay.

Jordan walks to the kitchen. She gets close to Eli while he puts away the fruit. Eli gets a little startled.

ELI (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

Jordan whispers.

JORDAN
Your Dad tried to kill himself?!

ELI
Yes.

JORDAN
And you hit him with a baseball bat? What's wrong with you?

ELI
That was a long time ago.
(beat)
Did Charlie send you to watch over me?

Jordan looks guilty. She hesitates as she says:

JORDAN
No.

ELI
He did, didn't he?

JORDAN
Well, kind of.

Eli closes the refrigerator door. He stands for a moment, staring off.

ELI
They don't trust me.

Eli's attention is on Jordan.

ELI (CONT'D)
I want you to leave.

JORDAN
What? Why?

ELI
I can do this by myself.

JORDAN
Charlie's just a little concerned.
And he's paying me.

ELI
What is this? What exactly is
Charlie expecting you to do to get
paid?

JORDAN
I know it sounds a little bizarre,
but it really isn't. I don't want
to be a charity case. But I really
do need the money and I can't get a
job for fuck's sakes. And so, you
know, the nice couple he and Jane
are, offered me this. I know it's
out of the norm, but hell, a lot of
things are.
(beat)
And I'm sorry I went ape shit on
you earlier.

Pause.

ELI
Fine. You can help.

JORDAN
Great. I'll clean.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Jordan is on her knees dusting a shelf with a duster. After a moment, she tears up. She stops dusting and wipes her tears away.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli and Jordan are by the door. Grady is sitting on the couch.

JORDAN
I may be late most days. I live pretty far from here.

ELI
Oh yeah, you're by Charlie, huh?

JORDAN
Yup.

They look at each other for a moment until it gets awkward. She laughs a little.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Yeah, so I guess I should get going now.

ELI
Yeah.

JORDAN
Bye Grady!

Grady waves.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Alright, see ya.

Jordan walks away. Eli closes the door and sits down next to Grady.

ELI
She's a little out there, isn't she?

Grady nods.

ELI (CONT'D)
You like her? Is she cute?

GRADY
She's entertaining.

Eli nods.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli wakes up in bed. He hears Grady MOANING loudly.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Eli is next to the closed bathroom door. He KNOCKS on the door.

ELI

Dad?

Grady coughs and moans. He struggles to speak.

GRADY (O.S.)

Yeah?

ELI

What's wrong?

GRADY (O.S.)

It's the goddamn stones... Ah!
Fuck!

ELI

Don't you have pills or something?

GRADY (O.S.)

I forgot to get them.

ELI

You forgot them!? Don't be so
careless. Should we go to the
hospital?

GRADY (O.S.)

No!...ah...ah...FUCK!

ELI

Dad! Open up!

After a moment, the door opens. Grady is on all fours.

GRADY

You don't know how much this hurts.

Eli kneels to be on the same level as Grady.

GRADY (CONT'D)
You don't happen to have any booze,
do you?

ELI
No, sorry.
(beat)
I might have something that may
help.

Grady looks up at Eli.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's quiet. Grady is sitting on the couch. Eli sits down next to him. Eli has a tin container. He opens it to reveal a bag of marijuana. Grady looks at Eli with concern. Eli catches this.

ELI
Sam gave it to me.
(beat)
I was sick.

Eli rolls a joint and hands it to Grady.

GRADY
I can't do this. It seems... wrong.

Grady wrings with pain.

GRADY (CONT'D)
Light it. Hurry up!

Eli lights it. Grady inhales and coughs a little.

GRADY (CONT'D)
I don't feel anything.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Eli and Grady are sitting on the couch. They look relaxed and peaceful. Grady laughs strangely with a high pitch.

ELI
What's so funny?
(beat)
Oh wait, I get it.

Eli laughs like a hyena.

GRADY

I feel fluffy and delicious. I feel like eating myself.

ELI

Man, I want to fly a kite so bad right now. I just want to run real fast and just see that thing fly. God, I'm imagining it right now. So beautiful, so fucking beautiful.

Silence.

GRADY

I didn't like your Mom that much. I guess I did love her at first. But after awhile, she got real bossy, you know?

ELI

She was a bitch.

Grady suddenly gets mad.

GRADY

Don't say that about your mother!

ELI

Sorry.

Grady laughs hysterically. Eli does too.

GRADY

You know why I married her? Adam. Yeah, I got her pregnant. Don't get pregnant, Eli. It messes up your whole life.

Grady chuckles.

ELI

I want some love.

GRADY

Don't ever listen to what you know is wrong, but think is right.

ELI

What?

GRADY

Okay?

ELI

Okay.

Eli nods. Silence.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli and Grady are sleeping on the couch. Their legs are intertwined. Eli wakes up and looks at the legs.

ELI

What the--?

He quickly moves his legs away from Grady.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Eli is dressed. He walks in to find Grady still sleeping on the couch. Eli nudges him. Grady wakes up.

GRADY

Huh?

ELI

Come on. Let's get your pills.

GRADY

Okay.

(beat)

Thanks for the um, uh, marijuana.
It really helped.

ELI

Yeah, no problem.

GRADY

I wish I remembered what was so
funny.

ELI

Yeah.

(beat)

Um, so we should get going.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

A small pharmacy.

Eli and Grady are sitting by each other, waiting to be called. Eli is writing in his notebook. Grady is quietly holding his side. He looks like he's in slight pain.

GRADY
What are you writing?

Eli stops.

ELI
Oh, it's nothing. Just a short story.

GRADY
Is it good?

ELI
I think it is.

GRADY
I've read one of your stories before.

Eli is interested in where this is going. He looks kind of excited.

ELI
Yeah? Which one?

GRADY
I think it was called "The Mad Family."

Eli's excitement diminishes. He looks embarrassed.

ELI
Oh. Well, it's just, you know, a story.

GRADY
Yeah. Well, it's good. I really liked it.

ELI
Thanks.

Beat.

GRADY
Why aren't you a writer?

ELI
I am.

GRADY
I mean, professionally. I remember you wanted to be one.

Eli thinks.

ELI

I don't know. I guess after I got into editing peoples' works I began to like it.

(beat)

There's just something about improving someone else's work that makes me feel like I'm doing something go--

The Pharmacist calls.

PHARMACIST (ON P.A.)

Grady Polite. Grady Polite.

ELI

That's you.

They get up.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli is at his desk. He is on the last page of Sam's manuscript. Grady is sleeping on the couch. Eli closes the manuscript after he finishes. He stretches his arms and leans back in his chair.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli is holding the manuscript. He is heading out. Grady is lying down on the couch.

ELI

I have to give this to Sam.

GRADY

You finished?

ELI

Yeah.

Grady gets up. He touches Eli's shoulder as he says:

GRADY

Congratulations, Eli.

Eli looks at Grady's hand on his shoulder, surprised and a little touched.

ELI
Thanks, Dad.

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - DAY

An apartment similar to Eli's. It is messier but more luxurious.

Eli, Grady, and Sam are sitting by a coffee table. Sam is skimming through pages of his manuscript as he says:

SAM
Wow, Eli. This is really great.

Sam puts down the manuscript. Sam is a teary-eyed.

SAM (CONT'D)
I mean it, Eli. This would be shit if it weren't for you. Thank you.

Sam stands up.

SAM (CONT'D)
Give me a hug.

Eli stands up hesitantly. Sam hugs Eli. They stop.

SAM (CONT'D)
So, I was thinking maybe we can celebrate tonight?

ELI
I don't know.

SAM
Come on. Bring your Dad.
(to Grady)
Come, Grady. Your son finally finished my novel. This is a big day.

ELI
Sam, can I talk to you in private?

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER

Eli and Sam are in the kitchen. They talk quietly.

ELI
I'm not going out.

SAM
Why not?

ELI
My Dad.

SAM
Bring him along, then.

ELI
No. It's weird.

SAM
How?

ELI
I'll feel awkward.

SAM
Well, you always do.

ELI
Sam. We're not going.

Sam gets louder.

SAM
What the fuck's wrong with you,
Eli? I'm really grateful for
editing my work, but I'm sick of
you worrying about yourself all the
time. It's annoying. Grow up.
Seriously.

Sam walks away. Eli turns around to see Grady looking at Eli from his chair.

ELI
So, you want to go?

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A very stylish nightclub/bar. There are a lot of people socializing, dancing. HOUSE MUSIC plays.

Eli and Grady are in a booth. They have drinks. They are watching people dancing, not really into the whole club atmosphere.

Sam walks to their booth with RACHEL, an attractive woman in her mid-20s. She's smiling at Eli.

SAM
 Hey. What's up, guys? This is
 Rachel.

ELI
 Hi.

SAM
 (to Rachel)
 That's Eli.

RACHEL
 Hi, Eli.

SAM
 I'll be right back.

Sam leaves. Eli watches him, then turns his attention to Rachel. She's smiling.

RACHEL
 Wanna dance?

ELI
 No.

She frowns a little.

RACHEL
 Um, why not?

ELI
 Well, it's just that...

Eli looks at Grady.

ELI (CONT'D)
 ...I can't. Sorry.

She nods her head disappointed.

RACHEL
 Well, it was nice meeting you, Eli.

Rachel walks away.

GRADY
 Eli, why'd you do that?

ELI
 I can't just leave you here.

GRADY
 Yes, you can. I'm not a child.

ELI

But Dad--

Grady interrupts.

GRADY

Just go. Let me enjoy my drink by myself.

ELI

Okay, fine. Don't do anything to yourself.

Eli gets up.

INT. BAR - A LITTLE LATER

Eli finds Rachel talking with her Girlfriends. Eli approaches her, then hesitates. A Girlfriend points out Eli to Rachel. Rachel looks at Eli and walks up to him.

RACHEL

Hey. Ready to dance now?

ELI

Yeah, okay.

Rachel grabs Eli's hand and guides him to the dance floor.

Eli dances awkwardly. Rachel waves her arms in the air and moves to the music. She's good.

ELI (CONT'D)

Sorry, this is a little awkward for me.

RACHEL

Why?

ELI

My Dad is over there probably watching me. It's making me a little uncomfortable.

(beat)

And I'm not a good dancer.

RACHEL

Well, I guess we'll have to change that.

Rachel gets close to Eli almost embracing him. Eli closes his eyes, enjoying this. She puts something in Eli's hand.

Eli opens his eyes and checks his hand. It's an ecstasy tablet. Eli looks at Rachel wide-eyed. Rachel whispers in Eli's ear.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Eat it. You'll dance better.

Eli looks at the tablet meaningfully. He swallows it and closes his eyes again, no longer dancing. Rachel grabs him and dances with him.

INT. BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Eli and Rachel are dancing together; their bodies very close to each other. They're doing well.

Grady is sitting alone. He looks pretty miserable. He's drinking and watching people dance.

INT. TAXI - MOVING - NIGHT

Eli is making out with Rachel in the back seat. Grady is sitting by them. He looks at them kissing then looks out the window. He is obviously uncomfortable and upset.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli busts through the door, still making out with Rachel. He manages to turn the light on to reveal Grady standing by the doorway, detached.

Eli and Rachel make their way to Eli's room. The door SLAMS.

Grady walks in, looking depressed. He sits on the couch, rubbing his eyes from exhaustion. He sighs and lies down on the couch.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Rachel walks in the living room area. She hits her leg on the table.

RACHEL
Ah!

Grady, on the couch, wakes up and watches her limping out of the apartment.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli's eyes are closed. He's smiling madly.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jordan is walking to Eli's door. Rachel closes the door. They look at each other.

RACHEL
Um, hi.

JORDAN
Hi.
(beat)
Who are you?

RACHEL
Rachel. Who are *you*?

They stare at each for a moment.

JORDAN
What are you doing here?

RACHEL
I just fucked that Grizzly Adams
looking guy. So, I guess that's
what I'm doing here.

Jordan just looks at her. Rachel gives Jordan a funny look then walks away. Jordan flicks off Rachel's back.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - DAY

Eli opens his eyes to see that Rachel's not there. He frowns, then gets frantic.

ELI
Dad...!?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli, wearing only his pants, emerges from his room. Eli gives a look of relief to find Grady there sitting on the couch.

ELI
I thought I left you at the bar.
(beat)
I'm sorry about last night. I guess
I got a little carried away.

Grady doesn't respond.

ELI (CONT'D)
So, uh, did she leave?

Grady nods. Jordan pops her head from the kitchen.

JORDAN
Morning!

Eli gets a little startled.

ELI
Hey, Jordan. I didn't know you were here.

JORDAN
I called you a couple of hundred times. Why didn't you answer?

ELI
We were out. What are you doing here?

JORDAN
Cooking, talking. Simply put, my job. Hey, where'd you meet that slut?

ELI
Rachel?

JORDAN
I guess that's what it's called.

ELI
I met her at a club and she's not a slut.

Jordan looks concerned.

JORDAN
Who took care of Grady?

ELI
He went with me.

JORDAN
You went clubbing with your Dad?

Eli looks at Grady. Grady is frowning.

ELI
Yeah.

JORDAN

You guys must be awfully close.

Eli, Grady, and Jordan exchange looks.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Do you guys want to go out for a walk or something? I can't stand seeing Grady sitting on the couch all the time. It's sick.

GRADY

It's comfortable.

JORDAN

We're going out after breakfast. Got it?

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are walking on the sidewalk. They're in a area with trees and it's open; a perfect place for a walk.

JORDAN

So, how do you like it? Nice fresh air, huh?

ELI

No.

JORDAN

God. Mr. Negative here. Cheer up, for chrissakes.

ELI

I'm sorry. My head's a little fuzzy.

JORDAN

Having sex with some shit-smelling bimbo does that, doesn't it?

ELI

Shit-smelling? Did you really just say that, Jordan?

JORDAN

Yeah. Well, she reeked of shit.

ELI

You're nuts, I swear.

GRADY

Can we stop the yelling, please? I really feel like shooting myself, for chrissakes.

Eli and Jordan shut up. Silence.

GRADY (CONT'D)

Can we stop and sit, please?

EXT. STREETS - A LITTLE LATER

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are sitting on a bench. Grady is between them. Jordan looks awful bored.

They see Young Father and Young Son holding hands and looking happy, pass by them. Eli and Grady stare at them almost in disgust. Jordan smiles. Grady mutters something under his breath:

GRADY

Those damn guys again.

JORDAN

That's so cute. I remember holding hands with my Dad.

Jordan looks at Eli and Grady.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Did you guys used to do that?

Eli and Grady look at each other. Awkward.

ELI

Um, uh... Well--

GRADY

Can we get an ice cream or something?

EXT. PIER - DAY

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are walking. They have cones of ice creams; Eli and Grady have dark black chocolate ice creams. Jordan has a bright white vanilla. They look pretty mad.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

A pretty empty section at the beach. Large rocks, boulders are on the shore.

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are walking along the shore still eating their ice creams. Jordan sees the rocks. She hands her ice cream to Eli.

JORDAN
Can you hold this?

Jordan jogs toward the rocks.

ELI
Where you going?

She stops.

JORDAN
The rocks.

She runs to the rocks. Eli and Grady watch her walking along the rocks. She stops when she's at the edge. She watches the ocean and looks at peace.

EXT. BEACH - A LITTLE LATER

Eli and Grady are now closer to the rocks. Jordan is still watching the ocean. Eli is eating both ice creams.

GRADY
What do you think she's doing?

ELI
Looks like she's watching the ocean.

GRADY
But, why?

ELI
I'm not sure.

Eli calls out to Jordan.

ELI (CONT'D)
Hey! Jordan!

Jordan looks at Eli and shouts back:

JORDAN
What?

ELI
What are you doing up there?

JORDAN
I'm watching the ocean. Come up
here, so we don't have to shout.

ELI
Okay!

Beat.

JORDAN
Are you eating my ice cream?

EXT. BEACH - LATER

Eli is walking on the rocks, getting closer to Jordan's position. He looks nervous and a little scared. Grady is behind him, not worried.

ELI
Is this safe?

JORDAN
Yeah.

ELI
These rocks won't roll or anything?

JORDAN
Nope.

Eli and Grady reach Jordan. They stand beside her.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Good job, boys.

ELI
Yeah. So, why are you up here?

JORDAN
You know how people have their
"happy places"?

ELI
I guess. Yeah.

JORDAN
This is mine.

ELI
How come this place?

No response.

ELI (CONT'D)

Jordan?

Jordan looks a little sad.

JORDAN

Look at it. It's beautiful.

Eli looks at the ocean. It is beautiful.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

And I lost my virginity here.

Eli's attention is back at Jordan. He looks surprised.

ELI

What?

JORDAN

Well, not on this rock, but on one just like it.

(beat)

It was such a magical night. That's why I find myself climbing these things. To relive the moment. God, I'd love to have another night like it.

Jordan is on the verge of crying.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I mean, fuck. What the fuck am I doing in my life? I wanted to be a photographer or a cook or something with some zest. *This* thing I'm doing, me taking care of your Dad, watching over you; it's not a real job.

Jordan cries. Eli looks at her and fidgets, not knowing what to do. Grady walks over and pats her back. She hugs Grady. Grady looks at Eli like "am I doing the right thing?" Eli looks away to see a YOUNG MAN and WOMAN couple holding hands and walking along the shore.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Grady is sitting on the couch reading a newspaper. Eli comes in. His hair's wet. Eli sits next to Grady.

ELI

Hey.

GRADY

Hi.

ELI

What are you reading?

GRADY

The newspaper.

ELI

Any news?

GRADY

Yes.

ELI

What kind?

Grady puts down the paper.

GRADY

I don't know. I was just pretending to read to tell the truth.

ELI

Oh.

(beat)

That was pretty weird at the rocks today.

GRADY

I guess.

Beat.

ELI

You patted her on the back. Why?

GRADY

I don't know. It just felt like the right thing to do.

ELI

I see.

(beat)

Hey I wanted to apologize to you about Rachel. I'm sorry.

GRADY

No need to. I can you're a young man. It's normal. But, I have to ask, what happened with that girl you brought to your mother's funeral?

Eli looks saddened.

ELI
Amy? We broke up.

GRADY
I'm sorry to hear that. But, I'm glad you broke it off with her. She treated you like she was an amazon or something.

ELI
What do you mean?

GRADY
She was controlling.

Beat.

ELI
Actually, she broke up with me.

GRADY
Oh.

Grady slowly looks away from Eli. Eli looks straight ahead. Awkward.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Grady are in bed. Grady is sleeping. Eli's lamp is on by his side. He's looking at a framed picture of him and Amy. He's crying quietly.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - DAY

Eli is purchasing some cigarettes at the front. Grady is by him.

GRADY
You really have to smoke those things?

ELI
I like it.

GRADY
Yeah, but they killed your--

As the Liquor Store Worker hands him the cigarettes, a ROBBER with a beanie busts into the store. He has a gun. Everyone looks frightened. Everyone raises their arms.

ROBBER
Everyone, shut the fuck up!

Grady gets down on all fours. The Robber sees this.

ROBBER (CONT'D)
What are you doing?! Did I tell you
to do that?

Grady attempts to get up, but the Robber says:

ROBBER (CONT'D)
Never mind! Stay down!

The Robber walks closer to them. He looks at Eli.

ROBBER (CONT'D)
What the fuck are you looking at,
man?!

ELI
Nothing. No one. I'm sorry.

ROBBER
You think I'm a nobody then?

ELI
No. I'm sorry. Please don't hurt
me. You're not a no one.

ROBBER
So, you decide who I am, huh?

ELI
No--

Robber punches him in the stomach. Eli reacts by holding his stomach.

GRADY
Eli...

ROBBER
Get up!

Eli stands up, trembling. The Robber sticks the gun to Eli's head.

Grady gets up slowly, his hands in the air. The Robber points the gun at Grady.

ROBBER (CONT'D)
What are you doing, man?

GRADY

Please. You can have our money.
Just don't hurt us, okay?

Robber turns toward Eli.

ROBBER

Give it here.

Eli takes his wallet out of his pocket. The Robber takes the money. He looks at Eli.

Robber hits Eli's eye with the butt of his gun. Eli falls down. Eli is on his back, unconscious. His eye bleeds.

INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER

Eli opens his eye. His eye is bruised. He looks awfully depressed. He hears Jordan from a distance.

JORDAN (O.S.)

Crazy people out there. Never know
what's going to happen. You go out
for some errands, next thing you
know, you're dead. It's just...

Someone stands over him. It's MICHAEL, mid 20s, a cop. He has a mustache.

MICHAEL

Holy shit! Are you... aren't you
Eli Polite?

Eli is baffled.

ELI

Um, yeah.

MICHAEL

It's me, man! Michael Schmidt!

Eli takes a closer look at him.

ELI

Hi.

MICHAEL

Do you recognize me?

ELI

You have a mustache now.

MICHAEL

Yeah. And you have a beard. That's pretty cool.

(beat)

Whoa. What happened to your eye?

ELI

I think I got punched.

MICHAEL

Oh shit. When? Wait... just right now? Oh, fuck, you got punched by that robber.

ELI

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Man, that sucks. I hate that.

Eli gets up.

ELI

Where's my Dad? Is he okay?

MICHAEL

Yeah. We're getting his statement.

Jordan walks over to Eli. She's been crying. She hugs him.

JORDAN

Oh my God, Eli.

MICHAEL

Hey, do you want to go hang out and catch up or something?

Eli and Jordan look at Michael like this is the wrong time to be asking this.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

An average diner. The place is not very crowded.

Eli, Grady, Jordan, and Michael are at a table. Eli is holding a bag of ice on his eye. Eli looks very depressed. He does not want to be with Michael.

MICHAEL

Okay, so last night, wait, no, two nights ago, yeah, two nights ago, there's this speeding blue Honda Civic, right?

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Well, I'm hiding in this alley and the car zooms past me. I turn my sirens on and catch up to the bastard. I get out of my car and approach the vehicle, you know? I walk up to the driver and my fucking balls drop. It's this sexy, gorgeous blonde. She's wearing this dress except that one of the straps has fallen and I can see her tit. It's a fucking great job, being a cop.

Grady sees that Eli does not want to be here.

ELI

Sounds like fun.

MICHAEL

Are you seeing anybody? Any sexy girls?

ELI

No, not really.

MICHAEL

Man, remember that one time we went out with those girls from--

GRADY

Hey. Not right now, okay?

MICHAEL

What?

GRADY

Stop talking. My son just had a gun to his head.

ELI

Dad, it's--

JORDAN

(to Michael)

Seriously, man. Why are you talking about your balls dropping? This isn't exactly the appropriate time to be talking about your titty adventures. And you don't talk like that in front of a lady.

MICHAEL

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

GRADY
We probably should get going now.

MICHAEL
Yeah, sure, sure.

They get up. Michael pats Eli on the arm, comfotingly.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Take care of yourself, Eli.

ELI
Yeah.

Eli, Grady, and Jordan walk away. Eli is between them. He looks at them.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are at the front.

JORDAN
Do you need anything? Any help?

GRADY
Eli?

ELI
No.

Beat.

JORDAN
(to Grady)
Take care of Eli. I can't come tomorrow, but I'll be here in two days. Okay?

GRADY
Okay.

She tries to smile. Her eyes are teary.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli and Grady walk in. Eli looks horrible.

ELI
I'm going to bed.

GRADY
Do I come with you?

Eli looks at him blankly. He sighs. His voice is shaky like he's about to cry.

ELI

Yeah.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - ELI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Eli is sleeping. Grady is in bed. Eli is facing Grady. Grady looks at him meaningfully, like, "my son could have been killed today."

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eli walks out to the kitchen to find breakfast on the table. His eye is bruised heavily. Grady is reading a newspaper on the couch.

ELI

You made breakfast?

GRADY

Yeah.

Eli sits down to eat. He takes a bite.

ELI

Thanks.

Silence.

GRADY

How are you feeling?

ELI

I'm okay. The eye doesn't really hurt. It's just colored bad.

GRADY

That's good. Is there anything I can help you with?

ELI

I'm okay.

GRADY

If there is anything, you know, you can tell me.

Eli nods. Silence. Grady gets up and walks to the refrigerator. Eli watches him. Grady takes out a bag of frozen peas from the freezer and sets it on the table by Eli.

GRADY (CONT'D)
Put it on your eye. The swelling
will go down.

Eli puts the pack on his eye while looking at Grady. Grady
sits by Eli.

GRADY (CONT'D)
How's the food?

ELI
It's good.

GRADY
Didn't know I cook, huh?

ELI
No.

GRADY
Your Mother wanted to be the cook
of the house. I think she was
jealous, to be honest.

Grady looks at Eli and sees he's a little annoyed.

GRADY (CONT'D)
Well, I'll leave you to your meal.

Grady grabs his side. He feels pain gradually building up.
Eli notices it.

ELI
Are you okay?

Grady groans.

ELI (CONT'D)
Do you need your pills?

GRADY
I already took them. Do you, uh, I
don't know how to ask you this. Um,
do you have any more weed?

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli is working at his desk. Grady is high. He laughs in short
bursts every few seconds.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Eli is asleep in his chair with his head on the desk. Grady walks over to him and nudges him. Eli slowly wakes up. He rubs his neck.

GRADY
Let's go to bed, Eli.

Eli gets up. They walk side by side to Eli's bedroom.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Grady opens the front door. Jordan comes in.

JORDAN
Hi.

Grady and Jordan walk to the couch. Eli is sleeping on it. He's only wearing pajama pants. His eye is slightly bruised.

GRADY
I don't know what's gotten into him. He was fine at first then he started lying down on the couch all day.

JORDAN
Eli... Eli... Eli!

Eli grunts.

GRADY
What's wrong with him?

JORDAN
That hit must have really shook him up. What did you do when you were this down?

GRADY
The same thing except I'd be watching TV.

JORDAN
I'll try waking him up.

Jordan nudges him. She does it more aggressively. Eli moans and groans.

JORDAN (CONT'D)
Hey, man! I know you're awake. Stop faking!

Eli's eyes open. He sounds tired.

ELI
Huh? What?

JORDAN
You little actor!

ELI
What are you talking about?

JORDAN
You were awake the whole time.

ELI
Shut up, will ya?

JORDAN
Get up. Let's get some fresh air.

ELI
(to Grady)
Hey can you tell her to leave
please?

Grady looks at Jordan who looks pissed. Grady looks at Eli.

GRADY
I think she's right. You should get
out of here.

ELI
I'm comfortable right where I am.
You guys enjoy a nice walk
together.

Jordan walks away angrily. She gets a cup from the kitchen. She fills it with water, then walks back to Eli. She drinks it. She kicks him repeatedly everywhere. Eli gets up. He's wide awake.

ELI (CONT'D)
What the fuck?

JORDAN
Now that you're awake. Let's go.

INT. ELI'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Eli is driving. He looks upset. Grady is in the passenger seat. Jordan is in the back. Grady looks out the window. Something catches Grady's attention outside:

A SHOT OF A BUSY CARNIVAL.

Grady points to the carnival.

GRADY
Turn over there.

ELI
Where?

GRADY
Over there.

Eli looks to where Grady is pointing.

EXT. CARNIVAL - DAY

An average-looking carnival. Games at every corner, rides, teenagers, fun.

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are walking side by side.

ELI
Why are we here?

GRADY
I never did take you to a carnival,
did I?

ELI
No.

GRADY
Well, here it is.

Eli looks around.

JORDAN
Hey! Let's ride the Ferris Wheel.

Eli sees the Ferris Wheel from afar. He looks tense/scared.

ELI
It's a little childish, isn't it?

JORDAN
You're a little childish.

ELI
No, I'm not.

JORDAN
Yes, you are.

ELI
No. I'm not.

JORDAN
Then prove it. Go on the Ferris
Wheel, Mr. Man.

ELI
I don't know...

JORDAN
It'll be fun. Come on.

Jordan intertwines her arm with his. Eli looks at this.

ELI
Fine.

Jordan smiles.

EXT. CARNIVAL - AT THE FERRIS WHEEL - DAY

People are in line. Eli, Grady, and Jordan are too.

Eli looks up at the towering Ferris Wheel with fear and nervousness.

EXT. CARNIVAL - AT THE FERRIS WHEEL - LATER

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are at the front of the line. People exit the gondola. The CARNIVAL WORKER opens the door for Eli, Grady, and Jordan to enter. The Carnival Worker looks at them.

CARNIVAL WORKER
Okay. Two to a seat.

Eli looks frightened. Grady and Jordan see this.

JORDAN
What's wrong?

ELI
I'm scared of heights.

GRADY
You are?

CARNIVAL WORKER
Come on. Let's move it.

Jordan takes Eli's hand.

JORDAN

Don't worry. I'm like the anti-scared of heights gal. We'll equal each other out.

INT. GONDOLA - THAT MOMENT

Grady and Jordan sit by each other on one side. Eli sits alone on the other side.

ELI

(to Jordan)

I thought you said we'd equal each other out.

A chubby, massive, 8 year old, NEIL, sits by Eli. Eli looks at him, then at Grady and Jordan, confused. HAPPY MUSIC plays. The Ferris Wheel starts.

INT. GONDOLA - A LITTLE LATER

The gondola is in the middle level, not yet at the peak. Everyone is looking outside except Eli. He looks so scared.

JORDAN

It's so pretty.

The gondola is getting up there. Eli looks out, then quickly back inside. He's scared.

ELI

Is this thing secure?

NEIL

Yeah.

Neil starts shaking the gondola car like mad. The gondola sways back and forth. Eli is panicky. He holds onto his seat for safety.

ELI

Stop, please!

Neil stops eventually.

NEIL

See, safe.

Eli looks sick. He's motionless. Then, he throws up on Neil's lap. Neil SCREAMS. Grady and Jordan look at this.

INT. GONDOLA - LATER

The gondola has reached the top. Jordan and Neil are looking out. Grady looks out. It's beautiful. He looks relaxed and at peace. Eli is nervously looking inside the gondola. He sees Grady enjoying it. Eli decides to look out.

Eli sees all the people at the carnival. There's so many people having fun. He sees the city.

Eli looks at Neil, then Grady, and finally Jordan. They are all looking out the gondola. He almost smiles.

EXT. CARNIVAL - AT THE CAROUSEL - NIGHT

Few kids ride the carousel. Parents watch their kids. Eli, Grady, and Jordan sit at a bench. They're watching the kids on the carousel. HAPPY MUSIC plays.

ELI
They look so happy.

JORDAN
Do you want to go on it?

ELI
Oh, no, no.

JORDAN
Why not? I'm guessing you've never gone on one.

ELI
I'm a little too old to be starting.

The HAPPY MUSIC stops. The ride's over. Jordan stands up. Jordan takes Eli's hand.

JORDAN
This "oh, I'm too old and mature" crap again? Come on. I'll go with you.

ELI
I don't know.

GRADY
Go, Eli. I'll watch you guys.

Eli looks at Grady, then at Jordan.

ELI
Okay. Let's go.

He gets up.

EXT. CARNIVAL - AT THE CAROUSEL - A LITTLE LATER

Eli and Jordan sit on horses. Eli looks nervous. Jordan smiles at him. Eli smiles nervously. HAPPY MUSIC plays. It starts.

Grady watches Eli and Jordan.

JORDAN
Isn't this fun?

ELI
No. I feel stupid.

Jordan gives a look of slight disappointment. Eli notices it.

ELI (CONT'D)
But, I feel happy.

Jordan smiles.

JORDAN
Never too old to ride a carousel.

They continue to ride happily.

EXT. ELI'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Eli's car parks by the sidewalk. They get out of the car. Eli and Jordan look at each other.

ELI
Do you want to come up for some coffee?

JORDAN
No, it's okay. I have to get up early.

ELI
Oh, that's right. Charlie's rehearsal's tomorrow.

JORDAN
Yeah.

An awkward pause.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

Well, my car's across the street.

ELI

Yeah.

JORDAN

Today was fun. Really. I mean, look at you Eli, I see some changes. I really do.

ELI

Really?

JORDAN

Yeah. You really conquered that Ferris Wheel tonight. I'm proud of you.

Eli laughs a little.

ELI

Thanks.

JORDAN

I'll see you tomorrow.
(to Grady)
Bye Grady.

Grady waves. After a brief pause, Jordan walks away. Eli watches her.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - DAY

Eli looks at himself in the mirror. He pets his beard. He takes out a can of shaving can and a razor from a drawer. He puts it on his face. He shaves his beard off.

He is now shaved. Eli checks himself out. He turns his head to check out different angles. He's impressed.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

Grady is still sleeping. Eli nudges Grady until he wakes up.

GRADY

Huh?

ELI

We should get going soon.

GRADY
You look good.

ELI
Thanks.

Silence.

ELI (CONT'D)
Um, yeah, so we should get ready.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Eli's car stops in front of a big church.

Eli and Grady exit the car and are greeted by Adam. Adam hugs them both.

ADAM
You guys look great. Really healthy.

ELI
You look good too.

ADAM
(to Grady)
How are you, Dad?

GRADY
Good.

ADAM
Great. Well, let's go inside.
Everyone's here.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

A big church. People are socializing. Charlie is talking to some people.

Eli, Grady, and Adam walk in. Charlie sees them and hugs them.

CHARLIE
You shaved your beard.

Charlie feels Eli's face.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
It's smooth.
(to Grady)
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You look better, Dad. Have you been working out?

No one laughs.

ELI

Is Jordan here?

CHARLIE

She said she couldn't make it today. But she'll be here tomorrow.

ELI

Oh, okay.

CHARLIE

You like her?

ELI

She's nice.

Charlie smiles.

CHARLIE

It's so great to see you guys.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A nice-looking house. Eli, Grady, and Adam enter. Eli is carrying a luggage bag.

ADAM

This is it.

CLAIRE, Adam's pregnant, almost due, wife greets them.

CLAIRE

Grady, Eli. Long time no see.

She hugs them.

ELI

Wow, you got really fat.

Everyone looks at Eli.

ELI (CONT'D)

Sorry. I was trying to be funny.

Claire forces a chuckle.

ADAM

Um, yeah, so your room's upstairs.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

A decent-looking room. There's one bed. Eli, Grady, and Adam look at the bed. Eli is carrying his luggage bag.

ADAM
Sorry, but you guys have to share a bed.

ELI
That's okay. We sleep together.

Eli puts his bag on the side of the bed Grady usually sleeps on. Adam looks confused.

GRADY
Eli, that's my side.

ELI
Oh, sorry.

Eli moves his bag over.

ADAM
Dad? Eli?

GRADY
What?

ADAM
You guys sleep together?

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - LATER

Eli and Grady are in bed.

GRADY
My son's getting married tomorrow.
(beat)
I'm going to be a Grand Dad.

ELI
I guess we'll be one of those Thanksgiving families.

GRADY
Yeah. I guess.
(beat)
What's a Thanksgiving family?

ELI

You know like a family that has the man of the family cut the turkey and is seated at the head.

Beat.

GRADY

How come you never visit Adam and Charlie when you live so close to them?

ELI

I don't know. You never visited.

GRADY

I don't live by you guys.

ELI

There was no reason for me to visit.

GRADY

Hanging out with your brothers isn't a good enough reason?

ELI

I don't know. What would we do?

GRADY

Go to a baseball game, fish, anything.

ELI

I'll keep that in mind. Let's get some sleep, okay?

INT. CHURCH - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Eli, Grady, and Adam are wearing tuxes. They adjust it; dusting and straightening their tuxes. They look at themselves in a mirror. They look serious.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

The wedding. Everyone is wearing elegant clothes: tuxes and dresses. At the front is Charlie, JANE, his to-be wife, and a REVEREND.

Eli is sitting in a pew next to Grady. Behind them, Adam sits with Claire.

Eli sees Jordan in another section of pews. She looks stunning. Eli is fixated.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

The wedding reception is held in a gigantic, lavish ballroom. People are dancing, eating, socializing. A BAND plays.

Eli sits at a table with Grady, Adam, and Claire. Adam is talking to Claire.

ADAM

Eli's been taking care of Dad. From the looks of him, I think he's done a good job.

Grady looks grumpy.

CLAIRE

That's so nice.

Eli looks around.

He sees kids dancing. He smiles a little.

He looks at a couple making out. His smile vanishes. He quickly turns to look elsewhere.

He sees Jordan across the room, sitting alone. He is fascinated. Suddenly, the lights go OUT. Everyone gets startled.

A spotlight shines on Eli. Everyone stares at him. Eli looks confused. Eli sees Jordan staring at him. The spotlight moves its way around to Charlie and Jane's table.

They look happily surprised with the spotlight shining on them.

VOICE OVER P.A. SYSTEM (V.O.)

Ladies and Gentlemen. Mr. and Mrs.
Polite. How about a dance?

Charlie smiles lovingly at Jane. He takes her hand and guides her to the center of the ballroom. LOVELY MUSIC plays as Charlie and Jane dance romantically.

The light from the spotlight is bright enough to show Jordan near the dancing couple. Eli gazes at her.

Grady moans even louder and looks as if he's in excruciating pain.

JORDAN
I think he's in pain.

ELI
No, he's fine.

Grady sounds like a monster.

GRADY
Help...me...rest...room...

JORDAN
Help him, Eli!

ELI
I'll be right back. Don't go anywhere.

JORDAN
Um, okay.

Eli gets up and tries to lift Grady.

ELI
(to Jordan)
Actually, can you help me?

EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eli and Jordan are carrying Grady with his arms around them. They carry him by the bathroom.

ELI
I can take it from here.

Jordan lets go. Eli opens the door. Eli gives Jordan a thankful look and goes inside with Grady.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Eli is waiting outside of Grady's stall. Grady SCREAMS LOUDLY in pain.

GRADY
Yes! Yes! Fuck yes! Woo-hoo!

Eli gets startled.

ELI
What is it?

GRADY
They're out.

The toilet FLUSHES. Grady comes out. He looks really happy. Grady smiles.

GRADY (CONT'D)
They're out.

ELI
Congratulations.

Grady washes his hands. Eli stands next to him. They look at themselves in the mirror. Eli smiles.

EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eli and Grady walk out. Jordan is there.

JORDAN
What happened?

ELI
His kidney stones are out.

JORDAN
Good job, Grady!

Jordan sticks her hand out for a "high-five." Grady looks at it, then smiles. He slaps it.

GRADY
Thanks.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Eli, Grady, and Jordan are sitting at a table with Adam and Claire. The Band plays a SLOW MELLOW SONG. Jordan whispers to Eli:

JORDAN
Want to dance?

ELI
Sure.

Jordan gets up and slowly walks to the dance floor. A couple of couples are dancing. Eli follows her. They face each other.

ELI (CONT'D)
Hi.

JORDAN
Hi.

Jordan grabs Eli's hand. They dance. Jordan's head on Eli's chest.

ELI
I'm not very good at this.

JORDAN
At what?

ELI
Dancing. Do you have any ecstasy?

Jordan looks at him, confused.

JORDAN
No, why?

ELI
It makes me dance better.

JORDAN
You're doing fine.

Eli smiles.

ELI
Okay.

They continue to dance.

EXT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Jordan walk to Jordan's car. It's quiet.

JORDAN
Oh, there's this art show tomorrow night. Maybe you'd like to go?

ELI
Um, yeah, sure.

Jordan opens her car door and gets a banner. She hands it to Eli.

JORDAN
Here.

Eli takes it.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

I have to say, I'm glad to have met both you and Grady. You guys are definitely on the top of my list of genuinely good guys.

Eli laughs.

ELI

I'm glad my brother didn't trust me.

Silence. They laugh a little. Eli hugs and kisses her on the cheek.

ELI (CONT'D)

Okay, I'll see you tomorrow.

JORDAN

Bye.

Jordan gets in. She drives away. Eli waves.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Grady is in bed. Eli lies next to him. It's dark.

ELI

How'd you like the wedding?

GRADY

I drank too much.

ELI

Want some water?

GRADY

No.

ELI

I'm going to an art show with Jordan tomorrow. Do you want to come?

GRADY

No. Adam asked me to help him with the baby room. And I think I probably should spend time with him. He's my oldest, you know?

ELI

Yeah.

(beat)

Do you guys need my help?

GRADY

No. Go to sleep. You've had a lot on your hands.

Eli looks at him, then at the ceiling.

ELI

Good night, Dad.

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

The gallery is black and white. It looks very plain yet stylized. There are a lot of people. They look at art work and discuss. WAITERS and WAITRESSES in uniform have trays with drinks and appetizers.

Eli is with a crowd watching an artist and his artwork hanging on a wall behind him. The artist is RENE, 30s, a skinny guy dressed in all black. He looks like Andy Warhol. The artwork is a painted picture of a Pepsi can and a banana.

RENE

This, ladies and gentlemen, is my finest work. I call it "Banana and a Pepsi Can." It symbolizes the sexual frustration of pop culture. I got the inspiration when I saw the mouth of an opened Pepsi can. It looked like it wanted to speak to me. I unzipped my pants and put myself into the mouth of the can. The pain was prodigious.

Artists nod their heads in agreement.

INT. ART GALLERY - A LITTLE LATER

Eli looks around and spots Jordan across the gallery. She is smiling and giggling with a couple of people. Jordan sees him. She smiles and waves to him. Eli waves back.

Jordan excuses herself from her friends and walks toward Eli. Eli walks toward her too. They meet half way.

ELI

Hey.

JORDAN

Hey.
(beat)
How's your Dad?

ELI

He's a riot.
(beat)
I don't know why I said riot. I'm
not someone who says riot.

JORDAN

Want to walk around?

ELI

Sure.

They walk.

JORDAN

How's it like going out without
your Dad tagging along?

ELI

It's different... I feel good. I
mean, I'm not saying it's awful
being around him, but it feels
good.

JORDAN

Like going away to college.

ELI

Yeah.

INT. ART GALLERY - LATER

Eli and Jordan are looking at a painting of a man being eaten
by pillows.

ELI

This is art?

JORDAN

Apparently.
(beat)
Are you bored?

ELI

Yeah.

JORDAN

I didn't expect you to say that,
but fuck it. Let's get the hell out
of here.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

The only source of light comes from stores and street lamps.
The street is pretty busy. Eli and Jordan are walking
together. They look cold.

JORDAN

Hey.

ELI

Yeah?

JORDAN

Why'd you hit your Dad with a
baseball bat?

ELI

I really don't remember. I mean,
well, I don't want to remember.

JORDAN

Well, I think you're doing a bang
up job with him. I really mean
that.

ELI

Thank you, Jordan. You didn't do
too bad with the cleaning and
cooking.

Jordan smiles.

JORDAN

I was cleaning your room the other
day and I found a picture of you
and a girl. Who is she?

Eli looks bothered.

ELI

Amy. My ex.

JORDAN

Oh. What happened?

ELI

I killed her.

Jordan looks shocked.

JORDAN
Wh--what?

ELI
I'm joking.

Jordan smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)
No, she broke it off with me.

JORDAN
Yikes, I'm sorry.

ELI
You know what, I'm glad she did. I
know I never would have. Like my
Dad said, she was an amazon and I
was her little puppet.
(beat)
Some things are supposed to happen
for a reason.

JORDAN
Yeah. I think you're right.

INT. JORDAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eli and Jordan walk in. She turns the light on to reveal:
A cozy-looking apartment. There's canvas boards everywhere.

ELI
Whoa.

JORDAN
What?

ELI
You must really like painting.

JORDAN
Yeah, well, it's fun.

Eli sees a canvas on an easel. It's a painting of a man in a
suit with the head of a horse. Eli walks up to it.

ELI
Oh my God.

Jordan looks at him.

ELI (CONT'D)

Is this a painting of one of my stories?

JORDAN

Yeah, the one about the guy with the horse head.

ELI

You read my stories?

JORDAN

Yeah. Charlie showed me them.

(beat)

You know, he's really proud of you.

Eli is still looking at the painting.

ELI

It's amazing.

JORDAN

Do you want it?

ELI

Really? How much do you want it for?

JORDAN

You can have it for free.

ELI

No, I couldn't.

JORDAN

Take it. I painted it for you, anyway.

Eli looks touched by this.

ELI

Why?

JORDAN

Because I like you.

Eli smiles at her, then looks at a covered canvas.

ELI

What's that?

JORDAN

Something I've been working on.

She uncovers it. It's a painting of naked people who appear to be flowers.

ELI
You painted this?

JORDAN
Yup.

ELI
What do you call it?

JORDAN
It can have any title, but I guess I call it "Flower People."
Something ordinary.

ELI
I like it.

JORDAN
Thanks, man.

ELI
I didn't know you were a painter.
Why don't you do it professionally?
It's really good.

JORDAN
I tried. I mean, I sell some here and there, but not enough to support me. And I don't know, I kind of like what I've been doing.
Helping your Dad.

Eli smiles.

ELI
So, what, you're going to be a caretaker or something?

JORDAN
Maybe. Yeah.

INT. JORDAN'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Eli and Jordan are by the door. They are laughing about something. They stop and look at each other.

ELI
I guess, I'll see you later,
Jordan.

JORDAN
Yeah, definitely.

Awkward silence. A kiss moment.

ELI
Yeah, so, bye.

JORDAN
Bye.

Another kiss moment. Eli sticks his hand out for a handshake. Jordan looks at it then shakes it.

ELI
Bye.

Eli leaves. Jordan frowns closing the door. Eli frowns walking down the hallway.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Eli enters. Adam and Claire are watching TV in the living room.

CLAIRE
Hi, Eli.

ELI
Hi.
(beat)
Where's Dad?

ADAM
He's sleeping upstairs.

Eli looks concerned.

ELI
By himself?

ADAM
Yeah.

ELI
You're not supposed to leave him alone, Adam.

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Adam burst through the door. Adam turns the light on. Grady wakes up, panicked.

GRADY
What is it? Fire?!

ADAM
You're okay.

GRADY
What's wrong?

ELI
Nothing. You're not supposed to be alone, Dad.

ADAM
Sorry Eli, I totally forgot.

ELI
Just be wary next time.

ADAM
God, I'm so sorry. Eli, I should never have doubted you. Here I am leaving him alone.

Eli touches Adam's shoulder.

ADAM (CONT'D)
You guys should get some sleep.
I'll see you tomorrow.
(beat)
You're doing well, Eli.

Adam leaves. Eli closes the door.

ELI
You scared me.

GRADY
You scared me too.

Silence.

GRADY (CONT'D)
How was the art show?

EXT. ADAM'S HOUSE - DAY

Eli, Grady, and Adam are outside. Adam is facing Eli and Grady. A luggage bag is on the floor next to Eli.

ADAM
I want to see you more, Eli. Come visit.

ELI

I will.

Adam smiles. Adam hugs Eli. Adam faces Grady.

ADAM

You too, Dad. I want you to see
your grandchildren.

Adam hugs Grady.

ADAM (CONT'D)

What are you guys going to do now?

Eli and Grady exchange looks at each other.

INT. ELI'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Eli is driving. Grady is in the passenger seat.

Grady pulls his sleeves up. He looks down at his bandaged
wrists. He takes them off. His wrists are scarred.

ELI

Does it hurt?

GRADY

I don't know.

Grady touches the scars.

GRADY (CONT'D)

No. It's fine.

(beat)

I can't believe I tried to kill
myself.

INT. ELI'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Eli is driving. Grady is sleeping in the passenger seat. The
car is on an empty highway.

QUICK SHOT MONTAGE:

The break up scene with Eli and Amy. They are shouting.

Eli hanging himself.

Eli dancing with Rachel at the club.

Eli looking at Grady's wrist at the hospital.

Eli looking at Jordan on the big boulder.

Eli with the robber's gun to his head.

Eli and Jordan on the carousel.

Eli gazing at Jordan at the wedding.

QUICK SHOT MONTAGE ENDS.

Eli's car is about to pass another street when another car drives straight into Eli's. Eli's car swerves. Eli's eyes are wide with blood spilling down his head. The air bags deploy. Grady's head shoots back.

The ambulance siren is heard.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Grady are in hospital beds. They are sleeping. Eli has a bandage on his head and his stitches on his head. Grady has band-aids on his brow and chin.

Eli wakes up. His eyes move around. He tries to get up but the pain overcomes him. He holds his side. He turns his head to see Grady. He looks around and sees Jordan asleep on a chair. Eli coughs a little. Jordan wakes up. She walks to him. She looks tired and has been crying.

JORDAN

Eli.

ELI

Hey.

JORDAN

You're not very lucky, are you?

Eli chuckles, then coughs. Jordan frowns.

ELI

Is he okay?

JORDAN

Yeah. He's just sleeping.

Jordan cries.

ELI

Hey. Don't cry.

JORDAN

I can't help it. You and Grady,
you've guys been on the verge of
death way too many times.

Eli reaches to wipe the tears from Jordan's eyes but can't reach. It looks silly. They laugh a little. Jordan lowers herself so Eli can wipe the tears. Jordan smiles.

ELI

Thank you for being here. It's
really quite the breathtaking sight
waking up to see you after an
accident.

JORDAN

Well, it really sucks seeing you
all bruised up after an accident.

They smile.

ELI

Hey. I have to tell you something
important.

JORDAN

What is it?

ELI

I tried to kill myself.

JORDAN

Oh my God, Eli. Why?

ELI

I was sad. A girl really hurt me.
But these past few weeks, a lot has
changed. I realized people should
do what they know is right, and not
do what they think is right.

JORDAN

You're getting real philosophical.

Eli chuckles.

ELI

Nearly dying three times does that
to a person.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

It's dark. Eli and Grady are in bed. Eli turns toward Grady.

ELI
Dad? Are you awake?

Grady sounds tired.

GRADY
Yeah. What is it?

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Charlie and Jane are on the bed. Jane is throwing up in a trash can. Charlie is sitting by her comforting her.

ELI (V.O.)
We're going to be okay, right?

INT. SAM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sam is at a desk. He's looking at a blank screen on his computer with only the title: "Exploring Brando: the Essential Guide to Brando Impressions." He deletes the title.

DAD (V.O.)
What do you mean?

INT. ADAM'S HOUSE - BABY ROOM - DAY

Adam is hanging up a large picture of him and Claire on a wall. Claire watches him from a rocking chair. The picture falls. Claire laughs. Adam looks down, defeated.

INT. JORDAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jordan is painting a portrait of Eli as a centaur. She makes a small mistake. She drops her brush and curses.

ELI (V.O.)
I don't know.

A pause.

GRADY (V.O.)
Yeah. We're going to be fine.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

As before.

ELI

I remember you said you liked standing on them, so I thought I'd get you one. I want you to always be at peace.

After a moment, Jordan smiles, hugs, and kisses Eli passionately. Eli says quietly in Jordan's ear.

ELI (CONT'D)

I don't want to die. I like this. I really like this.

JORDAN

Me too.

INT. ELI'S APARTMENT - DAY

QUICK SHOT OF ELI THROWING AWAY CIGARETTES, A NOOSE, A TYLENOL BOTTLE, HE'S ABOUT TO THROW AWAY A BAG OF WEED BUT STOPS, AND HE FINALLY TOSSES HIS PICTURE OF HIM AND AMY.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Kids are playing in an open field in the park. Eli is there. He is the only one who's not a kid. He's holding a kite. He quickly runs really fast. The kite gradually flies in the air. Eli watches it as he runs.

EXT. PARK - LATER

Grady is sitting on a bench. Eli sits next to him. He's holding the kite.

GRADY

How was it?

ELI

It wasn't that bad.

Grady smiles.

ELI (CONT'D)

I tried to hang myself.

Grady frowns.

GRADY

What?

ELI
I tried to hang myself.

GRADY
When?

ELI
Before you did.

GRADY
But... why?

ELI
I wrote a suicide note.

Eli gets it out of his pocket and hands it to Grady.

ELI (CONT'D)
Want to read it?

GRADY
Okay.

Grady reads it. He puts it down.

GRADY (CONT'D)
I wrote one of these too.

ELI
I know.

GRADY
You read it?

ELI
I tried. You're really bad at writing.

GRADY
Want to know what it said?

ELI
No, not really.

Grady crumples the note up. Eli looks upset.

ELI (CONT'D)
What'd you do that for?

Grady looks at Eli, confused.

GRADY
Huh?

ELI
I wanted to keep it.

Eli takes the crumpled note and straightens it.

EXT. PARK - A LITTLE LATER

Eli and Grady are walking. They pass a Young Father and his Young Son holding hands and smiling. Eli and Grady look at them.

Eli grabs Grady's hand, awkwardly. Grady let's go of Eli's hand and looks at him strangely.

GRADY
What are you doing?

ELI
I saw the Dad and the... they were holding hands.

GRADY
Don't do that.

They continue walking in silence. After a moment, Grady takes Eli's hand. Eli looks at him.

GRADY (CONT'D)
Shut up.

They continue.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END