

people don't change

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FADE IN:

1 INT. JOSH'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 1

This house is tastefully and gloriously decorated for Christmas. Garland, handmade bric-a-brac, and a perfect tree. Josh, mid 20's, awkwardly attractive is sitting on the floor next to the tree, holding his head and looking at the ceiling. He has a swollen eye and a fat lip.

2 EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 2

The exterior of Josh's house is as tasteful and festive as the inside. Lots of lights, tracing every bit of trim on the house.

3 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - NIGHT 3

This is Josh's street. On either side of Josh's house, we see the surrounding houses, all decorated for Christmas. Lights, Nativity scenes, reindeer, etc.

FADE OUT.

TITLE: BEFORE

FADE IN.

4 EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - EVENING 4

Same shot, two months earlier. It's Halloween. None of the houses are decorated, save a few jack-o-lanterns. Josh's house is still (or already) decorated for Christmas. Christmas lights up and glowing, A Christmas tree glows in the front window.

Down the street, two mothers with a group of children are trick or treating. The mothers are chatting. The children are talking through masks and makeup, running ahead.

MOTHER #1

I don't know, I just feel like all that work, and then, you know, cause he's not going to be wearing it next year, or even if he wanted to, it totally wouldn't even fit.

MOTHER #2

I know, but look at them. And did you see Janine's daughter?

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER #1

Oh, the Shrek thing? Did... Janine didn't make that though, right, or...?

MOTHER #2

No... It was one of those plastic poncho costumes, with the plastic mask and the little stapled rubber band thing... (to clarify) Janine.

MOTHER #1

Yeah, no, I know, like from the grocery store.

The procession has arrived at a house just like the rest of the houses, but with Christmas lights up all over. This is Josh's house. The Mothers exchange glances, shrug.

MOTHER #1 (CONT'D)

(To the children now)

OK you guys, go ahead up there. Adam, honey, let's fix your cape... There you go. OK... be scary...

The children climb the steps to the door, ring the doorbell. Inside, we hear the doorbell play the first bars of "Jingle Bells" The children don't seem to notice.

The door is opened by Josh, wearing a turtle neck sweater. Inside, we can hear Christmas music.

CHILDREN

(In Unison)

TRICK OR TREAT!

Josh takes this scene in for a beat, smiling.

JOSH

Well! Look at you all! What a scary looking bunch I have at my door! What can I do for you all?

CHILDREN

Candy! Give us Candy! We want Candy!  
Trick or Treat!

JOSH

OK, Alright, I'd better see what I can do in here, huh?

Josh grabs a BOWL FULL OF CANDY CANES. He distributes them amongst the children.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Here's one for you... and for you...  
There you go... And you, oh, do vampires  
eat candy canes?

VAMPIRE

YEAH!!!

JOSH

OK, OK, take is easy, just checking.  
There you go. You guys take care now,  
have a happy season.

CHILDREN

Thanks. Thank you. OK. Bye.

VAMPIRE

(With vampire accent)  
Good Evening!

JOSH

(Same Accent)  
Good Evening!

The Children descend the steps. Josh watches them go, shuts  
the door.

5 INT. JOSH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

5

Josh dims the lights a bit, turns up the Xmas music with a  
remote control, takes a seat in an easy chair.

6 INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

6

This is a Target. MARY, early 20's, attractive but not new,  
is pushing a shopping cart, not looking for anything in  
particular. She puts the following items in her cart:  
Candles, Incense, Green Tea (Imported), A body pillow, Comfy  
Pajamas.

We watch the following items run by on the checkout's  
conveyor belt: Bath salts, Book: "Free: The Womyn Inside  
You", CD: "Sonja: Reflections of the Soul (Enya-esque)" Mary  
pays with a credit card.

7 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

7

Josh is doing Xmas stuff: Making and wrapping gifts, checking  
people off a gift list, making Xmas cards, etc.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

In the living room, Josh removes one ring from a chain of construction paper rings which spans the entire length of the wall into and through the kitchen, to the den, ending at a calendar and chalk board with "55 Days until Christmas" written on it.

Josh rubs out the "55" and replaces with a "54", checks the 31st of October off on the calendar, flips the page to November, admires the new page.

8 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LATER

8

Mary arrives home, unpacks her new stuff. She lights new candles next to old candles, lights a stick of incense and puts the rest of the new incense in a box with lots of other incense.

Mary starts tea, puts the box in a cupboard full of teas from all corners of the world.

In the bathroom, Mary starts a bath, using her new bath salts.

Mary gets out of the bath, puts on her comfy new pjs.

In the bedroom, in a full length mirror, Mary spends a minute assessing how her body looks in the new comfy pjs.

She goes to the living room, puts her new CD on, sits down indian-style on her couch, cracks open her new book.

The CORDLESS PHONE sitting next to Mary rings. Mary checks the caller ID, answers.

MARY

Hi!.. Good, how are yooouu?.. good!..  
reading... huh?.. nooo... 'cause, I have  
to work early, I'm all comfy... seven...  
if you want - actually no, it's messy  
here... what?.. oh, whatever, cry me a  
river... no, she's at some retreat for  
work... yup, guess you're screwed...  
right, but I'm not going out... oh, fuck  
you!.. I'm not even listening to you  
anymore, what are you doing tomorrow?..  
where?.. that sucks... no! Jesus, give  
up!.. yes!.. yes!..

Mary looks at the spot next to her on the couch, where the body pillow, still in it's wrapper, is sitting like a person: Her company.

A Beat.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

MARY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?.. Ewe... let's go to the Ritz... yes, but you're paying, and you have to pick me up... OK... OK, bye.

Mary hangs up, takes apart her evening: puts her book down on a stack of others like it, stops the CD, pours her tea out, blows out the candles, sheds her pjs.

She puts on clothes to go out in, checks her body again in the mirror.

She puts on makeup in her bathroom.

She locks her door, sits on the front steps, waiting.

9 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

9

Josh is making decorations for a tree.

He makes snowflakes from vellum paper.

He strings glass beads together with fishing line.

Josh applies his decorations to a SMALL POTTED TREE. He decorates with ease and grace. We watch the tree become beautiful.

10 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT DAY - MORNING

10

Mary is sleeping in her bed, a body sleeping next to her. They aren't touching. Her comfy pjs are on the floor.

A ZEN ALARM CLOCK begins to chime peacefully. Nothing moves in the room.

FADE OUT.

11 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

11

The BACKUP ALARM, a much more abrasive device, goes off, setting the room in motion. Mary bolts out of bed, stalls standing in the middle of the room, naked. She heads to the bathroom at a more cautious pace.

In the bathroom, Mary looks at herself in the mirror.

A beat.

She turns the shower on.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

MARY  
(on her way to the bedroom)  
Hey, do you want to take a shower?

In the bedroom, the other body is now gone from the bed.

In the living room, we see the front door shut.

Back in the bedroom, Mary stands, looking at the bed.

A beat.

In the bathroom, Mary turns the shower off.

In the living room, she gathers glasses, beer bottles, a near-full ashtray, a half-full pack of cigarettes. She pours the beer bottles into the sink, pours the contents of the ashtray and pack of cigarettes into the disposal, turns it on. She opens the cupboard of tea, stares at the tea, blinks.

12 INT. FRANCHISE COFFEE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER 12

Your basic Starbucks. All the employees are new to college, doing their best to be Gen X.

MARY  
Double Americano with room.

BARISTA  
(to the bar)  
Grande roomy Americano!

BARISTA #2  
(acknowledging)  
Grande roomy Americano!

BARISTA  
Anything else?

MARY  
Actually, can you make that bigger?

BARISTA  
(to the bar)  
Cancel that Grande Americano! Venti roomy Americano!

BARISTA #2  
Venti roomy Americano!

Mary pays with a credit card.

13 INT/EXT. DAYCARE CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

13

Mary parks her car, locks it, juggles her coffee, keys, trendy attache, and a paper grocery bag. We hurry with her through double doors (more juggling) down a hallway, through a cafeteria/gym, through a yellow door, into a kindergarten-esque classroom.

In the classroom, fifteen 3-5 year old children and MISS CLAIRE, a middle aged housewife type, red hair and no sense of adventure, are waiting.

DAYCARE CHILDREN

(In unison)

MARY!!

MARY

Hi Guys!!

MISS CLAIRE

Hi Mary, rough night?

MARY

Hi Claire, thank you so much.

MISS CLAIRE

Mmm Hmm, You all set here?

MARY

I think so. Guys, what do we say to Miss Claire?

DAYCARE CHILDREN

(in unison, obligatory)

Thank you Miss Claire.

Miss Claire exits, the hydraulic door makes it's way shut. Mary turns to the class and makes a sour face. The children laugh.

14 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - MORNING

14

The house is still.

In the bedroom, Josh wakes himself and smiles like the first child awake on Christmas morning.

In the bathroom, he starts the shower.

In the kitchen, he gets a gallon container of APPLE CIDER from the refrigerator, pours the cider into a MUG SHAPED LIKE SANTA CLAUS, puts it in the MICROWAVE, starts it.

(CONTINUED)

Josh grabs a remote control from the kitchen counter, points it towards the living room, turns on the all the Christmas lights on the tree and in the house, and the CD player with one click. The CD player begins to play acoustic christmas music.

In the living room, Josh smells the needles of the SMALL POTTED TREE from the night before. We hear the MICROWAVE beeping from the kitchen.

In the kitchen, Josh gets the mug from the microwave and takes a sip of cider. Josh smiles to himself.

In the bathroom, Josh gets in the shower.

After Josh's shower, he brushes his teeth, cleans his ears, puts on deodorant, shaves.

In the bedroom, Josh gets dressed in jeans and a long sleeved T-shirt. He puts on an OLD WRISTWATCH.

In the kitchen, while eating hot cereal, Josh handwrites and addresses CHRISTMAS CARDS to addresses he pulls from a large PHONE BOOK.

In the bathroom, he brushes his teeth again, checks his watch, starts the shower again, takes off his wristwatch, starts to get undressed.

15 INT. DAYCARE CENTER - AFTERNOON

15

Mary is reading a story to a circle of children. Some of them are sleeping. It's almost nap time.

MARY

Tip Toad sat down on a nearby bottle cap to think about what the crows had done to him. Tip wanted summer to come now, more than ever. He missed his friends back at the pond, and wondered what they were doing right now.

16 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - MORNING

16

Josh is wrapping the SMALL POTTED TREE in a burlap tarp. He packs it up, lights and all.

17 EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

17

Josh loads the tree into the back of an OLD PICKUP TRUCK. He starts the truck, pulls away.

18 INT. DAYCARE CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

18

Mary is putting the children on YOGA MATS for nap time. A children's album is playing a song about sleeping on a plastic record player. Some kids are restless, looking for something else to do. She is carrying a little boy to a mat.

LITTLE BOY

You're smoke!

MARY

Smoke?

LITTLE BOY

You're smokey!

MARY

Oh yeah? OK, well why don't you lie down here, sweetie, alright?

19 EXT. JOSHUA'S TREES CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - AFTERNOON

19

Josh arrives in a gravel parking lot. A RUSTY TRAILER and POLE BARN are the only buildings among ACRES AND ACRES OF CHRISTMAS TREES.

Josh unlocks a padlock, opens the door of the pole barn to reveal HUNDREDS OF DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREES, each one unique. Along one wall are HUNDREDS OF WOODEN BUCKETS.

He brings the tree from the truck and sets it with the rest.

We go through the day with Josh. He waters all the trees. He drives up and down rows of trees in a TRACTOR, doing Christmas tree maintenance.

20 EXT. DAYCARE CENTER - AFTERNOON

20

Josh pulls his truck into the parking lot. Mary is outside with the children, they're playing "Girls Chase Boys" while they wait for their parents to pick them up. Josh approaches the playground.

In front of Josh, THREE YOUNG BOYS are running from THREE YOUNG GIRLS. One of the boys quite obviously fakes a cramp and falls down, watching to see if the girls will catch him. All three girls run past the boy, chasing the other two boys.

Josh walks up to Mary.

JOSH

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
Hey. Which one's yours?

JOSH  
Oh, no, I don't, I'm actually from  
Joshua's Trees.

MARY  
Joshua's Trees.

JOSH  
Right... Christmas trees?

MARY  
Oh! Right! The Trees! I was like...  
You're here to see Claire?

Miss Claire, who is not hung over and was expecting Josh, is hurrying across the playground with armloads of construction paper, safety scissors, glue, etc.

MISS CLAIRE  
Hello! Hello! Welcome! I am Miss Claire!

Miss Claire manages, impressively, to extend her hand to Josh and not drop anything. He takes it.

JOSH  
Hi. Josh. Tsa pleasure.

Josh extends his hand to Mary.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
Hi. Josh.

MARY  
Mary. Nice to meet you.

CLAIRE  
And this is Mary, uh, Miss  
Mary... Well! Should we get  
started?

JOSH (CONT'D)  
Let's. (to Mary) It's nice to meet you.

Josh and Miss Claire head off towards the school.

MARY  
Yeah... Nice to meet you.

21 INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - MOMENTS LATER

21

Josh and Miss Claire are having a casual meeting. Miss Claire is drinking a cup of coffee. Mary enters and is hanging around listening, becoming more and more interested in what Josh is saying.

MISS CLAIRE

So, what's the thing?

JOSH

OK, so, I supply the trees, pretty much as many as you think your kids can handle. And then you guys decorate the trees however you like.

MISS CLAIRE

Oh, the kids would just love that! Usually we just have the one tree, you know for the class. But they would just adore that, to each have one.

JOSH

Right, they can each do whatever they want with them, you know, so it's really quite fun. And the look in the seniors eyes, it really just makes their year. Because, you know, they're used to, you know the same thing. They usually just have the one for the whole home, and a lot of times it's fake, and nobody really cares and...

MISS CLAIRE

The seniors?

JOSH

Right. Cause we give the trees, you know, to the senior citizens, so they can, you know, for their rooms.

MISS CLAIRE

Oh... So, but don't the kids get the trees? Because...

JOSH

Yeah, well, that's kind of the whole thing. Once the trees are done, you know, we give them to the senior citizens and the nursing homes. But, I mean, you should totally feel free to keep one, or some for the class. Was that unclear?

(CONTINUED)

MISS CLAIRE

Kind of. Hmm. See, with most of the projects, though, the kids usually take what they made home... they usually like to keep the things and take them home.

By now, Mary has run out of things to pretend to be doing, and is just staring at Josh, admiring.

JOSH

Right, but I guess, you know, the thing is that they get to do this good thing for these people who really don't have, you know, a tree for Christmas... But, I mean, I totally supply the trees, so you don't have to, you know, pay for...

MISS CLAIRE

Yeah, I mean. I think it's a great idea, I really do. But I just think, for my kids, I'm not really wanting to get them so involved in something, and then take it away from them. We're really trying to make an environment here where kids get to win, and to really feel like they are worth something. And that's, I think, what makes us different from other schools. We just cancelled dodgeball, you know, and we have a confidence calistenics expert, and ropeless jumprope. Oh, you should see their faces.

22 INT. DAYCARE CENTER GYM - AFTERNOON

22

A bunch of kids are trying to get the hang of "ropeless jumprope" which looks as ridiculous as it sounds. One boy trys a round of it, and gets an overenthusiastic response from the confidence calistenics expert. The boy flinches.

23 INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - CONTINUOUS

23

MISS CLAIRE

But to take their achievements away from them... Do you follow?

JOSH

Yeah, I do, I mean, and it might not be a good idea for your kids, if... But they also get to, you know, give something to somebody, so...

(CONTINUED)

MISS CLAIRE  
No, yeah, I know, but I just...

MARY  
I'll do it, I think it's a great idea.

Josh and Miss Claire turn to Mary, Mary smiles.

MISS CLAIRE  
Well --

MARY  
(to Josh)  
Can I buy you a drink?

Josh and Mary are having drinks. She has an almost empty domestic beer and an empty shot glass, he has a mostly full pint of micro-brew.

MARY  
...just always looking down on me! And all that shit in the lounge? Like, what exactly are you teaching these kids? I mean, I think what you're doing is so great. And my kids are going to love it! I don't know, I just...

JOSH  
Thank you. Thanks.

MARY  
So, what do you do, for, I mean, when you're not doing this?

JOSH  
I just do this; the trees.

MARY  
Really? Do you make enough money?

JOSH  
Yeah, I mean, I don't make a lot of money, but I don't really spend that much money either. I own my lot, and my truck... It all works.

MARY  
Wow. So you must have like a ton of free time then.

JOSH

Yeah, I'm never really that busy. I just do a lot of trees, but I still pretty much have time for anything else I want to do.

MARY

You do a lot of trees?

JOSH

Yeah, I, I guess I decorate a tree every day. But you know, like sometimes, I don't do one. Like last week I was kinda sick, and so, I don't always, I mean, it's not every day. But sometimes I do a couple in a night, so --

MARY

Wow. So, you're pretty big into Christmas, then?

JOSH

Right, right... I have this idea.

MARY

OK.

JOSH

No, I mean, I have this theory.

MARY

(reiterative) OK.

JOSH

Well, everyone has one thing, you think? Like everyone, when they come home, or when they wake up, or all day long, everyone has a thing, or an addiction, or an affliction, or whatever. Some people will drink, or like pack-a-day smoking, or they have sex all the time... But it starts, or, everyone has this thing, and maybe they all start, or stem from that thing feeling nice. Like I saw this postcard once with Bob Marley playing soccer on the front, and on the back was this little quote, you know, and it was from Ziggy Marley, and it said something to the effect of... he was restating this question, that I guess someone had asked him, and he said "Why did my father like to be fit?"

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Because when you're fit, you feel nice"  
And I just, I'm going to come to the end  
of this, I promise.

MARY

No, you're fine, go.

JOSH

So, I think that was just kind of a  
really simple way of answering a stupid  
question. But anyway, so everyone has  
these things, and they start because a  
drink is nice when your days are long, or  
whatever. But I really like Christmas,  
and I, OK, OK, when I was a kid, I used  
to ask my Mom, everyday, or it seems like  
it was everyday, but I would ask "Is  
today Christmas"? "No". "Is today my  
birthday"? "No, sweetie, not today". And  
so, when it was, it was really cool, and  
it was my favorite. I mean, I guess it's  
every kid's favorite, but my parents  
split up early, and I just, Christmas  
morning was always not like the rest of  
growing up, and not like the rest of  
their relationship.

MARY

Right.

JOSH

So, I guess, you know, that's my thing.  
But, I mean, Christmas rules, right?  
Everybody's nice to each other, or nicer.  
And it totally won't kill you, or rot  
your liver, or ruin your teeth, right?

Mary, awestruck.

MARY

I quit smoking.

JOSH

Really? That's awesome. How long?

Mary smiles.

Josh pulls through after ordering, some variation of  
Christmas music plays on his stereo, a classy ornament hangs  
from the rear view. He takes a look outside, blue sky, pulls  
ahead to pay.

(CONTINUED)

FAST FOOD CASHIER  
Four-Sixty-Three.

JOSH  
How are you?

FAST FOOD CASHIER  
Good, You?

JOSH  
Good thanks.

FAST FOOD CASHIER  
Four-Sixty-Three.

JOSH  
Hey, how much for the next order, for the  
car behind me?

The cashier looks back to the next car. We follow his glance.

The car behind Josh consists of your average family. MOTHER,  
FATHER, DAUGHTER not speaking to each other.

FAST FOOD CASHIER  
Uh... Eleven-Thirty-Six?

JOSH  
OK, here's Twenty. I want to pay for  
theirs, and the rest is yours.

FAST FOOD CASHIER  
Alright... Alright. Well thanks.

JOSH  
Thank You.

Josh pulls away.

Downtown setting. Light traffic, people going places.

Mary is standing in front of a closed shoe store with big  
display windows. She is blank, looking at all the lit shoes.

She looks at her feet, turns to the street.

27 EXT. JOSHUA'S TREES CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - EVENING 27

Josh is watching a spider weave a web. It's light enough to see, but getting darker fast. As the light fades, color turns to monochrome.

28 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - EVENING 28

Mary is comfy. Incense, candles, pjs, etc. She is trying to read a book.

The phone rings. Mary checks the caller id, doesn't answer.

Mary puts the book down, grabs the remote and turns the TV on.

29 EXT. DAYCARE CENTER - AFTERNOON 29

Mary is giving all the children back to their parents.

MARY  
Goodbye Julie!

JULIE  
Bye Miss Mary!

MARY  
(to Julie's Mom)  
Bye.

JULIE'S MOM  
Bye, thanks!

JULIE  
(to her Mom)  
Is today my birthday, Momma?

JULIE'S MOM  
Your birthday? You just had your birthday, silly! Remember?

JULIE  
(deflated)  
Yes.

Mary takes note of this exchange, watches them leave.

30 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE/TEACHER'S LOUNGE - INTERCUT 30

In Josh's house, Josh is just getting into the shower. The phone rings.

(CONTINUED)

Josh weighs his options for the duration of a ring, leaves the water running to catch the phone.

JOSH  
Hello? Hello?

In the teacher's lounge, Mary hears Josh answer just as she's hanging up. It's not in time to stop the receiver from landing in the cradle. She picks it back up; DIAL TONE. She starts to dial again.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
Hellooo?

In the teacher's lounge, Mary gets a busy signal.

They both hang up.

At Josh's house, Josh heads back towards the shower. The phone rings. (dashes denote cuts)

JOSH (CONT'D)  
Hello? Hey! Yeah, no, I know, I think I just missed... Right. Good, good, you? No, no, I was, no, it's fine. What's going on? Um, nothing, I mean, I'm not, I'm open, why? Totally. I don't know, I'm up for whatever -- Are you kidding? No, I mean, kids are, I mean that's gotta be like so much therapy. Right, right, easy for me to say -- Right. Yeah? Yeah? Ahh! Madness -- SUCH a good movie, but they only really run it around Christmas, you know. But I've got it, I mean, we could watch -- No, that sounds awesome... Yeah, absolutely, I mean it's just a bunch of trees really, but if you want to see it, I mean I could, what time is it? OK, well, do you want to meet me there in an hour? Alright. OK, do you know where you're going? Right, except it's faster if you go past there, and then the next left takes you right to me, it's Montreal drive. Actually, you know what? Will you meet me there in two hours? No, no, I just have a thing, I have, I want to show you something. You'll see, or, you'll, just meet me at... Yeah, that's perfect, but not later than that either. OK. See ya.

Josh hangs up, checks the clock, considers.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

Josh turns the shower off.

Now he's dressed, going through a box of tapes, looking at labels, putting some in a bag.

He grabs keys, out the door.

31 INT. JOSHUA'S TREES CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - MOMENTS LATER 31

Josh is sitting in front of a workbench in the pole barn, with a bunch of BOOM BOXES of various age/size. He's replacing batteries, rewinding, fast forwarding.

He's grabbing bundles of extension cords off a wall.

He is loading these things into a TRAILER attached to the back of the TRACTOR.

We see him at various corners of the tree lot. The sun is starting to set.

Mary pulls into the lot.

Josh comes to greet her.

JOSH  
Hey! How are you?

MARY  
Oh my God! This is beautiful.

Josh turns to take it in with her. He's impatient.

JOSH  
Thanks. Thanks.

MARY  
Here, I brought you a gift.

Mary hands Josh a CARD.

JOSH  
What? Wow. Thanks. Wow.

MARY  
You're welcome. It's just a card, I just... You're welcome.

Josh rips the envelope open to remove a TACKY CHRISTMAS CARD. He opens, reads, looks at the front again.

Josh looks at Mary, shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

I... Come on.

Josh takes Mary by the hand and leads her into the middle of the field, where the ends of TWO EXTENSION CORDS are laying. He surveys the setting, light.

Josh picks up the two ends of extension cord, ready to plug them in.

JOSH (CONT'D)

OK, so the sun's almost setting, see over there?

MARY

Yes.

JOSH

OK, good. That makes it more dramatic, I guess, or something... OK, OK.

Josh connects the two extension cords, sending power throughout the farm, turning on christmas lights all over. At first we don't hear the stereos, all winding away in random corners of the farm. Then about 10-12 stereos, full blast, each begin to play a different (but in-time) version of "Silent Night".

JOSH (CONT'D)

I don't know, it's just this thing I like to do some --

Mary grabs Josh and kisses him full well on the mouth.

Over cheery Christmas music, Josh and Mary spanning time in November.

They walk in the park.

They decorate trees with the daycare kids.

They make cookies.

They watch old Christmas movies.

They take baths together.

33 INT. FRANCHISE COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

33

Josh and Mary are sitting at a table, two huge hot chocolates in front of them, with tons of whip cream. Josh is looking around at the decorations, fixtures.

JOSH

I've never been in here before... nice.

MARY

Really? Never? I come here at least five times a week. I can't stay away from Swoon for too long.

JOSH

Swoon?

MARY

Yeah, Swoon. Never been there?

JOSH

Nope. I pretty much haven't ever been to any of the stores on this side of town.

MARY

How come? I mean not that it matters, but why?

JOSH

I guess it's another thing.

MARY

Oh... You and your things.

Josh looks away.

JOSH

Yeah.

Mary stands up, takes Josh's head in her hands and kisses him full well.

MARY

I LOVE your things. What's this one now?

Josh laughs to himself, looks at Mary.

JOSH

You're funny... So, I don't go to places, or to stores or whatever, where I haven't been before.

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
OK... but here you are.

JOSH  
Right, I mean, if I'm with someone then it's OK. But I would never come here by myself, or...

Josh shakes his head.

JOSH (CONT'D)  
I mean, this whole side of town is pretty new, and I can get most things at the store by me.

MARY  
So, is it that you don't come here, or that you can't.

Josh shrugs.

JOSH  
I just... I think, and I know this isn't really true, but I feel like people will think that I don't belong there... or here.

MARY  
Wow... So, but now that you've been here, you would come again?

JOSH  
Yeah, I guess. Good Cocoa, so...

Josh smiles. Mary laughs at him, gets up abruptly.

MARY  
Come on.

JOSH  
What?

MARY  
Come on, you can bring your cocoa.

JOSH  
Where are we going?

MARY  
Everywhere. Come on.

Josh and Mary leave the coffee house.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

## MONTAGE:

Mary leads Josh into every store on the block. We see them enter, then they emerge, sometimes with their purchases.

They go to a sandwich shop, where they buy two large pickles.

They go to a bookstore, they emerge with a bag.

They go to a clothing store, where they buy sunglasses.

They go to a shoe store, where Mary picks out a pair that she likes. She makes Josh try them on. Mary buys the shoes for Josh. She pays with a credit card. Mary crams Josh's old shoes into the new box. They leave the store.

34 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

34

Josh & Mary are cooking. Josh is showing Mary how to make pot pies from scratch. Mary is chopping potatoes while Josh is rolling pie dough.

MARY

Like this?

JOSH

Yeah, good, except maybe a little smaller.

Now they are putting all the filling in the pies, putting the tops on, etc.

MARY

There you go little guy. And some for you...

Josh takes her in for a beat. She senses him watching, throws a piece of carrot at him. He ducks, attacks.

35 INT. JOSH'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

35

Mary is trying to carefully remove pot pie from Josh's eye.

JOSH

No, I mean, it's kind of itchy, but I really think it's fine.

MARY

I am *SO* sorry. Wait, wait... OK, I got some.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

JOSH  
It's fine, it doesn't even... Did you  
check the pies though?

Mary looks towards the kitchen.

36 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

36

In the living room, Mary & Josh are sitting on the couch,  
eating pot pies, watching TV. Josh grabs a remote off the  
table, uses it to turn the Christmas tree on, smiles at Mary.  
She takes him in for a beat.

MARY  
Let's go out.

JOSH  
You wanna go out? Where do you feel like  
going?

MARY  
I don't know, let's just get a drink  
somewhere?

JOSH  
What time do you work tomorrow?

MARY  
Seven.

JOSH  
It's ten thirty almost, how are you going  
to do that?

MARY  
I don't know, I guess I'll just get up  
and go. So get up, let's go.

JOSH  
How about I show you how to make Egg Nog,  
that's a drink. Then you won't be so  
tired in the morning.

MARY  
Fine.

JOSH  
I'll make eggs.

MARY  
You're boring.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

Josh stares at her for a beat. He picks a potato chunk off his plate, throws it at Mary. It bounces off her forehead, She flinches, keeps watching TV.

37 INT. JOSH'S BATHROOM - LATER

37

Mary & Josh are taking a bath.

MARY

Thank you.

JOSH

Hmm, for what?

MARY

For not going out... You're good to me.  
You're sweet.

A beat.

JOSH

...I'll make eggs.

Mary gets out. She dries, hangs the towel up sloppy on the rack next to his neat one, leaves the bathroom.

Josh ponders the towels.

38 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - MORNING

38

In the kitchen, Josh is making eggs.

In the bathroom, Mary is getting ready.

In the kitchen, Josh is looking out the window, taking in the view. Mary storms into the kitchen. She takes a few bites of eggs, swills some orange juice, throws her coffee in a mug, kisses Josh on the cheek, leaves.

Josh looks at the dishes on the table.

39 EXT. DAYCARE CENTER - MORNING

39

Mary arrives in the parking lot. She is the first one here.

She gets out of her car, sets her coffee on top of the car, pulls her trendy attache and grocery bag out of the passenger seat. She closes the door and locks the car.

Mary looks around at the empty parking lot, smiles to herself.

40 INT. DAYCARE CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

40

Mary is setting up each of the students desks for today's activity. On each desk, she puts five sheets of CONSTRUCTION PAPER, a BOTTLE OF GLUE, and SAFETY SCISSORS. From the hall, we hear heeled footsteps.

Miss Claire appears in the classroom doorway. Mary doesn't look up.

MARY

Good morning, Claire.

MISS CLAIRE

Well... Good morning Mary. You're here early. Can I... do you need any help?

MARY

No, I think I've got it, thanks.

The BELL rings in the hallway. It's time for class. Miss Claire looks at the bell with a start, then her watch.

MISS CLAIRE

Oh dear!

Miss Claire looks at Mary once more, then hurries off down the hallway.

41 EXT. DAYCARE CENTER - AFTERNOON

41

Mary is giving the children back to their parents. It is the beginning of Thanksgiving break. All the children are wearing head dresses or pilgrim hats made from construction paper.

Three boys with pilgrim hats are chasing one boy with a head dress, who is screaming and not having fun. Mary doesn't seem to notice.

Mary notices Josh waiting in the parking lot for her. She goes to him, he has flowers for her.

MARY

Well, this is sweet! Oh my God, these are so pretty! Thank you!

JOSH

You're welcome. I thought we could go to the bar.

MARY

Wow, who are you all of a sudden?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

JOSH

Nobody, just the same old boring guy.

MARY

Stop. You're not, you're sweet... You're so sweet to me.

Mary grabs Josh's cheeks and kisses him.

MARY (CONT'D)

You driving?

42 INT. LOADING DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

42

Josh and Mary are sitting, much like before, same drink orders.

A sign on an easel tells us that tonight is open mic night. Someone is just finishing up their version of a time-honored open mic kind of song.

MARY

I played the piano till I was eight, then the clarinet for a year, then trombone, cello, flute, guitar, and I think that's it.

JOSH

Wow. Do you still play?

MARY

No, I basically sucked at all of them. My parents were persistent. I think I could play 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' on most of them if I had to. What about you?

JOSH

I used to sing a bunch, but I mean, never like for choir or anything. Just around the house. I guess everyone probably did that, or does that.

MARY

Probably.

JOSH

I always liked to carol?

MARY

Carol?

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

Yeah, like caroling. Christmas caroling.

MARY

Oh, right. Do people still do that?

JOSH

Not really. Which sucks, kinda. We used to go caroling every year. It was like a big block party. My cousins would come over, and we'd go stomping around in our moon boots, singing... I used to ride around on my Dad's shoulders.

A beat.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Did you ever get those cramps when you'd be riding on shoulders, and then they put you down, and you couldn't walk for a minute?

MARY

Yeah.

JOSH

I hate that.

Someone has just finished a song. Josh and Mary clap with everyone else, lackluster. The OPEN MIC MC gets up to announce.

OPEN MIC MC

Okay, Michael Dean everybody! Next up is Julian. Julian, are you out there?

Julian, late twenties, slight, effortlessly attractive, is sitting in a handicap bathroom stall with a guitar case over his knees, hearing his name called in the bar.

He rattles two white pills out of a prescription bottle, crushes them with a lighter, makes two lines with his driver's license, rolls up a twenty dollar bill, and snorts the lines.

He is now at the sink, checks his nose, runs water over his fingers, puts them up his nose and snorts.

(CONTINUED)

He heads out the door, walks on stage, the MC recognizes him, gives him a hug. He sits down and sets up. By the time he's ready, the bar is so loud you can barely hear him.

JULIAN  
(sniffs) Cheers.

Julian plays an indifferent brit-rock ballad. Slowly, the bar quiets down and is listening to him. He gets a big applause.

*Note: The song lyrics are given in subtitles, and fade consistently with the audience quieting to hear.*

JOSH  
That was sweet.

MARY  
That is *so weird*.

JOSH  
Huh?

MARY  
I can't... that is *so weird!*

JOSH  
What? Are you okay?

MARY  
I totally know that guy.

JOSH  
Who? The guy on stage?

MARY  
Yeah... He was my first boyfriend.

JOSH  
No way, really? When was the last time you saw him?

MARY  
Two winters ago.

TITLE: Two Winters Ago

In the shower, Mary and Julian are having sex. Mary and Julian disappear and reappear in different places within the room, having sex.

45 INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER 45

Mary is sleeping in the bed, Julian is leaving with a duffle bag.

In the hotel parking lot, Julian gets into his car and leaves. We see Mary in the hotel room's window, watching him go.

46 INT. LOADING DOCK - BACK FROM FLASHBACK 46

MARY

That is *so weird*.

JOSH

Yeah. Wow. Do you guys still talk?

MARY

No, I mean, I haven't, I don't. I thought he moved away. I can't believe he's here.

JOSH

Huh. Weird.

Julian has finished his set. A waitress brings three bottles of domestic beer and three shots of whiskey to Josh and Mary's table.

MARY

Um, we didn't order these. (to Josh) Did you order these?

JOSH

No, I don't --

WAITRESS

(looking up)

Yeah, he did.

Julian is walking up to the table. He smiles.

JULIAN

What's up?

MARY

Hey! Oh my god! What are you doing here?!

Mary gets up and hugs Julian. Josh watches, smiling.

WAITRESS

(to Josh)

So, it's twelve fifty.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH  
Oh, right. Okay.

Before Josh can get his wallet out, Julian hands the waitress a semi-rolled up twenty dollar bill. The waitress starts making change.

JULIAN  
You're all set, thanks.

WAITRESS  
Thank you.

JULIAN  
(to Josh)  
What's hapnin' man, I'm Julian.

JOSH  
Hey, Josh. Good to meet you.

Josh gets up to shake Julian's hand. Julian sits while he's shaking. Mary sits also. Josh is left standing. He sits down quickly.

JULIAN  
So what's up?

MARY  
Nothing. I can't believe you're here!  
What are you doing here?

JULIAN  
Not much. I'm just... here.

MARY  
Nice! That's awesome. When did you get  
into town?

JULIAN  
Um, Tuesday? I think Tuesday. I was gonna  
call you. Are you still at your Dad's?  
What are you doing?

MARY  
No, I moved out last summer. I work at  
Little Rascals. I'm a teacher.

JULIAN  
Right on... So what are y'all up to  
tonight? Just drinking?

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
Yeah, nothing, just chillin. Are these  
for us? Jack?

JULIAN  
(passing out the shots)  
Yeah yeah. Here. Josh?

JOSH  
Sure, yeah, thanks.

JULIAN  
(raising his glass)  
No sweat. okay, to what?

Nobody has a suggestion.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
Eh, fuck it, cheers.

They all take they're shots. Julian lights a cigarette.

MARY  
Can I have one?

JULIAN  
Yeah, knock yourself out.

Julian slides the pack of imported cigarettes over towards  
Mary.

Josh looks at Mary.

Julian lights Mary's cigarette with a match.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
So what's your story, Josh?

More empties. Fuller ashtray. Julian is holding court at the  
table.

JULIAN  
...just, madness. Everywhere you look. I  
couldn't even sit still long enough to  
sit in the hash bars. Coke, mushrooms,  
ecstasy, and every other doorway is some  
beautiful girl, just chillin, like a  
mannequin. I was dating this girl for a  
minute, and she'd have to work the  
windows every other night.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN (CONT'D)

I mean, you talk about security, and trust? We have no idea about what it means to belong to someone here. I'm totally going back. It's just... And then in the daytime, there's Van Gogh, the Louvre, it was fucking amazing. Just... So how's teaching? Are your kids cool?

MARY

Yeah, they are, I love my kids!

JOSH

Yeah, they're great kids.

JULIAN

Right. I got a thing. You can do this to your kids. You wanna hear it?

Mary grabs another cigarette.

MARY

Yeah. Is it dirty?

JULIAN

(sarcastic)

Yeah, it's filthy, they'll love it. Be quiet. OK, you guys both do this, but do it in your head. OK, pick any number in your head.

JOSH

Any number?

JULIAN

Right. You're going to have to do math with it, though, so... OK, you got it?

Josh and Mary both nod.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

OK, now take that number and... Double it... Got it?

MARY

Yeah.

JOSH

Yeah.

JULIAN

OK, now add... I don't know...Uh, eight to that number.

(CONTINUED)

Josh and Mary both equate and nod.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Right, now let's take your number and cut it in half. Got it?

MARY

Yup.

JOSH

Wait... OK.

JULIAN

Now take the number you have now, and subtract your original number from it.

MARY

The number I thought of first?

JULIAN

Right, your original number.

MARY

OK.

JOSH

OK.

JULIAN

Alright, now take the number you have now, and find the corresponding number in the alphabet. Like 1 is 'A', 2 is 'B', if you have to go past 26, just start over like 27 is 'A', 28 is...

JOSH

Got it.

MARY

Me too.

JULIAN

Oh, OK. Now think of a country that starts with that letter. Let me know when you've got it.

A beat.

JOSH

OK.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (3)

MARY

Wait, I can't think of one... Oh, Oh, OK  
I got one.

JULIAN

OK, now take the last letter of the name  
of the country...

MARY

My kids are like four and five, they're  
totally not going to get this.

JULIAN

Fine. Take the last letter of the country  
and think of an animal whose name begins  
with that letter.

JOSH

Wow, um -

JULIAN

Just let me know.

JOSH

OK, I got it.

MARY

Wait...

JOSH

Do you need help?

JULIAN

No helping. You got one?

MARY

Oh, OK. I got one.

JULIAN

OK, now. I have a question. How many  
kangaroos are there in Denmark?

Josh and Mary are surprised and impressed.

MARY

Wait. How did? Wait...

48 EXT. LOADING DOCK PARKING LOT - LATER

48

Josh, Mary, and Julian are standing around in the parking lot  
talking, jingling keys.

(CONTINUED)

Behind them, two BAR GUYS, blue collar, five-o'clock shadows and lots of denim, are coming out of the bar.

JULIAN  
...and I just left.

MARY  
Just left?

JULIAN  
Right. Bye.

MARY  
What about your stuff?

JULIAN  
I climbed in through the window afterwards and got it. Whatever. Fuck him, you know?

MARY  
I guess, but wow.

JOSH  
Wow. That's --

One of the bar guys from behind have taken notice of Mary. The other one keeps walking to his car.

BAR GUY  
Hey, you need a ride?

Josh looks around to see if the Bar Guy is talking to someone else. Mary and Julian look right at the Bar Guy.

JULIAN  
What's that?

BAR GUY  
I wasn't talking to you, was I? You got something to say to me?

JULIAN  
Not in those pants man.

Julian turns back to our conversation. The Bar Guy's friend, in his car now, leans on the horn.

BAR GUY #2  
Come on, dickhead!

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

The bar guy can't do all this at once, and must retreat to his friends car. The bar guys leave.

Julian lights a cigarette. Josh stares at the car as it leaves. He's blown away.

A beat.

MARY

So, it's good to *see you!*

JULIAN

Likewise.

MARY

(to Josh)

Oh, my car!

Josh turns, as if to check for Mary's car.

JOSH

Yeah... No, I'll take you to your car.

MARY

No, that's so out of your way.

JULIAN

Where's your car?

MARY

At the school. Which way are you going?

Julian turns to see if Mary's car is behind him.

JULIAN

Where's the school? On Veterans? (with The Ladies Man's accent) yeah, um, thas a little out of my way, and um...

JOSH

No, it's fine, I can take you. I can take her.

JULIAN

Super.

MARY

OK --

49 INT. JOSH'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

49

Josh is taking Mary to her car.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

What time do you work tomorrow?

MARY

Don't. Thanksgiving.

JOSH

Right. Sorry. Well, are you gonna... What are you doing then?

MARY

Hmm.

They arrive at the school.

JOSH

Huh?

MARY

What?

JOSH

Oh, nothing, I was... What are you gonna do tomorrow?

MARY

I don't know. I'll call you, kay? Bye. Thanks.

JOSH

Yeah, it's no... I'm gonna be slammed at the farm anyway, so... OK... Drive safe.

Josh waits for Mary to get into her car.

Mary tries to wave him on. Josh waves back, continues to wait. She leaves.

Josh watches her go, looks down to see that she has left the flowers he bought her on the seat.

50 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - LATER

50

Josh is at the kitchen sink. He trims the flowers individually under running water, fills a vase, arranges the flowers on the dining room table. He takes the flowers in for a beat.

In the bathroom, Josh starts the shower.

Outside, it has started to snow.

51 INT. FRANCHISE COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

51

It is snowing outside. Mary is sitting at a table, paying her bills. She is having trouble paying attention. Lots to look at.

An attractive YOUNG PROFESSIONAL sits down across from her, goes through the process of setting up his computer, pulling out his work, etc.

They exchange glances three or four times.

A beat.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL

So...?

Mary looks up.

Young professional wasn't ready for this. He stalls.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

MARY

No. Is... I'm Mary.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL

Hi. I'm Josh.

MARY

You're kidding.

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL

No, I'm really Josh. Is that...?

MARY

No, it's strange. It's really strange.  
I'm sorry... Sorry.

Mary quickly packs up her stuff and leaves. The young professional looks on, a bit confused. After Mary leaves, his cell phone rings. He's back into his element.

52 INT. TAKEOUT FOOD PLACE - MOMENTS LATER

52

This is a Boston Market. Mary enters and approaches the counter. The TAKEOUT FOOD EMPLOYEE looks less than thrilled to be here on Thanksgiving.

MARY

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

TAKEOUT FOOD EMPLOYEE

Hi.

MARY

Sucks to be here today, huh?

Takeout Food Employee smiles.

MARY (CONT'D)

Yeah... So, do you have like,  
Thanksgiving?

53 EXT. JOSHUA'S TREES CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - EVENING

53

Josh is harvesting the trees for Christmas. There are FARM HANDS helping him. He is felling trees, loading them on a BIG FLATBED TRUCK.

The trees are being taken off the flatbed truck and loaded into a baler, which ties them with twine.

The baled trees are loaded onto more trucks, headed out of the farm.

Mary pulls into the lot. Josh notices her and comes over. Mary is pulling the bags of food and a bottle of wine out of her car.

MARY

Happy Thanksgiving! Surprise!

JOSH

Wow. Hey. What are you... Wow. Did you cook all this?

MARY

(in a British accent)  
Don't be daft.

JOSH

Right, sorry... Well it looks good! You look better.

Josh and Mary kiss.

54 INT. POLE BARN - MOMENTS LATER

54

Josh and Mary are sitting at a bench on the side of the barn. The barn is full of trees, some with their lights on. Neither of them is talking, as their mouths are full.

(CONTINUED)

Josh takes a sip of wine, swallows, wipes his mouth and looks at Mary.

Mary stops chewing and looks at Josh.

MARY  
(with a mouth full of food)  
What?

JOSH  
Do you want to be with me?

Mary swallows.

MARY  
I am with you.

JOSH  
Right, no, I mean like... Do you want to  
BE with me?

MARY  
I know what you meant. I am with you.

JOSH  
Oh. OK.

Josh can't help smiling. He goes back to eating.

Julian is waiting in the pharmacy's pseudo-lounge for a prescription to be filled. He is using the blood pressure checking machine. He notices Josh, across the lobby looking at humidifiers.

JULIAN  
You got a lot of nerve showing up here.

Josh turns, not sure if he's being talked to.

JOSH  
Oh, hey man! What are you doing? You  
don't have...

Josh nods to the machine that Julian has his arm in.

JULIAN  
Yeah, 'fraid so. Just a matter of time  
now.

(CONTINUED)

JOSH  
(getting the joke) right, right. That's too bad. So anyway, how you been?

JULIAN  
Good, good. Getting lots of rest, catching up on Dallas. Hey, you don't know who shot JR, do you?

JOSH  
Ah, no, sorry.

PHARMACIST  
(loudspeaker)  
Prescription for Taylor?

JULIAN  
That's cool. What are you doing right now?

JOSH  
Oh, I was looking at getting... But not really anything. Nothing. You?

PHARMACIST  
Taylor, your prescription is ready.

JULIAN  
(to Pharmacist)  
YES! Thank you!

56 INT. LOADING DOCK - LATER

56

Josh and Julian are having drinks, talking. There's almost nobody there.

JOSH  
So, I mean, it's weird I think, or people think, but not really any stranger than other people's things.

JULIAN  
Yeah, I don't think it's that weird at all. You only get like a month for Christmas as it is, that's not nearly enough. Plus that's your job. How many people are that passionate about their jobs?

JOSH  
Yeah, yeah. I don't know. It works for me.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

So, do you sell all of the trees come christmas? Do you have a lot?

JOSH

Well, my grandpa used to run a lot. That was my first job, pretty much my only job, helping him. Now what I do, is I wholesale the trees to people, and then they run their own lots. Most of the county ends up with my trees.

JULIAN

Your Grandpa dead now?

JOSH

Yeah, he died about three years ago. He was actually the first person over sixty to die on a roller coaster in the US.

JULIAN

No shit? Where?

JOSH

In Ohio, at Screaming Peaks. It wasn't their fault. There's this ride where you stand up I guess --

JULIAN

The Whirling Dervish.

JOSH

Right, the Whirling Dervish. I've never been, so... So anyway, I guess it really bangs your head around, and you have the restraints all around you? Is that right?

JULIAN

I've never been on it.

JOSH

Oh, well I guess your head sort of bangs back and forth, which, for most people is kind of painful. But, so what happened was that this banging around knocked something loose from his carotid artery, which is right here?

Josh points to his neck. Julian feels the same spot on his neck.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

OK.

JOSH

So, and then when the ride was over, he was in the middle of a stroke. I guess the people were waiting for him to move, and then when he didn't they figured out, you know, that something was wrong. So, I guess that never happened before, or maybe just not to someone his age, but now I guess there's extra padding, so...

JULIAN

Jesus. That's... Jesus. Was anyone with him?

JOSH

No, he was alone. He would take a trip every fall, on the train. He was really into riding the train, but he always insisted on going alone. He was pretty cool. Even at his age, he pretty much made the rest of the family look pretty boring.

JULIAN

Damn. So you got the farm?

JOSH

Yep, he left that to me.

JULIAN

What about your parents?

JOSH

They died... They've been dead for a while.

A beat.

JULIAN

OK. You want another shot? Jack?

JOSH

Ah, sure... Yeah.

JULIAN

Good man. I'll be right back.

Julian gets up, orders shots, and leaves the bar.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (3)

Josh watches, looks around.

Julian returns with his guitar case, leaves it at the table, leaves again, returns with two shots of whiskey.

Julian gives Josh a shot, raises his glass.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

To your Grandpa. What's his name?

JOSH

Marvin.

JULIAN

To Marvin.

Josh nods and they do the shot. Julian gets his guitar out, tunes it.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Can you sing?

JOSH

Well, I mean, not like great.

JULIAN

You want to play a song?

JOSH

Yeah, I'm not really --

JULIAN

Yeah you are.

Julian gets up and orders two more shots, brings them to the table, raises his glass.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

To caring less.

JOSH

Right.

They do the shot.

JULIAN

Right. Come on.

Julian walks on stage, Josh follows, unsure.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED: (4)

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
(to the bartender)  
Ryan?

RYAN, the bartender, holds his hand up to say "whatever".  
Julian starts to play a soft acoustic ballad.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
You know this?

JOSH  
I love this song.

JULIAN  
I know you do, honey.

Julian sings and plays guitar with Josh helping on the  
chorus.

57 INT. JOSH'S TRUCK - LATER

57

Josh is dropping Julian off at his car. They're sharing a  
beer. It is snowing hard.

JOSH  
I mean, and that bothers me, sometimes. I  
sometimes think I should be moving more,  
or like doing more things, or whatever.  
But I honestly do like my life, I don't  
feel like I'm really missing anything.

JULIAN  
Hey, if that works for you. Some people  
need more, some less --

JOSH  
Right. It's something about what will  
happen, like what's coming. I spend so  
much time thinking I'm ambitious, you  
know? But then someone will ask me how  
things are going, or what have you been  
up to, and I basically just have the same  
things to tell them. Oh, you know, same  
old thing. Just doing my thing. And like,  
I don't really know all that many people,  
which is a thing that I - but like they  
all seem to be moving forward, or even  
backwards, but I don't really get that  
about myself. But I mean, I'm fine.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'm not like all that concerned with it, which is maybe the problem, you know, like these rising and setting levels of interest in my life. But then, and this is a whole other thing, which is I guess tied to the idea of what's coming, but it's this feeling that someone is going to betray me. Which can't be right, or even if it is, what good am I doing worrying about it? But... I don't know. Sorry.

JULIAN

You're a good guy, Josh. You deserve good things. You might get them, maybe not, but you should remember that.

JOSH

Right... Thanks man.

JULIAN

No sweat. Let's hang out this week, bring Mary along.

JOSH

OK, sounds good. Drive safe.

JULIAN

No.

Julian shuts the door, gets into his car, lights a cigarette, peels out in the snow.

JOSH

Mary.

58 INT. PHONE BOOTH/MARY'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER - INTERCUT 58

Josh is calling Mary. Four rings, then she picks up.

MARY

(sleepy)  
Hello.

JOSH

(whispering)  
Hey. Hi. Are you sleeping?

MARY

Hello?

JOSH

Hey. Can you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
What are you doing?

JOSH  
I'm uh, I went out for drink, or some  
drinks, how are you?

MARY  
I'm sleeping, I'm tired.

JOSH  
Yeah, sorry. Sorry about that. So, what  
are you doing?

Call waiting beeps.

MARY  
(sighs)  
Jesus Christ. Hang on.

Mary tries to click over.

MARY (CONT'D)  
(groggy)  
Hello?

JOSH  
Hey, Hi.

MARY  
Hello?

JOSH  
Hi, it's me still.

MARY  
Jesus Christ. Hold on.

Mary clicks over. Josh waits, looking around. It takes a long  
time. Finally, Mary clicks back over.

MARY (CONT'D)  
(awake now)  
Josh? Hello?

JOSH  
Hey, yeah, hi.

MARY  
Hi. What's up? What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

Um, nothing. I was gonna see if you, what are you doing?

MARY

I'm really tired, I'm sleeping. OK I'm gonna sleep.

JOSH

Oh, alright. Who was on the other line?

MARY

Call me tomorrow.

Mary hangs up.

JOSH

Mary?

59 EXT. LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

59

This is your standard locally owned liquor store. It is still snowing hard. Julian pulls up outside the store just as the neon "OPEN" sign goes out. The LIQUOR STORE GUY, mid thirties and scruffy, is locking the glass front doors, just as Julian reaches them.

LIQUOR STORE GUY

Closed.

JULIAN

No, come on, man! All I need is cigarettes.

LIQUOR STORE GUY

No, we're fucking closed. Go Away.

JULIAN

What did you say? Just fucking let me in, dude, I just need smokes. Don't be a fucking prick.

LIQUOR STORE GUY

HEY! I said we're fucking closed! Now fuck off.

Julian pounds the door handles.

JULIAN

Alright.

(CONTINUED)

Julian walks off, out of the frame. The Liquor Store Guy watches him go, and then steps backwards quickly. Julian comes back into frame, carrying a heavy waist-high DOORSTOP ASHTRAY. Julian throws the ashtray at the doors. The doors shatter and the Liquor Store Guy falls down, cowering on the floor. Julian walks up to the door.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Huh! What the fuck?! You want to fucking tell me where I can go now? Huh?

LIQUOR STORE GUY

(whimpering)

No.

JULIAN

All I wanted was fucking pack of smokes, dude! Fucking asshole.

Julian gets in his car and peels out.

The mall is decorated for Christmas. Christmas Muzak plays in the background. This is a thrill ride simulator kiosk. A big red box on hydraulics is violently shifting around. The operator is reading a magazine, answering the questions of two MALLRAT GIRLS, mid-teens, plastic.

MALLRAT GIRL #1

How much is it?

OPERATOR

Five Dollars.

MALLRAT GIRL #1

What kind of ride is it?

OPERATOR

It's a roller coaster. It's wooden.

MALLRAT GIRL #2

Is it fun?

OPERATOR

(cardboard)

Yeah, it's awesome.

MALLRAT GIRL #1

Does it go upside down?

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

All three turn to look at the machine, shaking back and forth.

OPERATOR

No.

MALLRAT GIRL #2

Does it feel real?

One of the girls notices a male mallrat down the hall. She goes after him, calling his name.

MALLRAT GIRL #1

Corey! Corey!

The other girl follows quickly. The operator watches them go, turns back to his magazine. The ride comes to an end, the box rests. He undoes various latches to let out the riders; a man in his late fifties and Josh.

OPERATOR

Welcome back folks, how was your trip?

A beat.

OPERATOR (CONT'D)

Please be sure to retrieve your belongings before exiting the ride. Thank you for riding the Cobra XT.

JOSH

Thanks.

OPERATOR

Uh huh.

61 INT. LINGERIE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

61

This is a Victoria's Secret. An INCREDIBLY HOT WOMAN, early thirties, is helping Josh pick out bras and underwear for Mary.

INCREDIBLY HOT WOMAN

...and what this is going to do, with this piece here, and feel that...

She offers Josh a feel of the bra. He pinches the bra quickly.

JOSH

Hmm.

(CONTINUED)

## INCREDIBLY HOT WOMAN

Isn't that nice? And so that's going to give a little bit of a lift.

JOSH

Right.

62 INT. MALL - MOMENTS LATER

62

Josh is leaving the lingerie store with a bag. He is taken with all the Christmas decorations and music. He inhales it, smiles to himself.

63 EXT. DAYCARE CENTER - AFTERNOON

63

Josh shows up at the daycare with flowers. There is snow on the ground. Miss Claire is giving the children back to their parents. Some of the kids recognize Josh, yell his name, give him hugs, etc.

JOSH

Hi Miss Claire. How was your Thanksgiving?

MISS CLAIRE

Well. It was fine Josh, thank you. I am, I'm pretty... Well... Austin, honey! We don't shove, sweetie, we love! I've been better.

JOSH

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Is uh, is Mary here or...

MISS CLAIRE

No, Mary is certainly not here, thank heavens.

JOSH

Sorry?

MISS CLAIRE

Well, after this morning, I would not expect to find Mary here again. These are children! Children! They ALWAYS learn! And if you think, well --

JOSH

I'm sorry, I'm not really sure what you're talking about.

(CONTINUED)

MISS CLAIRE

No?

JOSH

No.

MISS CLAIRE

Well, your Mary, whatever she is to you, decided to get herself fired this morning.

JOSH

Fired?

MISS CLAIRE

You bet fired. Absolutely! She shows up here, obviously drunk, smelling like a, a, like a tavern and an ashtray, and these kids watch everything! Do you think they missed that? They're children for the love of Mike, do you think they missed that?

JOSH

No, I, I don't... Drunk? She was drunk? Are you sure?

MISS CLAIRE

Well, I didn't give her a drunk test or whatever they do, but I didn't need to! That girl shows up here, dressed like Madonna, or, or Britney Spears, with the makeup and the swaggering! And look at our flagpole! It was morning recess! We all saw it! Look at that!

Across the parking lot, Mary's car is moderately wrecked (undrivable) up against the tilted flagpole. Some janitors are assessing the situation.

JOSH

Mary did that? Was she, she crashed there?

MISS CLAIRE

I'll say! I always knew that girl was dangerous, but this? This! What will I tell the parents? 'Oh, I'm sure awful sorry Mr. and Mrs. Kinderman, but Jimmy's teacher wrapped her honda around our flagpole this morning in front of your son and his classmates.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (2)

63

MISS CLAIRE (CONT'D)

But gee, look at this lovely Paper Marche Christmas Tree we made during arts and crafts!' No!

JOSH

Is she alright? Where is she now?

MISS CLAIRE

Well, she's not hurt if that's what you mean, but alright? Do you call this alright? I would NOT say alright! I don't know where she is, and frankly she better not be here, ever again! Mackenzie! Kristy! We do not kiss one another! Hey!

64 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

64

Josh knocks and enters the apartment, still carrying the flowers. There are empty beer bottles, shot glasses. A CD is skipping. The TV is on.

JOSH

Hello? Mary?

Josh makes his way through the apartment, looking for Mary, taking in the disarray. No one is there. Josh turns off the CD player and TV.

He sits to wait, flowers in his lap.

A beat.

Josh gets up, puts the flowers in water. He begins to clean up the apartment.

He throws the bottles away, makes the bed.

He goes to the bedroom, where he finds an ashtray, half-full of cigarette butts, with two used condoms in it.

Josh takes it in.

65 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - LATER

65

Josh is sitting in Mary's comfortable chair, reading one of her self help books.

Headlights shine through the window.

Josh gets up to look out the window, where Mary is getting out of Julian's car.

Mary enters.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Jesus Christ! You scared me.

Mary looks around her apartment.

MARY (CONT'D)

Did you clean?

JOSH

Yes, I cleaned your house.

MARY

Well, thanks. You didn't have to do that.  
What are you doing here?

JOSH

I'm here for you. What are you doing  
here?

MARY

Jesus Christ, I live here, Josh. What do  
you mean?

JOSH

I mean... What are you doing? What did  
you do?

MARY

What are you talking about?! You are  
being so weird!

JOSH

I'm being weird? You crashed your car!  
You were drunk, and you crashed your car!  
In front of children, Mary! You crashed  
into your work, drunk, in front of  
children! You left your TV on, and whose  
condoms are in the ashtray?! What are you  
doing?

MARY

Jesus... I can't do this right now. I  
don't want this right now.

JOSH

You don't want this? I don't want this!  
Who are you? What are you doing? Tell me  
what you're doing!

MARY

Stop fucking saying that! I don't know  
what you want me to say! What?!

(CONTINUED)

JOSH

I just want... All I want is for you... You're being so mean, and that's just now, without all these questions. You're yelling at me, and I didn't do anything wrong.

MARY

No, you didn't do anything wrong. I can't believe you cleaned. You shouldn't have cleaned. Why are you even here?

JOSH

I brought you flowers. I was bringing you flowers.

MARY

Jesus Christ. I don't know what to say. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I'm this way. You knew what I was --

JOSH

What you were? What were you? What did I know? You said you wanted to be with me! I thought you wanted to be with me, and you ruined that.

Mary's lights a cigarette.

MARY

Yes. I ruined that. I'm a horrible person. I ruin everything. That's what I do. That's me.

JOSH

So that's it? You're horrible, sorry? That's it? You're not horrible, and you don't want this. Do you want this? Do you want to be with me? You told me that. You said you wanted to be with me!

MARY

I know, I know. But some people are just there to show people what not to be, or what to run from. I want to be good, but--

Josh gets up and goes to Mary, gets in her face.

JOSH

But what? What? Why aren't you trying to fix it? Try to fix it! I'm going to leave! And you should stop me!

(CONTINUED)

MARY

I can't fix it. It's fucked. You should just go. I'm not stopping you.

JOSH

Stop me! I don't want to go, I want you to try. Try and tell me something. Tell me things, and try to make it better. You made a mistake, but you're sorry. You're not going to let this happen again. You want me to know how sorry you are, and you want me to hold you! Something!

MARY

No, I can't. This is what it is.

JOSH

What does that mean? I don't know what that means. It is what it is? No! You need to tell me --

MARY

Jesus Christ! Open your eyes! I'm a whore! I'm a fucking slut! I hurt you, have some respect for yourself! Yes, you're everything I want for myself, but that's not the truth. I'm not supposed to be good! I fucked Julian last night, over and over. I loved it! He bit me, and I loved it twice as much! I fucked him the first night he was in town! I kissed you good night, and then I went to his hotel room! You need to get up and run from me. Look at you! I just walked all over you! Jesus Christ, I am so sorry, Josh, but don't sit here and try to make it right. It's all wrong! I don't know why everything is wrong. Just stop talking! I gamble, and I rob, and just walk away from me. You should not need me to tell you that, Jesus Christ!

Mary goes into her bedroom and slams the door.

Josh sits for a minute, gets up, puts the book he was reading back on the shelf and leaves.

Josh comes in, tosses his keys into a christmas bowl by the door. He goes to the living room and removes a ring from the christmas chain.

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

He goes to the bathroom, turns on the shower.

67 INT. MARY'S BATHROOM - LATER

67

Mary is brushing her teeth, applying some skin cream to her face. She stops to look at herself. She turns the light out.

68 INT. TANNING SALON BACK OFFICE - DAY

68

Mary is interviewing for a job at a tanning salon. This is the back office. No windows, just a mess of tanning posters and a few calendars on the wall. Her interviewer is KEVIN, mid-thirties, way too tan for his own good.

KEVIN

...and that's the number one hurdle, if you will, that we have to get over here. I mean, the sunblock industry alone last year accounted for something like four billion dollars in revenues. And that's not taking into account dermatologists, plastic surgeons, I mean the list goes on! And here we are, a family business, in a small industry, having to educate people on the truth about their skin, you see?

MARY

Yeah... Wow.

KEVIN

We have to get the truth under their skin! We have to get under their skin with the truth!

MARY

Right. That's funny. So... I mean, I said, on the application that I have a car, but I actually just had to put it in the, um, to the mechanic. But I have a ride, and it'll be done soon, so it's not even, it shouldn't...

Kevin considers Mary's figure and predicament.

KEVIN

But you can get a ride?

MARY

Oh! Absolutely. My boyfriend --

69 INT. TANNING SALON - CONTINUOUS

69

This is the front desk of the tanning salon. There are a few Christmas decorations hung around. Julian, Mary's ride, is flirting with the ATTENDANT, late teens and way too tan. They are watching a promotional video for "Spray of Sunlight", a spray-on tanning process.

JULIAN

Doesn't it get in your eyes?

ATTENDANT

Well, you have to wear eyewear, which we sell. Or you can buy Blinkies for fifty cents.

JULIAN

Blinkies?

ATTENDANT

Uh Huh, they're right here. They're stickers, and you just put them like this:

The attendant demonstrates by peeling off an oval shaped foil sticker and folding it into a cone, which she applies to her eye and smiles.

70 INT. TANNING SALON - CONTINUOUS

70

Back to Mary and Kevin.

MARY

Yeah, it shouldn't be a problem.

KEVIN

OK.

MARY

OK.

They both smile.

71 INT. LOADING DOCK - LATER

71

Mary and Julian are having drinks.

JULIAN

What? What is it?

MARY

Nothing.

(CONTINUED)

JULIAN

OK.

Julian leans back and looks around the bar, finished with trying to cheer up Mary. He's just kidding, and leans back in.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

What?

MARY

Nothing, I just... You know, I wrecked my car, and I lost my job, and it just...

JULIAN

You got a new job.

MARY

At a tanning salon.

JULIAN

What's wrong with that? I love tan people.

MARY

Whatever, nevermind.

JULIAN

What? Are you too good to work at a tanning salon? Maybe your job isn't your problem. Maybe you need to get comfortable with who you are, stop trying to be something else.

MARY

Such as?

JULIAN

Well, like your old job. If you had kids, would you want them hanging out with someone like you all day? Seriously.

MARY

What?

JULIAN

I mean, look at you, look at your life. How happy has all your trying to be "pure" and "good" really made you? I know you, I've known you for... and you like to smoke, you like to drink, you like to be tied up, you like to be bitten.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED: (2)

71

JULIAN (CONT'D)

And what is so wrong with that? Why do you want to be something else, when you are what you are? You know?

Mary stares at Julian.

MARY

He's a good person, he didn't deserve this.

JULIAN

I know... exactly.

The bar gradually begins to move faster and faster, Julian gets up and plays on stage, people come and go. Mary stays in regular time, smoking, drinking, looking around at the people.

72 INT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

72

This is a Hollywood Video. It's decorated for Christmas. On an overhead bank of televisions, the credits to whatever movie was playing are rolling. Josh enters and heads directly for the holiday movie section. On his way he is greeted by VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE, female, early twenties, dark brown shoulder length hair. Reserved but capable.

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Hello.

Josh doesn't even look up, just keeps walking.

JOSH

Hey.

Josh arrives at the holiday movie section. There is some garland stapled to the rack, and one ornament. He picks up a few boxes, nothing looks good.

Above, the credits are done rolling on the television bank, and the televisions go to LOUD SNOW. Josh looks up at the bank, then over to the front desk, where VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE is looking at Josh. She ducks below the counter to stop the VCR under the counter.

Josh slowly looks around the isles, realizing that there is a whole store full of other movies.

73 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

73

Josh is sitting on the couch, watching a movie. The phone rings. Josh looks at the phone. It rings again. Josh picks up the phone.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

JOSH  
Hello?... Hello...Hello...

There is silence on the other end. After a long pause, we hear a click, then a TELEPHONE OPERATORS VOICE.

TELEPHONE OPERATOR  
If you would like to make a call, please hang up and dial again.

Josh hangs up.

74 INT/EXT. PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY

74

This is a six-story covered concrete parking garage. Mary pulls her damaged but running car up to the parking ticket machine to get her parking ticket.

She is too far from the machine, which is BUZZING LOUDLY at her.

She shifts the car into park.

She undoes her seat belt.

She opens the door and leans out to grab the ticket.

We ride with her through the structure, around and around up through all six levels. Almost every spot is taken. There are two cars ahead of her which take the only two spots open.

Mary reaches the top level (open air) of the structure. She pulls her car into an empty spot.

She shifts the car into park

She turns off the ignition.

Mary begins to sob.

75 EXT. JOSHUA'S TREES CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - DAY

75

Josh is walking back from the tree field to the pole barn, where Julian is waiting, leaning against his car. Josh works while Julian talks.

JULIAN  
Afternoon... How you doing, man? So, you're not talking, is that... That's cool, I mean, I probably wouldn't...  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

## JULIAN (CONT'D)

But, I wanted to come talk to you, you know, 'cause I think, you know, this whole thing is... I feel bad about how you found out, that was bad... I don't know man, I mean, I'm sorry... I hope you know that like, it didn't have anything to do with you. I mean Mary and I... sort of have always had a... well anyway, I think you're a good guy. I really do. You should almost be... because the way Mary is, this probably would have happened sooner or later. You know? And she feels so bad, man, she feels like she should have never even been with you, not because she didn't want to, but, I mean, some people are just made a certain way, and as much as they can sort of pretend, or fake, or be another way, sooner or later, they're just going to end up where they were headed in the first place, you know? People don't change. I don't know, I just... I wanted to say that to you, or something like this. So, I'm sorry. I'm sorry... OK, so I'm gonna go... OK. Sorry. Whatever.

Julian lights a cigarette, offers the pack to Josh. Josh takes one. Julian lights his lighter, holds it out to Josh. Josh pulls his own lighter from his pocket, lights his cigarette, stares blankly at Julian.

## JULIAN (CONT'D)

OK.

Julian gets in his car and leaves.

Josh goes about decorating a tree.

He trims the root ball, puts rocks and soil in a pot, pots the tree.

He takes a length of garland from a huge roll on the wall, takes out a box of ornaments from a bigger box of boxes.

He hangs the garland, starts hanging the ornaments on the tree.

He drops an ornament on the floor, it shatters. He stares at the pieces for a beat.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

He goes to the door, turns out the lights in the barn, closes the bay door and leaves.

77 INT. LIQUOR STORE - LATER

77

Josh is buying lots of liquor. He has a basket. He is reading labels, trying to make informed decisions.

He puts tequila, rum, whiskey, gold-flake cinnamon schnapps, and peppermint schnapps in the basket.

He brings the basket of bottles to the counter to pay.

LIQUOR STORE GUY

That it then?

JOSH

Uh, no. Can I get a pack of, um, reds?

The Liquor Store Guy quickly grabs a pack of cigarettes and puts them in a bag with the bottles.

78 EXT. FAST FOOD DRIVE THROUGH - LATER

78

Josh is pulling ahead to pay for his food.

FAST FOOD CASHIER

Four-sixty-three.

Josh pays with a five-dollar bill.

FAST FOOD CASHIER (CONT'D)

Out of five... and thirty-seven makes five. Ketchup or salt?

JOSH

No.

Fast Food Cashier hands Josh his drink and bag of food.

FAST FOOD CASHIER

Have a nice day.

Fast Food Cashier slides the window shut. Josh rolls his window up.

79 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

79

Mary is sitting on her couch, watching TV. She looks down to the seat on the couch next to her.

80 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

80

Josh is sitting on the couch, the TV is on. He looks down to the seat on the couch next to him.

His phone rings. He keeps staring at the spot on the couch. The phone rings again. Josh looks up, towards the phone, then back to the spot on the couch. The phone rings again. Josh gets up and grabs the phone on the end table next to the couch.

81 INT. JOSH'S HOUSE/MARY'S APARTMENT - INTERCUT

81

MARY

Hi.

JOSH

Hello.

MARY

It's Mary.

JOSH

I know. Hi Mary.

MARY

Are you mad?

JOSH

Am I --

MARY

I mean, I, (exhales through her nose)  
What are you doing?

JOSH

What am I, I'm just at my house. I'm just sitting at my house.

MARY

Well... I'm sorry. I'm really really sorry.

JOSH

Yeah, you know, I don't want to... please.

MARY

No, no, no. I know, but what if, what if you came over to my house right now?

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

JOSH  
What? No. Why... No.

MARY  
No, no, no, yes. Just please say yes and  
come to my house right now... Please?  
Hello?

JOSH  
No. There's... no. I'm not coming to your  
house.

Mary exhales through her nose.

82 EXT. MARY'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

82

Josh pulls up outside, sits in his running truck for a long  
time, staring at Mary's apartment.

Josh finally turns off the truck and gets out, goes to the  
door. He knocks. Mary answers the door after 20 seconds,  
wearing a T-shirt and soccer shorts. She uses the door for  
balance.

MARY  
Hi.

JOSH  
Hi.

83 INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

83

Josh enters and makes his way to the middle of the room. He  
shrugs his shoulders.

Mary sways for a beat, then throws her arms around Josh.

MARY  
Hi.

Josh is holding his breath. After a long pause, Mary lets go,  
steps back and looks at Josh.

JOSH  
So...?

MARY  
Wait here. Hold on.

Mary locks and chains the front door. Mary walks out of the  
living room, towards the bedroom and bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

83

Josh waits, standing in the middle of the living room. He watches the doorway for Mary to return. Thirty seconds pass.

Off Screen, we hear a bath running.

MARY (CONT'D)  
(from the bathroom)  
OK, come on!

Josh looks towards the locked front door.

He opens his mouth to say something to the doorway, shuts his mouth and eyes.

He opens his eyes and follows Mary's voice.

84 INT. MARY'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

84

Josh enters Mary's bathroom to find her in a running bath. Her T-shirt and soccer shorts are on the counter.

JOSH  
Mary, I'm not, I...

MARY  
I know, I know, I know, I only just need you to just help me wash my hair. That's all that I need, and that's it.

JOSH  
This is...

85 INT. MARY'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

85

BATHTUB SEQUENCE:

There is no sound. Josh is in the bath with Mary. They are washing her hair.

They are sitting still.

They are getting out, Mary is having trouble standing up. Mary pushes Josh out of the way to get to the toilet, throws the lid up and throws up into the toilet.

Josh is holding her hair while she throws up.

Josh is putting toothpaste on a toothbrush and handing it to Mary.

86 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

86

Still no sound. Josh grabs a nightgown from a dresser drawer and hands it to Mary, who puts it on slowly.

Josh pulls back the covers of Mary's bed, helps her into it. He puts the covers over Mary, and stands over her, watching her fall asleep. When she looks asleep, he leans down and kisses her forehead. This wakes her, she grabs his neck, hugs him tightly.

MARY

I'm better. Thank you... come on.

Mary pulls Josh onto the bed, over the covers, and motions for him to sit next to her.

Josh sits down on the bed next to Mary. Mary holds onto his arm and goes to sleep.

Josh sits on the bed, watching Mary.

FADE OUT.

87 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - LATER

87

We hear distant knocking. Josh is asleep. After a beat, the knocking wakes him up. He sits up slowly. He looks around, down at Mary, sleeping. Josh gets up and goes to:

88 INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

88

Josh unlocks the door, opens it as much as the chain will let him. Julian is outside.

JULIAN

What the fuck?

JOSH

Um, she's fine. She's asleep. She was, I don't know --

JULIAN

Open the door.

JOSH

No, I don't think -- She's OK. I should go. She's OK. Just come back tomorrow... for her.

JULIAN

Josh, open the fucking door.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

JOSH

No... no. OK.

Josh closes the door. Walks back to:

89 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

89

Josh stands at the foot of the bed, watching Mary. He's not quite awake.

From the living room, we hear a crash. Josh turns towards the living room.

Julian comes storming into the bedroom, comes straight up to Josh, grabs him by the neck. Josh tries to get Julian's hand off of his neck, but realizes that Julian wants it there.

JULIAN

What the fuck are you doing?! HEY! What the fuck are you doing?

Josh makes a choking sound, Julian slaps Josh twice in the ear.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Jesus fucking Christ, I thought I fucking talked to you. Didn't I fucking explain it to you? What the fuck are you doing here?

JOSH

I... I'm gonna... dude.

JULIAN

Shut the fuck up, man!

JOSH

Don't... I --

Julian slaps Josh in the ear again.

JULIAN

What the fuck are you doing, man? Huh?!  
Fuckin' bitch!

Another slap. Josh can't move. Josh sees himself in a mirror across the room.

JOSH

Please, don't. I'm not --

Mary, still asleep by all accounts, stirs.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

MARY  
Julian don't. Just --

JULIAN  
(to Mary)  
Shut the fuck up, Mary.

Mary grunts into her pillow.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
(to Josh)  
Hey!

Julian pushes Josh into a nightstand. Josh falls slowly, gets up quickly.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
Oh, what? You didn't think this through, did you man? I mean, I fucking came to you, I said things to you, I tried to tell I was sorry, you fuckin... And you come here? You fucking end up here, in this bed?! I mean how much of what I told you did you miss, dude? What the FUCK --

Another slap.

JULIAN (CONT'D)  
-- did you think would happen?! Just... fuckin' leave man. Just go away.

Josh leaves immediately. Julian watches him go, turns to watch Mary sleeping.

90 INT. JOSHUA'S TREES CHRISTMAS TREE FARM - LATER

90

Josh comes home, puts his keys into the Christmas bowl. He has a swollen eye and a fat lip.

Josh goes through the living room and kitchen, into the den, and removes the final ring from the construction paper chain. He looks at the chalkboard, which reads "1 Days until Christmas"

Josh walks back into the living room, sits down on the floor, holds his head in his hands, and looks up at the ceiling.

91 INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

91

Mary is in bed, where we left her. She opens her eyes. She closes her eyes.

92 INT. MARY'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER 92

Mary is standing in the doorway to her bathroom, staring at the bath tub.

TITLE: AFTER

93 EXT. FAST FOOD DRIVE THROUGH - MORNING 93

It is Spring. Julian is pulling forward to pay for his food. He is fumbling through the ashtray looking for change.

FAST FOOD CASHIER

Hey.

JULIAN

Hey. What do I owe you?

FAST FOOD CASHIER

Well, uh, you're all set. The woman in the last car paid for it. So, you're all--

JULIAN

No shit?

FAST FOOD CASHIER

Yeah, I mean, she just gave me a... she gave me money and said to pay for yours, so --

JULIAN

Wow, that's... wow. Huh. So, can I get my breakfast, or --

FAST FOOD CASHIER

Yeah, yeah, here you go... And your orange juice... OK --

JULIAN

OK --

FAST FOOD CASHIER

So, have a nice day.

JULIAN

Right, you too man. OK.

Julian pulls forward.

94 INT. TANNING SALON - DAY

94

Mary is leaning on the counter, reading a magazine. A TANNING CUSTOMER comes waling up from the back of the salon, having finished tanning.

TANNING CUSTOMER

Thanks.

MARY

Mmm Hmm. Bye.

The Tanning Customer leaves.

Mary grabs a SPRAY BOTTLE, ROLL OF PAPER TOWELS, HAND TOWEL, and PEPPERMINT from under the counter. She carries these things down the hall to the tanning bed room that the customer just left.

She sprays the bed with the bottle, wipes the bed's top and bottom down with paper towels.

She lays the hand towel and peppermint on the bed, grabs the used hand towel from the floor, and leaves the room.

We walk with Mary down the hall, where she puts the used hand towel in a laundry basket. She walks back to the front of the store, where Mary leans on the counter and continues to read her magazine.

95 INT/EXT JOSH'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

95

The shades are all drawn in the house. In the living room, the Christmas tree is dead, not lit. The TV is on, showing a reality court show.

In the kitchen, Josh is eating cereal in his underwear. The kitchen table is scattered with junk mail and dishes. The kitchen sink is full of dishes.

Josh looks around him, sees the state of the house. He grabs a cigarette from a pack on the table, lights it with a match. He pulls a mostly full SANTA CLAUSE ASHTRAY across the table, puts the used match in it.

96 INT. STRIP-MALL DINER - AFTERNOON

96

This is a coney island. A waitress walks up to a table, pours a cup of coffee.

DINER WAITRESS

Hey hun. How ya doin?

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

Her customer is Josh.

JOSH  
Hey, Hi. I'm, uh, I'm pretty good... You?

DINER WAITRESS  
I'm alright, what can I get for you?

JOSH  
S'my birthday, actually. So --

DINER WAITRESS  
Oh yeah? Happy birthday! What, did you hatch from an Easter Egg?

JOSH  
Yeah, something like that. So, um, I think I'll have the Georgia Reuben. And some water. Is that OK?

DINER WAITRESS  
I'll see what I can do.

The waitress winks at Josh. He smiles. She walks away.

Josh turns to look at the skyline for thirty seconds.

The waitress returns with a piece of pie.

DINER WAITRESS (CONT'D)  
Here you go, hun, that's on me. Your sandwich will be right up, OK?

JOSH  
OK, Wow... Thank you. That's --

DINER WAITRESS  
You bet, Happy Birthday.

The waitress walks away. Josh looks at his pie.

97 INT/EXT. STRIP-MALL DINER - LATER 97

Josh is paying his check at the register. He is holding a rented movie. We follow him out of the diner, two doors down to:

98 INT. VIDEO STORE - CONTINUOUS 98

Josh walks up to the counter with his movie. Behind the counter is VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE.

(CONTINUED)

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Hi.

JOSH

Hey, Hi. I'm returning this, but I think it might be late.

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

OK, let's see.

She scans the movie, reads the screen.

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE (CONT'D)

Hmm. Yeah, it was due yesterday, so --

JOSH

Darn. Yesterday was my birthday, actually, so --

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Oh, well happy birthday.

JOSH

Yeah, thanks. So, I had -- my friends were having a party for it -- for me, and I kinda lost track of --

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Well, I can just pull it off for you.

JOSH

Really? Could you?

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Happy birthday.

JOSH

Wow. Thanks. I appreciate that.

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

No problem. Just don't let it happen again.

JOSH

Right. I promise. OK, well, happy Easter.

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Actually, I'm Jewish, so --

JOSH

No shit.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

VIDEO STORE EMPLOYEE

Yep.

JOSH

Hmm.

Josh Smiles.

THE END.