

THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

Written by

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INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Thomas arrives at the warehouse, starting his overnight shift. Twenty-four-year-old THOMAS KENNEDY, a conventionally handsome Caucasian man, possesses the unwavering dedication of a provider and the steadfast loyalty of a family man. His all-American features - a youthful face framed by a rugged appeal - belie the strength of his character.

Even amidst the relentless rhythm of the paper products factory, He's shown performing his routine tasks, highlighting the monotonous nature of his job and the emptiness of the warehouse. The scene focuses on establishing the setting and Thomas's solitary existence, setting the stage for the events to come. The sounds of the warehouse, and the quiet movements are emphasized. We see him checking in, grabbing his equipment (forklift keys, clipboard), and getting started on the evening's paperwork.

Thomas diligently stacks and prepares shipments, his inherent dignity shines through. He's a picture of quiet resilience, his work ethic a testament to his values. The worn denim and simple tee shirt he wears only highlight his unwavering commitment to his responsibilities.

INT. WAREHOUSE BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Seated solitary at a secluded table, Thomas consumed his meal in contemplative silence.

INT. WAREHOUSE DOCK - NIGHT

Employing a motorized lift, Thomas skillfully maneuvers a heavy pallet from the delivery truck, its weighty cargo carefully secured.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Thomas looks through papers on his clipboard. Studying them carefully before pulling and packaging more paper products. Thomas continues his tasks, moving pallets of paper, checking inventory, and ensuring everything is in order. The focus is on the repetition and the sense of quiet isolation. The camera focuses on details - the texture of the paper, the slight creaks of the warehouse floor. We understand his job is simple, but the vastness of the space magnifies his solitude. A brief interaction with a distant security camera is included.

## EXT. WAREHOUSE - DAWN

As dawn fractured the horizon, painting the sky with nascent light, Thomas emerged from the cavernous warehouse. Behind him, a diverse stream of employees—young and old, their faces etched with the promise and weariness of another workday—began to file in, their footsteps echoing the rhythmic pulse of the impending shift.

## INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Sunlight, a molten gold, ignited the eastern sky as the train, a steel serpent, snaked across the bridge. From Thomas's vantage point, a nearly packed carriage, the cityscape unfolded: a breathtaking panorama of the Hudson, awash in the dawn's incandescent glow, and a sprawling metropolis awakening to a new day. His gaze drifted from the majestic river, reflecting the rising sun, to the myriad scenes of urban life - hurried commuters preparing for their daily battles, the city itself stirring from its nocturnal slumber, a vibrant tapestry of human endeavor woven into the fabric of the morning.

## INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BATHROOM - MORNING

A fractured reflection stares back from the vanity's shattered glass, its jagged edges mirroring the disarray below. A chaotic sprawl of prescription containers litters the countertop, a testament to a troubled mind.

Twenty-three-year-old ASHLEY KENNEDY, a white cisgender woman, possessed a volatile spirit, her moods shifting like desert sands, making her a difficult companion. Haunted by insecurity, she perpetually felt like an outsider, a solitary figure adrift in a sea of faces. Her hand, trembling slightly, closed around a vial. With a decisive twist, the cap yielded, releasing its contents. A cascade of pills, a bitter harvest, tumbled into her palm.

Her eyelids fluttered shut, a final, desperate act of surrender to the shadows within.

## INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - MORNING

Drowsiness clung to Thomas, a heavy blanket in his king-sized haven. The jarring blare of his alarm clock, perched precariously on the nightstand, ripped through the quietude. He blinked his weary lids, consciousness dawning sluggishly.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BATHROOM - MORNING

The deluge of water invigorated Thomas as he stood beneath the showerhead, relishing the cascading torrent on his skin.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - MORNING

At her ornate dressing table, Ashley meticulously prepares for the day's demanding challenges, her reflection a silent observer of her transformation.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDY'S KITCHEN - MORNING

A desolate scene unfolds: a mountain of unwashed dishes dominates the sink, amidst a general air of neglect and disarray.

At the kitchen table, Thomas meticulously spoon-fed the six-month-old Casey Kennedy, her tiny form nestled in her highchair. Ashley's unexpected arrival shattered the peaceful, intimate moment.

THOMAS

Are you feeling a little better?

ASHLEY

No. Where's the coffee?

THOMAS

(Chuckles)

Walk two blocks make a sharp right  
and head east about a mile. Where  
do you think the coffee is?

ASHLEY

Am I conveying an aura of amusement  
and receptiveness to your supposed  
humor? I highly doubt it!

Ashley ambled toward her kitchen cabinet, a quiet pilgrimage to the comforting ritual of morning. She retrieved a delicate porcelain mug, its weight promising warmth. With a deliberate grace, Ashley infused the rich, dark elixir of freshly brewed coffee, the aroma a potent promise of awakening.

THOMAS

You do not have to yell in front of  
Casey, if you are not all right to  
go to work stay home.

ASHLEY

I am fine.

THOMAS

My mom said she would watch Casey today.

ASHLEY

Why?!

Casey received a pair of sound-dampening ear protectors from Thomas, who retrieved them from the adjacent seat and gently placed them upon her head.

THOMAS

You could be a little more appreciative it helps when we do not have to call a babysitter and spend the extra money!

ASHLEY

Our improved financial situation would be dramatically different if your employment provided a more substantial income!

THOMAS

And if you could go to work, we would have more money!

ASHLEY

Is my depression the sole reason you deem me a failure, a complete wreck? Despite knowing this, you still chose to wed me.

Thomas ascended, his limbs heavy with the weight of slumber, yet propelled by an unwavering resolve.

THOMAS

I must go to work it is going to be almost 90 degrees today. Are you sure you want to wear a turtleneck sweater?

ASHLEY

I do not tell you what to wear so do not tell me what I should be wearing. This sweater looks nice on me for a cashier's job, and this is what I am wearing!

Casey is collected by Thomas, his strength evident in the effortless lift. The action speaks volumes of their existing dynamic.

THOMAS

Your sweater does look nice on you.

ASHLEY

You finished your night shift why are you going back now?

THOMAS

The overtime helps with our expenses when they have it, I slept for a few hours I will drop Casey off at my mom's.

Bound by an unbreakable commitment, Thomas and Casey moved on, their paths intertwined for all time.

INT. HELEN KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - MORNING

A haven for gatherings, adorned with cherished photographs, boasts elegant furnishings and an atmosphere of tranquil repose. Family portraits rest serenely atop the polished piano, a testament to enduring bonds. Spotless and inviting, the room exudes warmth.

Helen's exquisite piano captivated Thomas, its ivory keys beckoning him to unleash a torrent of melodic expression. A profound realization stilled Thomas; his hand moved, etching the significant findings into his notebook with deliberate intensity.

Fifty-year-old HELEN KENNEDY, a woman of unwavering compassion, possesses a maternal warmth that radiates genuine affection and a profound sense of responsibility.

HELEN (O.S.)

Your father always loved how well you played the piano.

THOMAS

When he first brought this home, I would not go near it.

HELEN

It was when I played your favorite song row row your boat that you liked the piano.

THOMAS

I was amazed that you could do that  
on this.

HELEN

After that, every chance you got  
you would sit there and play.

THOMAS

Thanks for watching Casey today.  
You are always there in many ways  
for Ashley and me.

Helen settled into her armchair, the worn fabric yielding  
comfortably beneath her weight.

She cradled the warm porcelain of her teacup, its fragrant  
steam of comforting embrace.

HELEN

I am glad you brought her over.

THOMAS

I see Casey's smile after spending  
time with you.

HELEN

How is Ashley?

THOMAS

It is taking time to sort things  
out, she is doing better.

Consulting his timepiece, Thomas arose with a decisive  
movement, his gaze settling on the meticulously prepared  
notes that lay before him..

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I must go. Ashley is only doing a  
half shift, are you sure you do not  
mind dropping her off.

HELEN

I do not mind. Do have a good day.

THOMAS

You also have a good day.

Departing his mom's residence, Thomas embarked on the  
momentous remainder of his day.

## INT. WAREHOUSE BREAKROOM - DAY

Twenty-three-year-old JARROD, a streetwise Italian American, possessed the impulsive nature of a man living solely for the present. He and Thomas were seated, a at a table. Thomas, a quiet observer, meticulously documents fleeting thoughts in his notebook. Meanwhile, a diverse tapestry of colleagues—spanning generations and personalities—occupy scattered tables, some huddled in animated conversation, others lost in solitary contemplation. A few more seek respite and rejuvenation at the beverage dispensers.

JARROD

You should have seen the lady I was with last night.

THOMAS

You always have a different one when you go to the club, what was different about this one?

JARROD

Their magnificence was breathtaking. I was utterly captivated.

THOMAS

Was that the defining characteristic? Immense?

JARROD

I buried my face in their splendor; I was consumed.

A chuckle, low and mirthful, rumbled in Thomas's chest.

THOMAS

Did you at least get the name of this one?

JARROD

I knew I forgot to do something. Are you writing a new song?

THOMAS

Trying.

JARROD

Don't you get tired of doing that?



THOMAS

Don't you get tired of going to the club every night?

JARROD

No, it is something I enjoy doing. I see what you did there.

THOMAS

I been thinking about getting my degree in music appreciation someday and teaching at a local college if I do not become a professional musician.

JARROD

You do not need to waste money. What you enjoy doing requires no education, you tap a key and pull a string.

THOMAS

Easy there it requires a little more than that.

JARROD

My point was that you do not need an extensive education to succeed now.

THOMAS

You can see this warehouse as a career for yourself?

JARROD

Yes. I like to have a fun time and this shop pays my bills and I have leftovers to spend. You should come to the club with me some night. Women lose it when they see a baby face.

THOMAS

I wish people could see me as a young man and not a baby face anymore.

JARROD

You have been a baby face ever since I met you in high school. I can introduce you too to some hot girls.

THOMAS

If I were an unmarried person that would be different, but I am married with a child. You were my best man; you do remember my wedding?

JARROD

You were serious when you said those vows? I thought since you will not be doing the overnight shift anymore you will have time to go to the club.

THOMAS

Why would I not be doing my overnight shift?

JARROD

You have not read your work email?

THOMAS

Not today.

JARROD

They are eliminating your shift. You are going to be working the evening shift with me.

INT. BIGGS WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY

The cramped workspace, a chaotic jumble of neglected tasks, exuded an atmosphere of profound discouragement. Thomas burst in, his presence jarring the stillness.

THOMAS

You could not hold a meeting and let everyone know they were eliminating the overnight shift I had to hear it from someone else!?

Forty-year-old ARTHUR BIGGS, a stout, Caucasian man of considerable girth, prioritized wealth above all else. His substantial frame slumped over paperwork, a monument to avarice at his cluttered desk.

BIGGS

If you had read your email, it also said if you have any questions see me!

THOMAS

Well, I am here!

Biggs ceased his tedious administrative duties, a defiant act against the suffocating weight of bureaucratic inertia.

BIGGS

What is your question?!

THOMAS

Why are they eliminating the overnight shift? You have work.

BIGGS

The work is slowing down on that shift and there is more need for you on the evening shift.

THOMAS

My nights are occupied with other obligations put me on the day shift.

BIGGS

So are everyone else's nights. I have a son I barely see. I do not have any openings on the day shift.

THOMAS

What about the pay difference do I still get that?

BIGGS

No, you get what they make on the other shift.

THOMAS

So, I have no choice this decision has been made for me?

BIGGS

Everything is about money, and it is not about how much is in your pocket or mine. It is about how much is in the man's pocket who signs the checks.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS HALLWAY

The door creaked open, admitting Helen, who cradled Casey like a precious burden, swathed in unfamiliar outerwear.

Ashley's resentment was a tangible force; Helen's unforeseen arrival ignited a storm of unease within her.

HELEN

Good afternoon.

ASHLEY

Hi. You did not have to call first.

HELEN

I did not want to come over if you were not here.

ASHLEY

Thomas told you when I would be here.

HELEN

How are you doing? You look good.

ASHLEY

Thanks. Where is Casey's coat?

HELEN

I noticed that her coat was worn when Thomas brought her over, so we went shopping.

ASHLEY

Thomas and I are capable of buying Casey the things she needs.

HELEN

I know you are but I want her to be warm when she goes out.

ASHLEY

She has not caught a cold yet in our care.

HELEN

If you do not want the coat. I can return it.

ASHLEY

I do not want the coat but it was not for me it was for Casey.

Ashley removed Casey, leaving Helen with a hollow ache in her chest.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

Thank you for watching her.

HELEN

Anytime you need.

ASHLEY

Did you want to come in?

HELEN

No. I think I will go, enjoy the rest of the day.

ASHLEY

You as well.

The door sighed shut, its ponderous weight a finality against Helen, who remained poised, a silhouette etched in the fading light of the threshold.

SUPER Later That Night

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A hazy, intimate atmosphere reigned in the dimly lit club. Unhurried, the crowd, mostly patrons in their later years, occupied the tables.

Thomas, a virtuoso, concluded his electrifying jazz solo on his electric guitar, the final note hanging in the air. A smattering of appreciative applause followed, a testament to the raw power of his performance.

THOMAS

Thank you, you have been a great audience.

Thomas walks towards the back of the club.

Thomas's progress was abruptly halted by forty-year-old BENNY, a robust Caucasian man, exudes an air of unwavering professionalism; his demeanor is stark, direct, and uncompromising.

BENNY

Here.

He proffers Thomas a weighty envelope. Thomas' gaze lingers on the sealed missive before his fingers finally claim it, a palpable hesitation clinging to the air.

THOMAS

Thanks.

BENNY

It is 150 dollars less.

THOMAS

That is not what we agreed to.

BENNY

I also said pay is based on the turnout.

THOMAS

I was going to pay my rent with the extra money.

BENNY

I do not care what people perform on stage as long as customers are buying drinks. After so many drinks these customers do not know what they are listening to. Your tables turned over seven times tonight.

THOMAS

You still had a decent crowd in here.

BENNY

This is a business I like you, but if you cannot lift this crowd, you are not going to be able to perform here.

THOMAS

I can bartend for you for the extra 150 dollars. My dad was a bartender and I watched and picked things up from him.

BENNY

Your dad took you into the pub?

THOMAS

No, he would have friends over occasionally and mix drinks in the kitchen.

BENNY

I wish I could help you. You're welcome to come back, but next time you need to lift this crowd.

Benny departs, his exit leaving a vacuum in the dimly lit tavern. Four patrons, men in their forties, occupy the bar's perimeter, their conversation a low hum of masculine camaraderie. Thomas approaches. The bartender, a young man of thirty, glides toward Thomas, his movements suggesting both practiced ease and quiet attentiveness.

THOMAS

Club soda.

INT. BIGGS HOUSE - NIGHT

Biggs enters his entryway before going to his living room and sitting down at his computer. Shortly after, his son, fourteen-year-old BRAD BIGGS, a bright Caucasian boy, possesses a vibrant spirit and cherishes life's simple pleasures and the company of others walks in.

BIGGS

Brad!

Biggs looks at his timepiece.

BRAD

Hey dad.

BIGGS

Why are you now getting back!

BRAD

I went out with some friends after soccer practice.

BIGGS

Rules are rules, Brad. This isn't about punishing you, it's about order and predictability. You have a curfew, if everyone ignores schedules, the whole system falls apart.

BRAD

I am not one of your employees. I am your son.

BIGGS

It is almost the same thing. I am responsible for you, which means knowing where you are, which right now should have been in this house!

BRAD

I should have called. I was wrong  
not to.

BIGGS

Do you understand the magnitude of  
your actions?!

BRAD

Actions? I went out with some  
friends. I did not steal from a  
convenience store!

BIGGS

Lower your voice!

BRAD

It wasn't raised until you started!

BIGGS

Parenting is not just a job. Every  
time you are away from me, I wonder  
if you are okay. My childhood  
unfolded in a markedly different  
era, a time characterized by  
significantly fewer anxieties than  
those confronting youth today and  
it often causes unease for me.

BRAD

I understand and I will try and do  
better.

Climbing the stairs, his steps echoing his father's words.  
Below, Biggs, staring out at the city, pondered their weighty  
conversation. Unspoken tension filled the house.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The apartment's peeling paint cried out for a fresh coat.  
Thomas entered, his guitar case a weighty companion, thudding  
softly onto the worn floorboards. His gaze fell upon Ashley,  
a statue of stillness on the couch, her presence heavy with  
unspoken emotions. A lone flashlight, stark and accusing,  
rested on the coffee table, illuminating the dust motes  
dancing in the dim light.

THOMAS

Ashley why are you sitting in the  
dark?



Despite Thomas's decisive flick of the switch, the room remained stubbornly cloaked in darkness; illumination failed to materialize.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Why is there no electric?

ASHLEY

We did not pay the bill.

EXT. HELEN KENNEDY'S DOORWAY - NIGHT

The entrance swung inward, revealing Thomas cradling Casey in his arms; Ashley trailed behind, burdened by weighty duffel bags, their contents hinting at a significant journey.

INT. HELEN KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ashley reclined languidly in her armchair, a picture of serene composure.

Thomas approached with a purposeful stride, his arrival a subtle disruption to the quietude, and settled heavily onto the sofa, the cushions yielding beneath his weight.

ASHLEY

(happy)

How was your day?

THOMAS

You were going to call the electric company and get an extension on our bill until I got paid, what happened?

ASHLEY

I forgot. I can call tomorrow and have them turn it back on.

THOMAS

You did not make a pay arrangement with the electric company. We must pay the full amount past due and a reconnection charge to have the electric turned back on. That is going to use everything we have saved in our savings account!

ASHLEY

We have the money. I get paid tomorrow. I do work!

THOMAS

How many hours were you able to work this week?

ASHLEY

I was able to do three days.

THOMAS

You cannot have a baby in an apartment with no electric. I can before I start my shift at the warehouse perform at different train stations again, that will help with extra money.

ASHLEY

You stopped doing that because you were tired when you finished doing your overnight shift.

THOMAS

Now that I am on the evening shift I can perform first before I go to the warehouse.

ASHLEY

You should have seen it when Casey saw the shadow of the flashlight on the wall, she laughed so hard. It is late can we talk about this tomorrow?

Departure cast a long, anxious shadow over Thomas as he remained, consumed by apprehension.

INT. HELEN KENNEDYS OTHER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thomas snapped on the light, the sudden brightness stark against the shadowed room. With measured steps, he approached the venerable dresser, methodically divesting himself of his belongings, each item placed with somber care.

He sank onto the bed's edge, the day's anguish settling upon him like a leaden shroud. His despair was palpable; the weight of his troubles, a crushing burden on his soul, had utterly consumed him.

Helen paused in the doorway, witnessing Thomas's desolation, her silence a stark testament to the depth of his misery.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - MORNING

The train shrieked to a stop, unleashing a human flood onto the platform. Amidst the anonymous surge, Thomas played a mournful tune on his worn guitar, a solitary lament against the city's cold indifference. His empty tip jar mirrored the urban apathy.

INT. HELEN KENNEDY'S KITCHEN - DAY

Before settling at the kitchen table, Ashley meticulously prepared a steaming mug of coffee. Helen then entered, her presence immediately filling the quiet space.

ASHLEY

Thomas has already left if you were looking for him.

HELEN

I waited for him to leave.

ASHLEY

Okay.

HELEN

I want to talk with you.

ASHLEY

I have to go to work soon.

HELEN

This won't take long. You need to get yourself together and be more responsible!

ASHLEY

I already got a lecture from Thomas. I am not getting one from you!

HELEN

Well you need to listen to the lecture because you have a family now and they need to come first!

ASHLEY

They do!

HELEN

Do they, how much do you really care about Casey and my son?

ASHLEY

How dare you!

HELEN

I want you to love Casey as much as Thomas does.

ASHLEY

I take care of my daughter, my daughter, not yours!

HELEN

While you are in this house, you will show me respect.

ASHLEY

Thomas and I have gotten the electric back on and we will be returning home today. I have to go, thank you for ruining my day before it began!

A furious Ashley stormed from Helen's kitchen, her rage seen.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - AFTERNOON

At the warehouse, Thomas found midday workers enjoying a relaxed lunch break. Entering, he clocked in amidst the busy flow of employees.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - EVENING

Thomas, a virtuoso, infused the air with the soulful improvisations of his jazz guitar.

A ceaseless stream of passersby flowed around him, a river of indifference punctuated by the occasional splash of generosity - coins and bills tossed into the worn wooden box at his feet.

SANDRA, a sharp, thirtysomething businesswoman, stood transfixed, captivated by his performance. As the final note resonated, lingering in the twilight, she deliberately placed a crisp bill, a significant contribution, into the receptacle, acknowledging the depth of his talent.

SANDRA

Can I talk with you for a moment?

THOMAS

Of course.

SANDRA

You are good.

THOMAS

Thank you.

SANDRA

The office staff at my work is going to throw my boss a party for his birthday, he likes jazz music. Would you be interested in performing for 20 minutes doing more of what you did for \$100 dollars?

THOMAS

When?

SANDRA

This Thursday at 2 P.M.

THOMAS

I can do that.

SANDRA

Here is the office location and my phone number.

Thomas looks at the information.

THOMAS

I am Thomas. I will see you than. I am Sandra.

Thomas felt a profound sense of contentment as Sandra's departure left him with a lingering warmth.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - EVENING

Diligent Thomas, stationed at his assembly point, meticulously secured the cartons with adhesive, propelling them onto the relentless conveyor.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas entered, illuminating the room with a sudden, warm glow. His guitar case, a silent companion, landed softly on the floor. He beheld Ashley, nestled in slumber on the couch, a vision of peaceful vulnerability. With a quiet grace, he retrieved a comforting blanket from the back of his armchair.

He draped it tenderly over her, the gesture a silent promise of protection. A gentle, lingering kiss upon her cheek, a whispered affirmation of love, sealed the moment. Then, Thomas departed, leaving behind an atmosphere thick with unspoken affection.

INT. CASEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The nursery radiated tranquility, a haven of serenity. A readily accessible changing station, stocked with essential baby care items, offered effortless convenience. Ample, well-organized storage and a supportive feeding chair completed the haven.

Thomas gently pushed open Casey's door, revealing a faint, ethereal shadow cast by the late night moon. Casey's eyes, bright and alert, met his gaze. She was already stirring.

THOMAS

You should not be awake. You should  
be sleeping.

Illuminating Casey's room, he activated the bedside lamp. A soft, celestial luminescence, radiating tranquility, bathed the space in gentle light. Thomas approached her with quiet grace.

A tender smile played upon his lips as he gazed down at her. He crooned a soothing lullaby, its melody weaving a hypnotic spell. Soon, Casey was enveloped in the peaceful slumber of a child.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

(Whispering)

Someday my guitar will give you the  
life I want you to have.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Entering his chamber, Thomas illuminated the gloom with deliberate movements, Thomas approached his bureau, the weight of the day settling in his hands. He meticulously unloaded the contents of his pockets, each item a tangible memory meticulously deposited onto the polished wood, a silent testament to the hours passed and with a decisive hand, Thomas retrieved his mobile device, its sleek surface gleaming under the harsh light. He initiated a connection, the urgent ring slicing through the oppressive silence.

(Beat)

THOMAS

Andy, hi.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Everything is fine. The reason I called is to see if I could make some audio tapes in your recording studio tomorrow.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Thanks, I will see you than.

The call terminated, leaving Thomas with a hollow ache. His mobile, a cold weight in his hand, was discarded unceremoniously on the dresser. He slumped towards his bed, a heavy, defeated figure, collapsing onto the yielding mattress in a heap of exhaustion.

INT. BIGGS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A haven of peace and tranquility, a sanctuary from the day's relentless grind, emanated from the cozy living room. Diligently tackled his homework sprawled on the sofa.

Brad's mother, DANA BIGGS, a woman in her forties, possesses a compassionate heart, insightful intellect, and a balanced perspective, capable of discerning the nuances of any situation., her presence a gentle interruption to his focused concentration.

DANA

I thought you would be in your room relaxing.

BRAD

I was hoping to talk with dad.

DANA

He'll be late again, honey. Work.

BRAD

Always the warehouse.

DANA

Did you two have another argument?

BRAD

We did not argue, it was more of a disagreement.

DANA

What about?

BRAD

It is not that important.

DANA

If it was not that important you  
would not be waiting to talk with  
him.

BRAD

It's always like this.

DANA

Like what, honey?

INT. BIGGS WAREHOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Biggs, engrossed in his tasks, meticulously reviews documents  
at his expansive mahogany desk.

BRAD (O.S.)

Him being gone. Always working.  
Never really here.

INT. BIGGS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DANA

Your father works hard, Brad. He  
does it for us.

BRAD

For us? Or for the job?

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - NIGHT

Within the cavernous warehouse, under the cloak of night,  
Biggs addresses his assembled workforce.□ His pronouncements  
remain inaudible.

DANA (O.S.)

Do you like where you live?

BRAD (O.S.)

I am not sure I understand what you  
are asking.



INT. BIGGS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

DANA

Do you lack anything.

BRAD

No.

DANA

Is there always food on the table  
and a roof over your head?

BRAD

Yes.

INT. BIGGS WAREHOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

Biggs remains seated at his desk, engrossed in a phone conversation, his voice inaudible.

DANA (O.S.)

That is your dad. He is a provider,  
and this is how he shows his love  
for you, he may not always be in  
the same room with you but if you  
look around at everything you have,  
he is right by your side. He loves  
us both. He just shows it  
differently. So, I would not be too  
hard on him.

INT. BIGGS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BRAD

I don't need fancy things. I need  
him.

DANA

He worries about money and giving  
you a comfortable life. Maybe  
tomorrow will be different.

A hush fell as he gently shut his textbook. The stark desolation of his chamber reflected the profound void gnawing at his soul.

INT. ANDY'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A genial warmth permeated the room. A comforting intimacy enveloped the space.

Thomas settled into his armchair, a picture of quiet contentment. Across from him, ANDY, a relaxed 25-year-old cisgender Italian-American, lounged on his sofa, his easygoing nature radiating outwards. His empathy, though sometimes selective, shone through his amiable demeanor.

THOMAS

I thought when you built your recording studio you were going to play guitar again.

ANDY

I thought I was to. I liked playing with you after high school at events, but I never wanted to be a professional musician. My passion has always been business and finance and I do not pick up my guitar that much anymore. How is Ashley. I have not seen her since the wedding.

THOMAS

Things have been challenging. I thought I would take Ashley out to dinner with my next paycheck.

ANDY

You are celebrating?

THOMAS

Ashley says things are going good with her job.

ANDY

I am happy for her. If you ever get tired of trying to be a professional musician, you have a decent job yourself at the warehouse.

THOMAS

I will give my music everything I have and everything I do. I do for Casey.

ANDY

Not Ashley?

THOMAS

I look out for them both, but there  
is only so much I can do for  
Ashley.

ANDY

You just said Ashley is doing  
better.

THOMAS

For now.

INT. GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

Exiting the restroom, Ashley furtively concealed a vial of medication in her pocket. She meticulously composed herself before proceeding. Ashley Kennedy, traversing a supermarket aisle, is summoned by a voice booming over the loudspeaker.

A hushed command echoes: "Ashley Kennedy, proceed to the management office." She arrives at a forbidding door, a stern supervisor seated behind his desk gestures for her entrance. She hesitates, then enters his stark office.

INT. MR. HENDERSON'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is impeccably organized, a stark contrast to the nervous energy radiating from Ashley, who stands awkwardly by the door. Sunlight streams through the large window. The hum of fluorescent lights is a low, persistent thrum.

MR. HENDERSON, a man in his late 50s with kind eyes and a thoughtful expression, gestures to the chair opposite his large desk. He looks up from his paperwork, his expression concerned.

MR. HENDERSON

Ashley, please, have a seat.

Ashley sits, her hands clasped tightly in her lap. She avoids eye contact. He looks at her with genuine concern.

MR. HENDERSON (CONT'D)

There have been more errors than  
usual. And perhaps a little less  
engagement with customers.

ASHLEY

I've been overwhelmed.

MR. HENDERSON

Your well-being is just as important as your work. I want you to know that we have a comprehensive wellness program.

He slides a brochure across the desk towards her, a small smile playing on his lips.

MR. HENDERSON (CONT'D)

I think it might be beneficial.

ASHLEY

A wellness program?

MR. HENDERSON

Yes. It's completely confidential, and there's no obligation. Just something to consider.

ASHLEY

I messed up, Mr. Henderson. I've made so many mistakes.

MR. HENDERSON

Ashley, we all make mistakes. What's important is that we learn from them.

ASHLEY

I've let down customers, I've let down the team... I've let you down.

Ashley's voice cracks slightly, betraying her composure.

MR. HENDERSON

I understand you're feeling overwhelmed. And I want you to know I'm not here to reprimand you.

ASHLEY

I feel useless. I'm not sure I can do this anymore.

MR. HENDERSON

You can do this.

ASHLEY

I'm failing.

MR. HENDERSON

You're not failing, you are taking care of yourself.

(MORE)

MR. HENDERSON (CONT'D)

That's not failing, that's survival. So, Ashley, tell me more about what you've been feeling.

ASHLEY

I feel like I'm drowning. Like I'm constantly behind, no matter how hard I try.

MR. HENDERSON

And that's understandable, but the problem is how you're handling that pressure.

ASHLEY

I don't know how to handle it.

MR. HENDERSON

Then let's get you into our wellness program.

ASHLEY

What about my job?

MR. HENDERSON

Let's see how this goes first and then we can talk about your employment with our company.

INT. WAREHOUSE BREAKROOM - NIGHT

Jarrold entered, his presence a sudden intrusion into the quiet space. Thomas, absorbed in his thoughts, remained seated at a secluded table. With deliberate movements, Jarrold approached the fizzy-drink dispenser, its metallic gleam reflecting the artificial light. He inserted his currency, the mechanical whirring a stark counterpoint to the stillness, and made his selection. Then, his gaze snagged on Thomas, a poignant observation across the intervening distance.

JARROD

You are still here?

THOMAS

I am waiting for a call to see if I can perform tonight.

From the automated dispenser, Jarrold retrieved his fizzy beverage. With a decisive grasp, he claimed his refreshment.

Then, he settled heavily into the chair opposite Thomas, the weight of the day settling upon him.

JARROD

At this hour? I hope you get it.

THOMAS

Thanks, I do not know how you do it.

JARROD

Do what?

THOMAS

Go out almost every night and have the energy to do other things the following day.

JARROD

I am young, not married, and I have no children. You put a lot of pressure on yourself with everything you do and everything you want to do.

THOMAS

Are you going out tonight?

JARROD

I am going to the club now; did you want to go?

THOMAS

No.

A resonant peal shattered the quiet; Thomas, startled, immediately responded to his clamoring device.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Hello.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

This is Thomas.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Oh, no it happens. Maybe another time.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Thanks anyway.

With a decisive click, Thomas ended the call, his mobile device settling with a quiet thud onto the polished surface of the table.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Let us go to the club tomorrow.

JARROD

(Happy)

Seriously?

JARROD (CONT'D)

(Sincere)

You said you did not want to a moment ago?

THOMAS

I do not want to go now. Tomorrow, I want to escape from everything that is happening with me and experience your carefree life for a little while.

JARROD

Are you sure you want to spend the money; you had your electric turned off for no payment?

THOMAS

I got a paid offer while I was performing at the train station for tomorrow afternoon.

JARROD

You said that is not what that money was going to be used for and it was for your household expenses.

THOMAS

I know, one night will not hurt.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas enters. Ashley is sitting on the couch watching T.V.

THOMAS

Hi.

ASHLEY

Hi.

Thomas removes his shoes.

THOMAS

It's quiet.

ASHLEY

I just laid Casey down.

Thomas sits next to Ashley.

THOMAS

How was your day?

ASHLEY

It was peaceful. Casey and I had a nice afternoon together. How was yours.

THOMAS

My day was the same as usual, train stations wall to wall boxes to ship.

ASHLEY

This movie is hilarious.

THOMAS

Oh, yeah, what is it about?

ASHLEY

This guy is so busy trying to impress his girlfriend by trying to do the right thing all the time that he ends up doing everything wrong.

Thomas and Ashley continue to watch the movie occasionally laughing. Thomas looks over at Ashley, she is relaxed and happy before he puts his arm around her. They continue to watch the movie before Ashley rests her head on his shoulder and placing her hand on his knee.

INT. SANDRA'S CONFERENCE ROOM - AFTERNOON

A diverse group of ten workers, male and female, of varying ages, mingled amiably. Sandra and Thomas, engrossed in conversation, stood near the laden refreshment table.

THOMAS

Thanks for letting me stay for lunch.



SANDRA

Thanks for accepting my offer to perform.

THOMAS

It was nice not performing in a bar.

SANDRA

Can I introduce you to my brother?

THOMAS

Your brother?

SANDRA

He is not here, he is a local record producer, would you be interested in talking with him?

THOMAS

Wow. I made that kind of impression with you at the train station.

SANDRA

You did. I do not know what Riley might be looking for. Can you write your contact information down on the back of my business card?

With a purposeful gesture, Sandra proffered Thomas her engraved calling card and a fine writing instrument, a silent invitation to connect.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Unless you have your own business card.

With meticulous care, Thomas began meticulously recording his vital details.

THOMAS

I do not. I have not had a need for them yet.

SANDRA

I do not see him much, so I hope you are not expecting a response right away.

With a courteous gesture, Thomas respectfully returned her professional credentials and writing instrument.

THOMAS

Oh, I am not.

With a sigh, Sandra consulted the unforgiving face of her watch, its steady progress a stark reminder of time irrevocably lost.

SANDRA

I do not mean to be rude, but I must finish a report and get it up stairs. It was nice meeting you.

THOMAS

You also.

As Sandra departed, a poignant ache settled in Thomas's chest, his gaze lingering on her retreating form, a silent farewell etched on his face.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Exiting the imposing front door, Thomas and Jarrod embarked on their momentous journey.

JARROD

If Mindy is at the club, I will introduce you. You two have the same personality.

THOMAS

I am married.

JARROD

Oh, so you cannot talk to other women now.

THOMAS

I will say hi if she is there.

JARROD

You can be friendlier than that. I am not asking you to do the boom-boom with Mindy.

THOMAS

The boom-boom?

JARROD

I will race you to the train.

THOMAS

I will win.

JARROD

I do not know. I am fast.

THOMAS

Call it.

JARROD

One Two--

THOMAS

--Go.

Escaping the mundane, Thomas and Jarrod embarked on a run, their daily lives dissolving behind them like a fading dream.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A throng fills the vibrant nightclub, a kaleidoscope of patrons of all legal drinking ages lost in the revelry. The air crackles with energy as strobe lights pulse, painting the scene in fleeting bursts of color. Isolated amidst the ecstatic chaos, Thomas and Jarrod occupy a small table, their conversation a quiet eddy in the tumultuous current of the night.

THOMAS

Look at this place. I want to talk to the night manager.

JARROD

You said you wanted to enjoy my carefree life for a little while so stop thinking about performing and enjoy your club soda.

THOMAS

I cannot help it.

JARROD

You are a jazz musician, look around, do you think these people come here to listen to jazz?

THOMAS

I know how to play other stuff I just prefer jazz.

JARROD

I did not bring you here so you could perform I brought you here to relax.

THOMAS

What would you be doing right now  
if I did not come?

JARROD

I would be dancing on someone's  
table or doing who knows whatever.

THOMAS

With who?

JARROD

Whoever wanted to get on the table  
with me.

THOMAS

I will be back.

Driven by a sudden urgency, Thomas sprang from the chair  
facing Jarrod, leaving the quietude shattered.

JARROD

Seriously? I know where you are  
going, will you sit down and relax.

THOMAS

I will not be gone long.

Thomas flees, propelled by a desperate urgency, his retreat a  
frantic dash toward uncertain freedom.

INT. NIGHT CLUB BAR - NIGHT

A diverse clientele—men and women spanning a wide age  
range—occupied every stool. Thomas approached RICHIE, a 24-  
year-old cisgender man, exuded a menacing air; his cocky  
swagger and muscular physique hinted at a volatile  
temperament—a person best avoided in dimly lit alleys. Behind  
the bar, he meticulously polished glasses, each swipe a  
deliberate gesture reflecting his simmering intensity.

THOMAS

Are you always this busy?

RICHIE

Every night even Monday.

THOMAS

I do not suppose the night manager  
is available.

RICHIE

Not usually, but you are in luck he is tonight.

THOMAS

Can I talk to him?

RICHIE

Nope, he only sees people by appointment.

THOMAS

I will not take up a lot of his time.

RICHIE

Are you going to order a drink? Part of my living is tips.

THOMAS

I will not order a drink.

Richie meticulously surveyed the boisterous pub, his eyes lingering on every detail.

RICHIE

I should hang around you when I go to the casino. You have good luck.

THOMAS

What?

RICHIE

That is Joey over there by the wall with the blue shirt on.

Following Richie's subtle gesture, Thomas's gaze landed decisively on the indicated spot, his attention instantly captivated.

THOMAS

Will you introduce me?

RICHIE

Nope.

THOMAS

Is he friendly?

RICHIE

Why don't you walk over, say what you need and let me know what his mood is tonight?

JOEY, a powerfully built cisgender man of forty, felt the weight of Thomas's deliberate passage. His imposing presence, direct and menacing, was undeniably felt as Thomas strode over him.

THOMAS

Hi Joey.

JOEY

Did They check your ID?

THOMAS

Yeah.

JOEY

Let me see it.

Thomas produced his identification, a worn rectangle holding years of silent stories.

Joey received the credential with a scrutinizing gaze, his eyes meticulously traversing both sides, deciphering the subtle nuances etched into its plastic surface. The silent exchange concluded as Joey solemnly returned the weighty symbol of Thomas's identity

JOEY (CONT'D)

What do you want?

THOMAS

I like your club. I want to perform here.

JOEY

Do you think you are good?

THOMAS

I am exceptionally good.

JOEY

What kind of music?

THOMAS

Jazz.

JOEY

Look around, do you think these people come here to listen to jazz?

THOMAS

You are the second person to ask me that tonight.

JOEY

And what does that tell you?

THOMAS

People are close minded when it comes to different styles of music that do not fit their norms.

JOEY

You are an overconfident bastard.

THOMAS

I get more confident when I feel challenged. Do you have a guitar here?

JOEY

Why?

THOMAS

One song.

INT. NIGHT CLUB STAGE - NIGHT

Strapped to his shoulder, Thomas's guitar hummed with anticipation. He launched into a pulsating electronic dance track, its infectious rhythm instantly captivating the crowd. Bodies swayed, then surged, completely enthralled by his electrifying performance.

A thunderous ovation erupted as he concluded, the applause a palpable testament to his skill. With a graceful movement, he gently placed his instrument back on its stand.

INT. NIGHT CLUB BAR - NIGHT

Thomas retraced his steps to the bar, his purpose unwavering, and deliberately approached Richie.

THOMAS

I do not see Joey.

RICHIE

He left.

THOMAS

He did not listen to my song.

RICHIE

He heard what he wanted to, here.

Richie proffered a crisp business card, its weight and texture speaking volumes about the substantial enterprise it represented. Thomas received it with a deliberate grace, his fingers lingering momentarily on the cool, smooth surface, the implications of the exchange settling heavily upon him.

RICHIE (CONT'D)

He said call him.

THOMAS

Thanks.

Two dollars, a paltry sum yet weighty with unspoken meaning, landed on the counter before Richie. His gaze, intense and unwavering, settled upon the offering.

RICHIE

What is this?

THOMAS

You wanted a tip-Two dollars for the introduction to Joey.

A boisterous GROUP of MEN, their laughter echoing, occupied a table. A WAITRESS, appearing to be in her thirties, approached their lively gathering.

GUY

Waitress, we'd like to sample a selection of your finest beverages; tomorrow's a day off, and we intend to celebrate accordingly.

Overhearing the refined man's conversation, Thomas glanced at his timepiece, a subtle signal of his impending departure. He strode purposefully towards the main entryway, his departure seemingly deliberate. Suddenly, Jarrod, breathless and urgent, intercepted him.

JARROD

That was neat what you did on the stage.

THOMAS

I am going to head out. It is getting late, and I do have to work tomorrow. I also should not be giving money away here.



JARROD

I want to introduce you to someone.  
I heard Jacob play the other night  
with his band, he is here, and I  
mentioned you.

THOMAS

You do not know him?

JARROD

Not personally do you have to be  
suspicious of everyone, who knows?  
He might be a connection.

INT. NIGHT CLUB BACKROOM - NIGHT

A dimly lit, soul-crushing backroom. The air hangs heavy with unspoken despair. Hippie-esque furnishings are scattered haphazardly. Thomas and Jarrod approach JACOB, a thirty-year-old man whose very essence screams of stagnation, a soul encased in impenetrable self-absorption, devoid of empathy and utterly incapable of genuine connection is immersed in his digital world, oblivious to the gloom.

JARROD

Jacob? This is Thomas, the musician  
I mentioned to you. I am going to  
leave you two alone.

THOMAS

Or you can stay.

JARROD

No.

THOMAS

Just a little while.

JARROD

Again no, I am going to have a fun  
time. That is what I came here to  
do.

Thomas felt a profound unease as Jarrod's departure cast a long shadow.

JACOB

Do you want a drink?

THOMAS

No.

JACOB

Are you sure?

THOMAS

I do not want anything.

JACOB

Then why are you in front of me?  
Who are you?

Thomas took his seat facing Jacob, a silent assertion of dominance in the tense stillness of the room.

THOMAS

Jarrold just introduced me to you,  
Thomas.

JACOB

Oh right, what have you recorded?

THOMAS

I have not. I play in clubs.

JACOB

That is an excellent way to start.  
Do you get high?

THOMAS

No.

JACOB

Is your existence a monotonous and  
unremarkable drone?

THOMAS

I do not have to drink or get high  
to be entertaining.

JACOB

Well, you are not entertaining me  
right now.

JACOB (CONT'D)

What is this music you do?

THOMAS

Jazz.

JACOB

I regard that nonsense with the  
utmost contempt; it is utterly  
worthless. Stand up.

THOMAS

Why?

JACOB

I know someone who is trying to put a fashion magazine together. You have model looks.

THOMAS

I am not a model.

JACOB

Nobody is a model. They stand rigidly, posed before the camera's judgment, their approach a hollow, meaningless display and do what is asked of them. Can you do that?

THOMAS

Jarrold introduced me to you about maybe recording my music and you are treating me like an object!

JACOB

Recording you? I am not going to record you. Do you honestly perceive me as someone possessing a sophisticated, professional recording environment? I play music with my band locally. Are you absolutely certain you're not in need of some comfort or escape?

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A furious Thomas, heading for the main doors, was intercepted by Jarrod.

JARROD

So how did it go?

THOMAS

Do not help me when it comes to my music!

As Thomas departed, a wave of bewildered self-reproach washed over Jarrod. He felt the sting of uncertainty, agonizing over his possible transgression.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - MORNING

Weary, Thomas lay slumbering in his bed, a haven of rest disrupted. Casey's wails pierced the quiet, a desperate symphony of sorrow. Thomas, eyelids heavy with exhaustion, reluctantly blinked awake.

THOMAS

I forgot the formula!

Thomas bolted upright, escaping the confines of his bed.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAWN

Imagine a sterile, brightly lit space; a CVS, a Walgreens, any corporate behemoth of medication.

RODNEY (18), a diffident, socially-awkward young man, manned his cash register with the weary detachment of someone perpetually underwhelmed.

CUSTOMER ONE (40s), a formidable African American woman, her ample frame radiating a simmering discontent, stood before him.

CUSTOMER I

Did my bouncy spray come up on sale?

A shadow of discontent clouded her gaze as she met Rodney's sorrowful eyes. Thomas approached from behind, his arrival heralded by the somber weight of the baby's sustenance.

RODNEY

That hair spray was on sale last week.

CUSTOMER I

Well, you are wrong. I look at my ads carefully, knowing bouncy spray is on sale this week.

RODNEY

I stocked them last week. This week bouncy spray is nine dollars and ninety-nine cents.

CUSTOMER I

Oh, no, young man, can I have someone check on my bouncy?

A urgent request for price verification crackled over the intercom, Rodney's voice sharp and insistent.

RODNEY

Mam. We are looking into the hair spray crisis. Could I have you step to the side so I can check everyone else out?

CUSTOMER I

It is only him in line. I will do no such thing and then wait in line again!

THOMAS

Seriously? It is 6:30 in the morning and all I want to do is buy baby formula.

The intercom sprang back to life, Rodney's voice resuming its broadcast with determined clarity.

RODNEY

Can I get a backup cashier?

CUSTOMER I

You would not need a backup cashier if you priced your bouncy spray right!

THOMAS

And we would not need a backup cashier if you would step to the side.

CUSTOMER I

I was next in line, and this is where I intend to stay!

A YOUNG WOMAN, perhaps in her early twenties, with a vibrant, punk-rock aesthetic, approached her checkout station; her demeanor was engaging and approachable.

CASHIER II

I can help the next customer.

THOMAS

I just wanted to buy baby formula.

Thomas strategically relocated to the alternate queue, sensing a more expedient path to his objective. An exhausted YOUNG MAN's voice, barely twenty, crackled over the intercom,

YOUNG MAN (O.C.)  
Bouncy spray nine dollars and  
ninety-nine cents.

THOMAS  
Imagine that.

RODNEY  
Would you still like the hair  
spray?

CUSTOMER I  
Certainly not at that price I will  
return it.

RODNEY  
You did not buy it.

CUSTOMER I  
Wait a minute.

RODNEY  
Do you want the bouncy spray?

CUSTOMER I  
I just remembered I bought my  
bouncy last week. I hope I was not  
too much of a bother.

As the patron departed, Thomas, burdened by his weighty  
satchel, intercepted her.

THOMAS  
Go ahead. I would not want you to  
have to wait to exit.

CUSTOMER I  
Why would I wait? I was here first.

With a final, lingering glance, the disgruntled customer  
vanished.

THOMAS  
I only wanted to buy baby formula.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - AFTERNOON

At his designated station, Thomas meticulously secures and  
bundles cartons, efficiently loading them onto the conveyor  
system.

His diligent efforts extend beyond his primary role, as he readily assists colleagues with diverse responsibilities, fostering a collaborative and productive work environment.

INT. GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

With a radiant smile, Ashley efficiently processes transactions at her checkout, warmly welcoming each new arrival to the store. Her engaging conversations with customers, punctuated by infectious laughter, create a vibrant and welcoming atmosphere, though her exact words remain unheard, their positive impact palpable.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Amidst the vibrant tapestry of a park teeming with life—joggers finding their rhythm, pedestrians ambling along—Ashley's ELDERLY PARENTS, their faces etched with weariness, propelled Casey's stroller. Their unenthusiastic efforts hinted at a burden, a palpable weight beyond the child's physical presence.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Elegantly appointed, the restaurant shimmered with subdued lighting, a romantic ambiance enhanced by fresh blooms, exquisite art, and the soft glow of candlelight.

Classical melodies filled the air as Thomas and Ashley, impeccably dressed, sat opposite each other, their table draped in fine linen. Around them, other mature couples, similarly attired, occupied adjacent tables, each a tableau of quiet intimacy.

THOMAS

This is nice.

ASHLEY

It has been a while since we have gone out like this.

THOMAS

It has. How was your day?

ASHLEY

Today was a good day. I did not feel like things were my fault.

THOMAS

You should never feel that way.

ASHLEY

I know.

A neatly uniformed, courteous ITALIAN SERVER, approximately thirty-five years of age, approached the table bearing two meticulously prepared dinners and accompanying salads. With a practiced grace, he presented the delectable meals, placing each complete course before the diners.

THOMAS

Thank you.

A shadow of doubt crossed Ashley's face as she cautiously surveyed the hefty cut of beef before her

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

ASHLEY

I asked for well done.

WAITER

That is well done. I can have the chef cook it more if you would like.

ASHLEY

It is fine. I will eat it.

THOMAS

If you are not happy.

Ashley's gaze, sharp and accusatory, pierced Thomas. Her expression conveyed a potent, simmering outrage; the unspoken words, How dare you presume to instruct me, hung heavy in the air.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Sorry, everything looks great.

The server's departure cast a sudden, palpable void in the room,

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Did you want to go to the art exhibit downtown this weekend?

ASHLEY

(Happy)

Are you off this weekend?

THOMAS

Saturday.



ASHLEY

That sounds like fun.

THOMAS

I think Casey will like the history exhibit when she is older.

ASHLEY

She might.

THOMAS

My mom can watch her Saturday.

ASHLEY

How about she spends time with my parents?

THOMAS

That would be nice.

ASHLEY

Your mom is spoiling Casey.

THOMAS

She is six months old; she might be fussy because she is going through growth spurts.

ASHLEY

The clothes your mom buys.

THOMAS

What is wrong with the clothes?

ASHLEY

Your mom buys her more expensive clothing.

THOMAS

Again, she is six months old, she does not know the difference between brand names.

ASHLEY

Next month we will see Sesame Street live with Casey. Those tickets are expensive.

THOMAS

I am glad my mom is in a position where she can do stuff like that because we cannot compete with our other expenses.

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I am happy that I could take you to a place like this tonight. I wish I could do it more.

ASHLEY

I want Casey to understand living within her means when she is older, I have had to.

A wild gleam ignited in Ashley's eyes as she fixed a frenzied gaze upon Thomas.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

You think I am being paranoid? I see your look.

THOMAS

Not at all.

ASHLEY

I am not being paranoid!

THOMAS

It is fine. Casey can spend less time with my mom.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ashley and Thomas enter, their hearts burdened with a shared anxiety that hung palpable in the air.

THOMAS

I will be in shortly. I am going to check my email, unless you want to sleep alone.

ASHLEY

We can sleep together.

Approaching his workstation with a determined gait, Thomas settled heavily into his chair. With a decisive tap-tap-tap, he expertly executed a precise sequence on his keyboard, the rhythmic clicking echoing the focused intensity in his eyes.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Thomas scrolls through his email.

BACK TO SCENE

Engrossed in the digital deluge of his email, Thomas meticulously examined the incoming correspondence. A sudden spark of intrigue ignited his curiosity.

With urgent precision, he seized his phone and rapidly punched in a number.

(Beat)

THOMAS

Hi. Andy?

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I know its short notice; would you be able to go to an audition with me?

SUPER The Next Evening

INT. THEATRE - EVENING

A dimly lit, intimate theatre Thomas and Andy proceed down a narrow corridor, shrouded in shadows. Thomas carefully carries the slumbering Casey while Andy carries his weathered guitar.

THOMAS

Thanks for coming with me and watching Casey. It would have looked bad if I had walked in there with her.

ANDY

Anytime.

THOMAS

I did not want to ask my mom to watch Casey again after letting her spend the night while Ashley and I went out to dinner.

ANDY

Ashley did not want to come to your audition.

THOMAS

I did not ask her.

Thomas and Andy paused, the significant room looming before them.

ANDY

Are you ready?

THOMAS

I do not know. I have not had much  
time to practice.

ANDY

You will be fine.

With a heavy heart, Thomas relinquished Casey into Andy's solemn custody. Andy received her, a palpable weight settling upon his shoulders. Thomas, his spirit mirroring the melancholic resonance of his guitar, carefully retrieved the instrument.

INT. THEATRE - ANOTHER ROOM - EVENING

Fifty seats filled the small, auditorium-like chamber; a miniature theater. RILEY, a 35-year-old Caucasian man, exuded an innate authority, a compelling presence capable of swaying any audience. Clad in simple jeans and a tee-shirt, his casual attire belied his inherent power. He occupied a single seat, a silent king surveying his domain. Thomas entered, his arrival a subtle disruption of the quietude. Riley's gaze, sharp and observant, tracked Thomas's progress; the newcomer's approach was noted. Thomas advanced deliberately, his footsteps echoing down the central passage.

THOMAS

Hi, are you Riley?

RILEY

I am and you are Thomas?

THOMAS

Yes.

A firm clasp sealed the momentous agreement between Thomas and Riley, their hands a testament to a profound and newly forged bond.

RILEY

Have you been playing long?

THOMAS

I have been playing since I was  
young.

RILEY

Go on.

Thomas ascended the stage, a silhouette against the expectant hush. His battered guitar, a faithful companion, was carefully positioned.

Then, a raw, soulful blues poured forth, a torrent of emotion that resonated deeply with the audience. The spell, however, was abruptly shattered by Riley's unwelcome intrusion.

THOMAS

What is wrong?

RILEY

I am not looking for jazz musicians.

THOMAS

Did Sandra tell you when she heard me performing at the train station, I did jazz?

RILEY

No, in fact she mentioned little about you. She said you were good, and I might be interested.

THOMAS

This is awkward. I wish she had mentioned that to you, or you would have asked what type of music I did.

With a sigh heavy with unspoken melodies, Thomas meticulously stowed his cherished guitar away.

RILEY

Pop music sells and that is where the money is. Many musicians are classically trained and spend years making music they do not like to get a paycheck.

THOMAS

Are you telling me I will never be a professional musician?

RILEY

Not if all you want to do is jazz. Jazz is one of the least popular music styles.

THOMAS

There is always a place for jazz and there is a place for me. I can be changed by what happens to me, but I refuse to be reduced by it. I am a jazz musician.

Thomas moved, decisively, towards the threshold.

RILEY

Thomas?

THOMAS

Yeah?

RILEY

Other countries adapt to jazz more.  
Send me an audio tape, three tracks  
with electronic and pop jazz on it.

INT. HELEN KENNEDYS KITCHEN - DAY

At Helen's table, a comfortable silence nestled between Thomas and her as they sat, their shared presence a quiet testament to their deep connection.

THOMAS

I am trying to help Ashley. I am.

HELEN

I know.

THOMAS

If Ashley continues to take her  
pills, everything will be good.  
Yes, everything will be good.

HELEN

You are not selling me. You do not  
have to do this alone.

THOMAS

I do. You and dad told me I would  
never be able to oversee her  
depression if it reached a  
particular stage and instead of  
listening, she had my baby and I  
married her.

HELEN

You are doing the best that you  
can.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Ashley, perched precariously on the edge of her swivel chair, revolved with a restless energy.

A formidable pile of manila folders, each representing a life story yet untold, dominated her cluttered desk, a monument to her overwhelming workload.

THOMAS (O.S.)  
But for how much longer?

INT. OFFICE BREAK ROOM - DAY

A revitalizing draught of water quenched Ashley's parched throat, the cool liquid a balm to her weary soul.

THOMAS (O.S.)  
The doctor prescribed another pill.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ashley, slumped on the plush cushions of her sofa, furiously tapped away at her phone. Meanwhile, Casey, a whirlwind of restless energy, darted about the room. Her gaze, fixated and unnervingly intense, settled upon the exposed electrical outlet, a gaping maw of potential danger in the otherwise calm domestic scene. The uncovered socket, a stark and menacing presence, held Casey captive in its silent, perilous allure.

THOMAS (O.S.)  
It is getting harder for her to  
focus.

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

In the serene stillness, Thomas ran alone, his rhythmic footfalls the only punctuation in the peaceful landscape.

THOMAS (O.S.)  
I have reached a point for me to be  
able to manage her on most days. I  
go running to relieve my own  
stress.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ashley sits on her sofa.

She doodles on her coffee table with her pen.

THOMAS (O.S.)  
There are days I do not know where  
her mind is.

(MORE)

THOMAS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

There are days that jogging does not help me, and I get scared that I will go back to the way I was before I met Ashley to relieve my stress.

INT. HALLWAY - EVENING

Thomas approached the ajar doorway, his gaze drawn into a chamber where five individuals, a diverse tapestry of ages, were seated. A solemn, male therapist, his countenance etched with the gravity of his profession, occupied a central position among them; his age hovering in the vicinity of thirty.

TIGHT ON THERAPIST

THERAPIST

Hi Thomas, would you like to start?

TIGHT ON THOMAS

THOMAS

My name is Thomas, and I am an alcoholic.

INT. DINER - DAY

At a small, secluded table, Thomas and Andy conversed intently. Meanwhile, a diverse clientele, spanning generations, occupied the barstools, their varied conversations weaving a vibrant tapestry of the bustling establishment's atmosphere.

THOMAS

Do you remember Riley?

ANDY

Riley? Oh, the audition at the theatre.

THOMAS

Yeah. I am going to do what he suggested. I am going to make him an audiotape.



ANDY

Why? He wants to change your style of music based on what you said after the audition.

THOMAS

He might be the connection I have been looking for.

ANDY

So, you do want to do pop-jazz?

THOMAS

It is not that far of a change from doing regular jazz.

ANDY

Has nobody else contacted you?

THOMAS

I keep sending out audiotapes, but not yet.

ANDY

Maybe you should consider getting your music appreciation degree.

THOMAS

I'm not ready to give up on my music.

ANDY

You know what's best for you. Did you want me to watch Casey.

THOMAS

Casey?

ANDY

You have that other audition on Saturday.

THOMAS

Oh, that's next week.

ANDY

No, it's this week.

He pulls out his phone and opens his calendar.

ANDY (CONT'D)

I put it in my calendar.

He shows Thomas. Thomas looks.

THOMAS

I thought it was next Saturday.

INT. BIGGS WAREHOUSE OFFICE - NIGHT

At his threshold, Thomas stood, a silhouette etched against the fading light. Biggs, sharp-eyed and observant, perceived his presence.

BIGGS

What can I do for you?

Thomas, his demeanor resolute, presented himself before the formidable Biggs in his austere office.

THOMAS

I need to take a paid day off.

BIGGS

Fill out the form.

THOMAS

I cannot give the one-week notice required; something came up last minute.

BIGGS

You must give a one week notice unless its family related.

THOMAS

I know you can do this if you want.

BIGGS

Do not start. It has been an exceptionally long day!

THOMAS

I've toiled relentlessly in this warehouse, tirelessly dispatching merchandise, while corporate executives luxuriate at home, indulging in lavish caviar and champagne, their evenings spent idly before screens, plotting further exploitation of hardworking individuals like myself. Therefore, spare me your complaints about a demanding workday!

BIGGS

What?!

THOMAS

I think I should have said that differently.

BIGGS

You should not have said it at all. The last time you walked into my office you were a man on fire. If you did not have the work ethic you have. I would fire you right now, but I need you!

THOMAS

One time and I will not ask again.

BIGGS

If I, do it for you, I must do for everyone. Why are you fighting me on this?

THOMAS

I am not fighting well, a little.

BIGGS

What is so important you cannot follow protocol?

THOMAS

I screwed up the day for an audition.

BIGGS

Audition? Oh, you are the guy who brings his guitar to work.

THOMAS

Well, you do not have to sound so negative about it.

BIGGS

You do not keep a daily log of upcoming events?

THOMAS

I usually have my priorities in place.

BIGGS

You might want to start to avoid situations like this. My son made the soccer finals this year and I am going to miss his game tonight. We all have someplace we want to be other than here.

THOMAS

So, I must miss an opportunity?

BIGGS

I am sure you will have other opportunities but in this warehouse you must follow protocol.

Exiting Biggs's imposing office, Thomas felt a palpable shift in the atmosphere, a weighty silence hanging heavy in the air after the turbulent exchange.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - NIGHT

With a determined stride, Thomas marched toward the break room, his destination a sanctuary from the day's pressures. Jarrod's nonchalant passage beside him felt like a deliberate slight, a silent, cutting observation.

JARROD

Are you going to ignore me every time you see me now because of Jacob?

THOMAS

I am tired of fighting with people, and I am not having a fight with you.

JARROD

Then resolve the conflict and there will not be a fight!

INT. WAREHOUSE BREAK ROOM - NIGHT

Jarrod trailed Thomas as he entered the employee lounge, his presence a silent, weighty shadow.

JARROD

Why are you mad? You got to perform a song at the club I took you to and meet a connection!

THOMAS

He was a corrupt, self-destructive leach, utterly devoid of musical sensibility, whose only aim was my exploitation and ruin through addiction. His behavior was unconscionable; a profound betrayal of trust, and you knew this!

JARROD

To be fair. No, I did not. I only introduced you because I heard Jacob knew people. I did not know him personally I told you that!

THOMAS

The next time you want to introduce me to someone, look out for me first before you do it!

JARROD

There will not be a next time!

THOMAS

That is for the best.

A jarring peal sliced through the air - Thomas's mobile phone. He withdrew the device. The familiar number glowed ominously on the screen.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What is it, Ashley?

(Beat)

Thomas bolted from the lounge, a frantic energy propelling him.

INT. HOSPITAL BABY WARD - NIGHT

A frantic Thomas dashed toward the reception area. Behind the counter, a stern Nurse, sixty years his senior, stood rigidly in her starched uniform, a silent sentinel of the sterile space.

THOMAS

I am Thomas Kennedy my daughter was admitted here.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Thomas.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING AREA - NIGHT

Ashley, lost in the intoxicating haze of euphoria, felt Thomas's presence as a distant tremor. He approached, a shadowy figure in her altered reality.

THOMAS

(Calmly but angry)

What happened?

ASHLEY

I, ah, fell asleep.

THOMAS

What happened to Casey?

ASHLEY

You know babies, curious.

THOMAS

How many pills have you taken?

ASHLEY

I said I fell asleep!

THOMAS

(Holding back his anger)

Why is Casey in the hospital?

ASHLEY

She was crawling around. You should see her it is funny, especially when she races around as if she must be somewhere, it is so cute.

THOMAS

You are strung out.

ASHLEY

It was an accident.

THOMAS

(Calmly and angry)

I do not know if it was an accident, you will not tell me what happened.

ASHLEY

I was going to mop the kitchen. I got tired so I put the cleaner on the floor, and I went to sit down, and I started to fall asleep when I heard the mop fall.

(MORE)

ASHLEY (CONT'D)

I got up and the cleaner was tipped over and Casey was lying next to the bottle.

THOMAS

You left cleaner on the floor knowing Casey was crawling around?!

ASHLEY

The doctor said she is going to be fine; she must stay overnight for observation.

A crushing despair settled over Thomas, and he recoiled.

THOMAS

Where is my mom?

ASHLEY

Your mom? She is not here.

THOMAS

Your parents brought you here?

ASHLEY

I took the train silly.

Astonishment gripped Thomas upon discovering Ashley's audacious act: transporting the wounded Casey aboard the hurtling train.

THOMAS

What?!

ASHLEY

I was careful she was still breathing.

THOMAS

Are you trying to kill Casey? She could have died on the train!

ASHLEY

Thomas, you need to calm down!

THOMAS

Do not tell me how I should feel!

ASHLEY

Everything is fine now.

Ashley's outstretched hand, a fragile offering of solace, met with a swift, decisive withdrawal. His hope withered.

THOMAS

Do not touch me! I want to see my  
daughter I need to see her.

A storm of anguish consumed Thomas as he retreated, his  
spirit fractured.

INT. HOSPITAL BABY WARD ROOM - NIGHT

In the sterile confines of a hospital bassinet, Casey rested,  
her small body a fragile burden. Thomas's gaze, heavy with  
apprehension, settled upon her. □ Casey's small hand rested  
gently within Thomas's, a comforting embrace that spoke  
volumes.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Serene calm enveloped the morning. Thomas's rhythmic  
footfalls punctuated the tranquility as he jogged.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS KITCHEN - NIGHT

Thomas ambled to the stainless steel expanse of his kitchen  
sink, a familiar ritual in the hushed quiet of his morning.

He retrieved a crystal glass, its delicate form a stark  
contrast to the utilitarian space, from the shadowed recesses  
of his cupboard.

Slowly, thoughtfully, he filled the glass with the cool, life-  
giving liquid, each drop a momentary meditation.

He savored the water, each sip a deliberate act of  
refreshment, a conscious pause before the day's demands.

Then, Ashley's sudden presence materialized in the doorway,  
her arrival a jarring interruption to his tranquil solitude.

ASHLEY

You have not said anything since we  
left the hospital to me.

A stony silence held him captive, his eyes stubbornly fixed  
elsewhere, unyielding to her silent appeal.

THOMAS

I do not know what to say.



Having finished his drink, Thomas meticulously deposited the vacant vessel into the stainless steel expanse of his kitchen sink, its emptiness a stark reflection of the quiet solitude settling over the room.

ASHLEY

Casey is fine.

THOMAS

This time.

ASHLEY

Do not tell me I am not a good mother!

THOMAS

I love you with everything I have, and you know that. Maybe it is time to consider other treatments for you!

ASHLEY

There is nothing wrong with me!

THOMAS

Where is Casey tonight!

ASHLEY

I am going to bed.

THOMAS

No you are not.

Ashley deliberately rotated, her gaze sweeping the altered landscape.

ASHLEY

Do not tell me what to do. You do not own me!

THOMAS

And if I keep staying with you, I will not have anything including my daughter!

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Thomas reclines, a solitary figure engulfed by the plush cushions of his sofa. Ashley, withdrawn and pensive, occupies a rigid chair, a stark island in the vast expanse of the room.

ASHLEY

Your mom could have watched Casey today!

THOMAS

If you are telling me, you have reached a place with your depression that you cannot watch Casey one day without being distracted than its time for a fulltime babysitter. I'm baffled as to who would bear the extra cost. My commitment to my responsibilities remains unwavering; my availability to Casey is absolute and unshakeable.

ASHLEY

I work!

THOMAS

You work when you can. My mom is retired and has earned the right to spend her time how she pleases. Casey is our responsibility! I borrowed money from my mom to pay some bills.

ASHLEY

We do not have to borrow money!

THOMAS

It would help if you could get through a week at your job. Don't you have one pill that can keep you focused?!

ASHLEY

I have a serious mental illness. No. I do not have one pill that can keep me focused. I have too many pills that make me feel like my head is dancing 24/7. I loathe you. I utterly and permanently disavow you, your presence a malignant infection upon my soul after what you just asked me right now!

THOMAS

Your actions are dismantling this family.

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I am doing everything I can for you and Casey. In addition to my work, I perform when I can!

ASHLEY

Do you mean your music? That delusional fantasy is a crippling obsession that you must abandon.

THOMAS

For all your verbal abuse I have always stood by you. When we got married you wanted to be a fashion designer and you gave it up and not once did I ever call what you wanted a pipe dream.

ASHLEY

It would be best to accept that you will never be a musician. How many rejections do you need?

THOMAS

I work a full-time job, perform, and take care of my family in the best way possible.

ASHLEY

And so, do I. I take my pills, but they do not always help.

THOMAS

I know and I want to help if I can.

ASHLEY

I said I take my pills!

THOMAS

I have been a good husband and a father. I have given you everything I have I cannot give you anymore!

ASHLEY

Have I not given you everything I have?!

THOMAS

You are not even in the ballpark. I am nothing more to you than a poor young man who can never be anything more than what I am now.

ASHLEY

You are nothing more than working-class like the rest of us, so do not ever think you are above that and walk around like a boy with talent. If you had a golden spoon, we would not live like this!

THOMAS

I am a struggling musician; you do not have to believe in me. All I must do is believe in myself!

Hesitantly, Ashley approached her chamber, then abruptly reversed course, a profound uncertainty etched upon her face.

ASHLEY

I cannot live this way anymore.

THOMAS

That is the first thing we have agreed on in a long time. I cannot live this way either.

With a resolute stride, Thomas approached the threshold of his dwelling, a silent promise echoing in his determined gait.

ASHLEY

Are you going jogging again?

THOMAS

I am going back to the hospital to stay with Casey.

The door swung inward, yielding to Thomas's determined push, revealing a scene that would irrevocably alter his life's trajectory.

ASHLEY

I am a good mother.

Thomas relentlessly pursues the horizon, his gaze fixed unwaveringly on the future.

THOMAS

Where is Casey tonight?

Thomas departed, his departure a silent, weighty exodus. Ashley remained, a statue of stunned disbelief in the aftermath.

INT. HOSPITAL BABY WARD ROOM - NIGHT

In a sterile, brightly-lit hospital room, Casey rests, vulnerable and small, within the confines of a child's medical cot. Thomas, a figure of quiet vigilance, occupies a nearby chair, his presence a silent testament to unwavering devotion.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

INT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Dressed in a sharply tailored tuxedo, Thomas stood beside Ashley, radiant in her ethereal wedding gown. Before them, the officiant presided, a solemn figure against the backdrop of lovingly assembled guests. Their assembled loved ones, elegantly attired, filled the pews, a silent testament to the momentous occasion unfolding.

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON

A torrent of rice engulfed Thomas and Ashley as they fled, their desperate sprint a frantic counterpoint to the celebratory chaos.

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

Amidst swirling laughter, Thomas and Ashley twirled in a joyous waltz, their bodies a testament to unrestrained mirth. Then, with playful abandon, they playfully smeared sugary delights across each other's faces, a chaotic, delightful exchange mirroring the exuberant bond between them. The sheer, unadulterated joy was palpable, a vibrant testament to their carefree spirits.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The door swung inward, revealing Thomas and Ashley. Her touch, a gentle claim upon his hand, drew his gaze upward. Their lips met in a fervent embrace, a prelude to the intimacy that awaited them as they moved, with a shared yearning, toward the bed.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

In the sterile yet sacred space of the hospital room, Ashley cradled her newborn, Casey, close to her heart. Thomas, his presence a comforting anchor, stood beside them.

Overwhelmed with a profound and joyful love, they gazed upon their precious child, their hearts overflowing with the miracle of new life.

**FLASHBACK ENDS**

INT. HOSPITAL BABY WARD - NIGHT

In a sterile, hospital crib, Casey rests, her small body a fragile island in a sea of white. Thomas, a steadfast presence, occupies a nearby chair, his gaze a silent vigil.

SUPER A Month Later

INT. MARRIAGE COUNSLER'S OFFICE - DAY

A meticulously arranged office hummed with quiet efficiency; a space reflecting the focused intensity of its occupant.

In the sterile, clinical setting of a marriage therapist's office, Thomas and Ashley occupy separate spaces on a sofa. A male MARRIAGE COUNSELOR, approximately forty years of age, exudes an aura of practiced professionalism. His posture, however, remains hidden from view, a silent, enigmatic presence mediating the palpable chasm between the estranged couple.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

This is our fourth session. Are things better this week?

THOMAS

Ashley?

ASHLEY

No.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

And you Thomas do you think things are better?

THOMAS

No.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Things are often complicated when both parties are young and more complicated when a child is involved. Ashley how do you know you do not want Thomas now, but when you got married you did?

ASHLEY

I thought he was my partner.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Marriage is challenging to make work even when they are your partner. Thomas Why did you marry Ashley?

THOMAS

I loved her. She was my world. She still is.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Do you still love your husband?

ASHLEY

No.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

Marriage counseling is to help two people to try and save their marriage. Have you given thought to how your decision will affect your child if you cannot work out your differences?

ASHLEY

I am not a bad mother. You are making me out to be a villain!

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

The question was for both of you.

THOMAS

I have never asked anything of you, but I am asking you to walk out of this office with our child and for you to tell me that you are willing to make this work and to look me in the eye and tell me you still love me. I believe you still do!

ASHLEY

I do not love you the way I once  
did.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

At this point what do you feel  
would be best for the both of you?

THOMAS

What we have been discussing.

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR

What has that been?

ASHLEY

It is time for us to separate. I  
will move back home.

THOMAS

What about Casey?

ASHLEY

I think she should stay with you  
for now.

THOMAS

Will you visit her?

ASHLEY

I will give her the attention I can  
give her.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A cramped, dimly lit nightclub pulsed with a suffocating haze. The air hung heavy, thick with despair. On a small, almost forgotten stage, Thomas poured his soul into a melancholic piano performance; each note a testament to the night's pervasive gloom.

Amidst a cacophony of voices ignoring his impassioned plea, a violent altercation erupted. Unperturbed, Thomas pressed on with his performance, a solitary figure against a tide of chaotic disregard.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT - AFTERNOON

A bustling afternoon sun beat down on the vibrant commercial heart of the city. Shops, eateries, and lively entertainment hubs overflowed with a throng of people.



Amidst this energetic tide, Thomas strode purposefully along the pavement, his mobile phone's insistent chime cutting through the urban hum. He navigated a diverse current of humanity - some in relaxed attire, others clad in sharp business suits - each individual a fleeting vignette in the city's ceaseless drama.

THOMAS

Hello.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

This is Thomas.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Are you being serious?

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I can meet with you.

(Beat)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I will see you then. Bye.

Halting his call mid-sentence, Thomas deactivated his phone with a decisive click. A slow, contented smile played on his lips as he resumed his stroll along the pavement, a newfound lightness in his step.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

A sun-drenched afternoon bathed the interior of the coffee shop in a warm glow. Thomas and Andy occupied a secluded banquette, their conversation shrouded in a comfortable silence.

THOMAS

He called me.

ANDY

Who?

THOMAS

Riley.

ANDY

Really? He called you. Do you think he called because he wants to record you?

THOMAS

What if he does?

ANDY

Then I guess you can give Casey the  
life you want her to have.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A miniature keyboard rested on the sofa beside Thomas, a  
silent testament to his restless energy. He idly tapped a few  
keys, a sporadic rhythm against the quietude.

The jarring peal of his mobile phone sliced through the  
stillness, a demand for his attention. He answered, his voice  
a reluctant surrender to the interruption.

THOMAS

Hello?

ASHLEY (V.O.)

Can you meet with me tomorrow?

THOMAS

Of course.

INT. RILEY'S OFFICE - DAY

Bathed in the soft glow of efficient lighting, Thomas and  
Riley occupied the spacious, well-appointed desk. Its  
immaculate organization, coupled with readily available  
communication and advanced technological resources, fostered  
a productive atmosphere conducive to focused task completion.

RILEY

I know it has taken me awhile to  
get back to you but I was thinking  
about you while I was on vacation.

THOMAS

I am not sure how I should take  
that.

RILEY

After college. People wanted me to  
move in a different direction but I  
was determined I was going to be a  
music producer.

THOMAS

You see my determination to be a jazz musician now. It sounds like you have a plan for me.

RILEY

I want to have you perform at a club, and I want to see how the audience responds to you. If they show an interest, I can have you come into the studio and record a single.

THOMAS

I would have to find the time to make the arrangements with the band.

RILEY

Would that be a problem?

THOMAS

I work a full-time job, I have a baby to support, I am recently separated. So. I only have one income. I will find a way to make the single and take care of my family at the same time.

RILEY

This takes a lot of work, more than most people realize.

THOMAS

I want to be a professional musician. I hang my hat in drinking dens in hopes of being noticed. I perform at train stations collecting pennies in hopes of being discovered. If you thought that I would not put the time and effort into making this happen I would not be sitting in your office right now.

RILEY

Let us get you to the club.

EXT. PARK- AFTERNOON

Sunlight dappled the park's verdant expanse as Thomas and Ashley strolled, their conversation a hushed melody against the backdrop of rustling leaves.

ASHLEY

I saw Doctor Steinbeck.

THOMAS

How did it go?

ASHLEY

She wants to prescribe another pill.

THOMAS

Are you okay with that?

ASHLEY

I do not want another pill.

THOMAS

Why did you see Doctor Steinbeck this time?

ASHLEY

I was not feeling right last week.

THOMAS

What was the difference?

ASHLEY

I had a mood swing at work.

THOMAS

Did you lose your job?

ASHLEY

No, but they put me on leave.

THOMAS

What now?

ASHLEY

I want to go to a treatment center.

THOMAS

How long would you have to stay?

ASHLEY

A few weeks longer I do not want to be addicted to these pills anymore.

THOMAS

You know I will help you in any way  
that I can.

ASHLEY

I know that now.

THOMAS

You should have known that in the  
beginning. When do you leave?

ASHLEY

If it is okay, I am going to go  
tomorrow.

THOMAS

Go, I want you to get better. That  
is all I have ever wanted for you.

ASHLEY

I do not think I am getting better.

THOMAS

Please do not think that I will  
always be by your side. You are not  
doing this alone. Family is one of  
the sweetest words anyone can say,  
and you and Casey are mine.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS KITCHEN - EVENING

At his kitchen table, Thomas meticulously spoon-fed Casey,  
her tiny form secured within the confines of her high chair.  
Gravity, however, seemed a relentless adversary, as morsels  
of her meal escaped the constraints of her bib, cascading  
onto the polished surface below.

THOMAS

If I ate like you, they would lock  
me away.

As the meal progressed, Casey's tiny hands reached out,  
grasping for the spoon with an eagerness that made Thomas  
chuckle.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Now that is how you eat.

Thomas continued to feed Casey, all was going well until  
Thomas was hit in the face with food which delighted Casey  
that she laughed.

It was then Casey looked at the empty chair at the table which Thomas had noticed while wiping the food off his

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You cannot talk, but I know what you are thinking. Where's mommy?

Thomas's eyes followed Casey's gaze to the empty chair, a shadow passing over his face. He knew the question that lingered in her curious mind, and his heart twisted at the thought of the answer. With a gentle sigh, he wiped the remnants of the meal from his face and pulled Casey close, her giggles softening into coos as he nuzzled her soft hair.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You know she loves you very much. You give us both such joy and when you are old enough. I hope you will understand why we parted.

From the neatly arranged box on his table, he delicately withdrew a tissue, its pristine whiteness a stark contrast to the gravity of the moment.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Here let me help you.

With a tender touch, he delicately cleaned the residue from Casey's lips, then thoughtfully deposited the tissue onto the surface of his table.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You look comfortable and I am glad. I wish I could sit next to your mom that comfortable again. Do not get me wrong I used to be able to. We got to a point we did not want to sit next to each other anymore.

A radiant smile illuminated Thomas's face as his gaze, filled with overwhelming adoration, rested solely on his daughter; she was his entire universe.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You do not know how to eat. You will not need a new diaper since most of the food missed your mouth, look at that bib.

With a gentle yet decisive tug, Thomas detached the soiled bib from Casey's neck,

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Thomas's gaze softened as he carried his daughter, a tender smile curving his lips. He knew that, despite the challenges of parenthood, these moments were precious.

THOMAS

I think I should have more social events here. It does get lonely, of course you fill up any room with your delightfulness.

Thomas ambled toward the plush sofa, settling beside Casey in companionable silence. Their shared weight sank gently into the cushions, a silent testament to their easy intimacy.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

You are getting tired.

Resting her weary head upon his shoulder, Casey succumbed to slumber. Thomas crooned a soothing melody, his gaze lingering on her peaceful face, a poignant vigil over her quiet breathing.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

I enjoyed this talk although you were not able to say anything. I know it does not look like it now, but I will give you the life I want you to have, but for now, life is good, yes, it is, life is good.

INT. BIGGS WAREHOUSE OFFICE - EVENING

Biggs sat engrossed at his workstation, the Skype interface glowing on his monitor. He engaged in a lively conversation with Brad.

BIGGS

I have vacation time coming up and I thought you and I could go to the cabin.

BRAD

That would be nice. It has been a while since we went to the cabin. You do not want to take mom?

BIGGS

We were talking and we thought you and I could spend a couple of days at the cabin and then do something as a family.

BRAD

The cabin would be nice and the chance to spend time with you.

BIGGS

Our infrequent interactions underscore a regrettable distance between us; bridging this gap presents a significant challenge.

BRAD

I understand, you are like grandpa.

BIGGS

Am I like my father?

BRAD

Yes, you both have said to have a dollar you have to work for a dollar.

BIGGS

My father equated lavish gifts with genuine connection. I strived to avoid mirroring my father's shortcomings in our relationship.

BRAD

Though our interactions may lack the intimacy of a traditional father-son bond, your unwavering support and constant presence are deeply felt.

A somber announcement, delivered with gravity, resonated through the intercom: a YOUNG MAN, 25 years old, his voice heavy with import.

EMPLOYEE (V.O.)

Biggs Walker you are needed on the shipping line.

BIGGS

I got paged.



BRAD

I heard.

BIGGS

You are very understanding for your age.

BRAD

You see me when you can. I understand.

BIGGS

You know I do love you.

BRAD

I know and I love you too. You got paged—Goodnight, dad.

BIGGS

Goodnight son.

Severing the connection, Brad ended the call. A weighty silence descended as Biggs remained immobile, lost in contemplation. Finally, he rose, his purpose resolute, and strode purposefully toward the dispatch area.

INT. BRAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brad's bedroom was a sanctuary, a haven of teenage calm, impeccably tidy and comfortably lived in. He rose from his desk, the glow of his laptop fading as he'd finished a FaceTime call with his father.

Approaching the window, his gaze fell upon Thomas strolling along the pavement, Casey nestled securely in her infant carrier. Thomas's murmured words were inaudible, yet the evident affection in his interactions with his daughter was palpable.

A poignant wave of longing washed over Brad; he yearned for that same warmth, that uncomplicated bond with his own father, a connection severed by distance. A cherished 5x7 photograph, a testament to happier times, rested on his nightstand—a smiling portrait of himself and his dad, side-by-side. With a heavy heart, he inverted the image, concealing the happy memory.

He slumped onto his bed, the weight of his emotions pressing down, his stillness broken only by the quiet, agonizing descent of his hands to his face.

SUPER A Week Later

## INT. PATIENT ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sunlight streams into the room, illuminating Ashley's pensive gaze fixed on the distant cityscape beyond the glass. A CORDIAL CAFETERIA worker, her face etched with the kindness of years spent serving others, enters, bearing a laden tray of sustenance.

## CORDIAL CAFETERIA WORKER

I think the culinarian out did  
himself this time. Chicken,  
vegetables, apple pie for dessert.  
I will leave the tray on your bed,  
you eat when you are ready.

With a gentle clink, the amiable cafeteria employee deposited Ashley's laden tray onto her bed. The food service employee departed, leaving behind a testament to unconsumed sustenance.

Moments later, Ashley approached the abandoned tray, her gaze lingering on its desolate contents—a poignant tableau of discarded hope. With a deliberate movement, she lifted the laden receptacle, its weight mirroring the gravity of her unspoken judgment. Finally, she deposited the remnants into the receptacle, a silent act of finality that spoke volumes.

## INT. DOCTOR STEINBECK'S OFFICE - DAY

A sanctuary of meticulous order. Thomas, a figure of quiet contemplation, occupies the chair before her immaculate desk.

## THOMAS

What is going on with Ashley Doctor  
Steinbeck?

DOCTOR STEINBECK, a woman of forty, a physician of considerable expertise, occupied her imposing desk. Her presence commanded the room.

## DOCTOR STEINBECK

Ashley's treatment is not going as  
planned.

## THOMAS

Why is that?

## DOCTOR STEINBECK

Ashley has a chemical imbalance,  
and her brain is producing less  
'feel good' moments.

THOMAS

Are you saying that she will always have to take prescription drugs.

DOCTOR STEINBECK

She has low levels of dopamine and to prevent her depression she needs to continue to take prescription drugs.

THOMAS

If she finds the right balance with her medications, she will be able to live a full life.

DOCTOR STEINBECK

No. Ashley's anxiety is getting worse.

THOMAS

She has me and her daughter. She was happy to come here. What might be causing this?

DOCTOR STEINBECK

Her low self-esteem.

THOMAS

I have tried to help her with that and to make her feel important. I will when she goes home try harder.

DOCTOR STEINBECK

Thomas she has lost the will to live and does not want to live the way she does and has developed a mindset that it is better to die.

THOMAS

You can change this?

DOCTOR STEINBECK

Her will to live. I will do what I can.

THOMAS

What if you cannot change her will to live?

DOCTOR STEINBECK

She will probably die in a month.

SUPER Later That Night

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A haze of stale cigarette smoke hung heavy in the dimly lit nightclub. The air itself felt oppressive, mirroring the mood of the sparse, jaded PATRONS scattered across the few occupied tables.

Onstage, Thomas, his face etched with despair, wrestled with a melancholic melody. A burly figure, a man whose face spoke of countless shady dealings, punctuated Thomas's struggle with a barrage of hurled objects. Undeterred, though visibly crumbling, Thomas pressed on, until finally, his composure shattered. He rose abruptly, as more projectiles rained down on him.

He stood for a moment before embarking on a purposeful journey across the room. His approach to the sneering. He seized the man with brutal efficiency, throwing him to the hard floor holding him down. His hand reached for a beer bottle, but a strong hand clamped down on his wrist, arresting his violent intent.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB ALLEY - NIGHT

A shadowy, sinister passage. Riley violently ejected Thomas into the inky blackness beyond the rear exit. The alley's menacing silence swallowed him whole.

THOMAS

Do not ever grab my wrist or touch me again!

RILEY

What happened in there!

THOMAS

I do not want to talk to you about Ashley!

RILEY

You need to talk to someone because what just happened was your wake-up call, who's Ashley!

THOMAS

My wife, I did not have a wakeup call. I regularly encounter a truly frustrating and inconsiderate individual during my performances.

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Their behavior consistently  
undermines the experience!

RILEY

I gave you your chance!

THOMAS

These customers at these clubs do  
not know I am on stage because they  
are too busy staring at the bottom  
of their glass waiting for their  
next drink. I want to be left  
alone.

RILEY

Talk to me about Ashley.

THOMAS

No. I want to be left alone.

RILEY

If it means anything I liked what  
you were performing before you went  
after that guy.

Departing, Riley paused, his gaze lingering on the receding  
scene, a poignant backward glance.

RILEY (CONT'D)

When that guy on the audiotape  
returns that I heard and is ready  
to make a single come to my studio.

THOMAS

I did not move the audience as you  
wanted.

RILEY

No, but you moved me, and I was the  
audience before the incident.

A somber shadow draped itself over Riley as he traversed the  
murky back passage.

SUPER One Month Later

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

As Thomas approached his apartment, his hand reached for the  
door handle. Simultaneously, the opposite door swung inward,  
revealing MS. MORALES, a kindly, sixty-year-old woman - her  
presence both unexpected and intimate in the hushed hallway.

Clad in a soft robe and sleepwear, her gentle demeanor radiated a palpable warmth.

MS. MORALES

I thought I heard someone out here.

Thomas, with a deliberate, almost agonizing slowness, pivots.

THOMAS

Hi Ms. Morales.

MS. MORALES

Ashley came by to see you.

THOMAS

Ashley? I did not know you knew her.

MS. MORALES

She introduced herself. My door was open. She seems lovely.

THOMAS

She is lovely.

MS. MORALES

She left something for you I will be right back.

A guitar case, weighty with untold melodies, returned with her.

MS. MORALES (CONT'D)

I did not know you played guitar. Happy birthday.

THOMAS

It has been a while. How did you know it was my birthday?

MS. MORALES

She told me. I hope you are not one of those people that play heavy metal.

THOMAS

No jazz.

MS MORALES

You have a good night.

The weighty guitar case, a vessel of unspoken melodies, was carefully lifted by Thomas.

THOMAS

You also have a goodnight.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Entering his apartment, Thomas illuminated the space, banishing the lingering shadows.

He approached his sofa, a haven of worn comfort, and gently deposited his guitar case upon its cushions. Settling beside it, a wave of bittersweet nostalgia washed over him as he lifted the aged, leather-bound container.

He cradled it on his lap, a treasured relic, and with reverent hands, unfastened the clasps. Inside, nestled in its plush lining, lay a magnificent folk guitar, its sun-kissed wood gleaming softly under the lamplight.

Etched into the corner, a poignant inscription - "I will love you always, Ashley" - served as a silent testament to a love both cherished and lost.

INT. DOOR - NIGHT

The entrance swung inward, revealing Thomas, a somber figure silhouetted in the shadowed corridor.

THOMAS

Hi.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ashley's compact kitchen, a haven of neatness and warmth, holds Thomas and Ashley at its small table. They face each other, a stark contrast - his robust presence against her delicate, almost ethereal frame.

THOMAS

How have you been?

ASHLEY

I have been good and you?

THOMAS

The same. Thank you for the guitar it was beautiful, there not cheap.

ASHLEY

You're welcome. I had extra money in my savings account.

THOMAS

So much for living within our means.

ASHLEY

I want you to have something to remember me by.

THOMAS

I already have something, you, and I remember you every day. Did you eat something?

ASHLEY

I had soup when I got up.

THOMAS

When did you get up?

ASHLEY

I got up not long before you came over. I get tired a lot lately. I like the soup with the shapes, those are good. I think Casey might like that soup and the shapes when she can eat soup. I been thinking a lot about past events.

THOMAS

What has you thinking about memories?

ASHLEY

I am in my happy place when I think about them.

THOMAS

Are you not in a happy place where you are now?

ASHLEY

I am. I am just happier there.  
(happy)  
I miss you.

THOMAS

Casey and I both miss you when you do not come around.

ASHLEY

I will always remember Casey and you.



A gentle grin graced Thomas's lips as he met her gaze. His touch, tender and reassuring, enveloped her hand.

THOMAS

Have I told you how beautiful you look today?

ASHLEY

Oh your just saying that to make me feel better.

THOMAS

I would never tell you something that was not true and I hope to tell you that many more times.

INT. BIGGS WAREHOUSE OFFICE - DAY

Biggs, engrossed in his work, sat rigidly at his imposing mahogany desk. Biggs' ajar office door received a hesitant rap from Thomas's knuckles.

THOMAS

You asked to see me.

BIGGS

You have heard there is a manager position opening.

THOMAS

I have.

BIGGS

I want you to apply you meet the qualifications and I want to recommend you.

THOMAS

That is kind of you, but that would be a salary position?

BIGGS

It would be.

THOMAS

I would, be you?

BIGGS

What do you mean?

THOMAS

I would be here all the time.

BIGGS

You would have a start time but no  
guaranteed end time.

THOMAS

I do not know.

BIGGS

Think about it the money is good.

THOMAS

You missed your son's soccer  
finals.

BIGGS

I see my son when I can the money  
is good.

THOMAS

Money can only buy so much. I will  
give thought to it was there  
anything else?

BIGGS

No.

Thomas departed Biggs's office, leaving behind a palpable  
silence. Biggs remained seated, his gaze lingering on the  
mahogany desk before gently lifting a cherished 5x7  
photograph - a framed testament to his son and wife. He  
carefully replaced the image, the weight of his unspoken  
emotions heavy in the air. Then, with deliberate precision,  
he reached for his telephone and initiated a call

BIGGS (CONT'D)

This is Biggs. Did that food  
shipment get out on time?

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

A somber light filters into the sparsely furnished bedroom.  
Desolation hangs heavy in the air. Ashley, lost in a  
labyrinth of thought, slumps against the rumpled bedspread, a  
portrait of quiet despair..

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

A contagious mirth erupted between Ashley and Casey, their joyous camaraderie forging a profound and lasting bond.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Close together on the bed, Thomas and Ashley rested, their fingers entwined; a silent intimacy blooming between them.

**FLASHBACK ENDS**

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Beneath a cerulean expanse, the sun blazed. Solitary, Ashley perched upon a boulder, her gaze lost in the boundless azure. Preoccupied, she contemplated the vastness above, her mind a swirling vortex of unspoken anxieties.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN - DAY

With a furious, bone-jarring crash, Ashley hurled the coffee pot onto the unforgiving tile.

INT. ASHLEY'S KITCHEN FLOOR - DAY

Upon impact with the unforgiving floor, the ceramic carafe fractured explosively, its elegant form dissolving into a cascade of jagged shards.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK**

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Thomas intercepted Ashley's furious swipe at his cheek, his grip a vise on her wrist.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Transformed by an inner radiance, Ashley rotated, her spirit soaring with unbridled delight.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - EVENING

Huddled in a shadowed alcove, Ashley wept, her fragility a stark contrast to the harshness of her surroundings.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Casey accompanied Thomas and Ashley on their contemplative stroll.

INT. CASEY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

In the embrace of a worn armchair, Thomas cradles the slumbering Casey. A profound stillness settles between them, a quiet testament to the weight of unspoken love and shared vulnerability.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS KITCHEN - MORNING

Beside a vacant seat, Thomas carefully nourishes Casey, enthroned in her highchair.

**FLASHBACK ENDS**

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS KITCHEN - EVENING

Seated at his cluttered desk, Thomas wrestled with a towering pile of invoices, the weight of each one pressing down on him. His fingers, moving with a hesitant rhythm, tapped out calculations on his calculator, each keystroke a small, desperate attempt to navigate the daunting labyrinth of his financial predicament.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Solitude embraced Thomas as he lay, weary, upon his mattress.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Rain lashed against the windowpane, a relentless curtain obscuring the world outside. Thomas, his gaze drawn inward by a melancholic contemplation, pivoted from the storm to the somber stillness of his dresser. There, amidst the quiet clutter, sat a cherished 8x10 photograph - Ashley's radiant smile a stark contrast to the somber mood, while the presence of Casey and Thomas beside her evoked a poignant memory, a bittersweet echo of happier times.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Anxiety gnawed at Thomas, his stillness in the chair a deceptive mask for the tempest raging within.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - DAY

Clasped together, Thomas and Ashley's fingers intertwined. Then, with a decisive jerk, he abruptly released her, leaving her hands dangling in the silent aftermath.

INT. CASEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Beside Casey's bassinet, Ashley lingered, a poignant tableau. Within the confines of her crib, Casey stood, a tiny sentinel. Her gaze, intense and unwavering, fixed upon Ashley. A tender, heartfelt smile illuminated Ashley's face.

With a gentle caress, Ashley brushed Casey's small hand. Then, with a subtle shift, Casey averted her eyes, a poignant moment of quiet contemplation.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - DAY

A somber sky mirrored Ashley's melancholic gaze fixed upon the windowpane; despair clung to her like the clinging mist outside.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - DAY

A melancholic Ashley lingered, her displeasure palpable. Thomas, possessive and protective, restrained Casey, holding her captive behind his shielding presence.

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

On her bed, Ashley slumped, her gaze drawn to the ominous vessel resting on her nightstand. A glass, half-submerged in a shallow pool of water, held a chilling cargo: a precarious heap of pills, their potential for both solace and destruction starkly visible.

ASHLEY

I wish I did not feel like things  
were my fault.

With a deliberate movement, Ashley's hand grasped toward the crystal glass filled with pills, a silent prelude to the known action.

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM FLOOR - DAY

The glass falls to the floor shattering.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - EVENING

At his designated station, Thomas meticulously secures the cartons with adhesive tape, each precise movement reflecting his dedication to the task.

INT. ASHLEY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Recumbent upon her bed, Ashley's eyes remained sealed. A livid mottling disfigured her skin, the chilling evidence of rigor mortis commencing its grim work. In the stillness of death, a profound tranquility finally settled upon her.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY - EVENING

A somber Thomas, his face etched with worry, traversed the sterile corridor, his mobile phone pressed urgently to his ear, a lifeline in a sea of echoing silence.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - EVENING

With a sickening thud, Thomas's mobile device plummeted to the unforgiving hardwood.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY - EVENING

Overcome with despair, Thomas collapsed onto the cold, unforgiving floor, his body wracked with silent sobs.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Dressed in somber attire, Thomas and Helen stood vigil over Ashley's final resting place. The profound weariness etched onto Thomas's face spoke of sleepless nights, a palpable three-day burden of grief.

THOMAS

I should not be saying goodbye.

HELEN

It was a lovely service.

THOMAS

It was.

HELEN

Ashley did love you.

THOMAS

I think she did. She wanted us to live together again. I never gave thought about it. I should have talked to her about starting over, what happened? I married her for how we got on, but after we were married, we stopped getting on.

HELEN

You could not have changed this.

THOMAS

She committed suicide I think I could have.

HELEN

She battled depression.

THOMAS

Ashley gave me a beautiful girl. A family is not a man without his wife and a child without their mother and a family is not a man and a child alone. I am not ready to be a single parent.

HELEN

Many of us are not ready, but with the help of others we get through.

THOMAS

I know I have grown, but I am still not a man, and a man raises a child not a boy.

HELEN

And sometimes a boy is forced to be a man even if that boy is not ready to be that man.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Fueled by simmering rage, Thomas pounded the pavement, his run a furious counterpoint to the turmoil within.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

At the bar, a glass of amber liquid sits before Thomas, a reflection of the turmoil within. His gaze, fixed and unwavering, betrays a precarious mental state.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

On the rattling train, Thomas slumped, his gaze lost in the blurring landscape. A tapestry of welts and contusions marred his features, a grim testament to a tormented soul. Then, Jarrod's approach materialized, a silent specter in the grimy carriage, his presence a stark interruption to Thomas's internal turmoil.

JARROD

Can I sit down?

Thomas pointedly averted his gaze.

THOMAS

I do not own the train.

Opposite each other, Jarrod and Thomas, locked in a silent, weighty confrontation, occupied adjacent seats on the hurtling train.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

Of all the trains in this city you  
are on this one.

JARROD

I see another seat. I am going to  
take it.

Jarrod gets and begins to leave.

THOMAS

What happened between us?

Jarrod sits back down

JARROD

You wanted to escape and enjoy my  
carefree life, so I took you to the  
club, it did not end well.

From the train's speeding window, Jarrod gazed pensively at the fleeting landscape, his mind adrift in a sea of unspoken thoughts.

JARROD (CONT'D)

You do not write things down on  
your pad anymore in the break room.

THOMAS

I have nothing to write.



Thomas gazed pensively at the world unfolding beyond the glass.

JARROD (O.S.)

We all go through the rhythm of  
life.

Lost in pensive contemplation, Thomas remained glued to the windowpane, his gaze fixed on the distant horizon.

THOMAS

What does that even mean?

JARROD (O.S.)

It means. Life is a river,  
sometimes it sweeps you gently  
along and sometimes the rapids come  
out of nowhere before we return  
back to that gentle sweep again.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - NIGHT

Thomas entered, the abrupt illumination of the overhead light shattering the darkness. He moved with a deliberate gait toward his dresser, a somber ritual unfolding.

His pockets yielded their contents—wallet, keys, a crumpled receipt—which he deposited with quiet precision onto the polished surface. Among his belongings, a cherished 8x10 photograph of Ashley rested, a silent testament to a love both vibrant and aching absent. His gaze fastened upon it, lingering on the captured image, lost in a reverie of bittersweet memories.

INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS FLOOR - NIGHT

The eight-by-ten photograph of Ashley crashed to the hardwood, its fragile glass pane exploding into a devastating shower of splinters.

EXT. OUTDOORS - MORNING

Dawn breaks, a tranquil balm washing over the world in hues of gentle apricot and rose. A serene quietude settles, promising a day of restorative peace.

## INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS BEDROOM - MORNING

Reclining atop his bed, Thomas lay in a stupor. A shattered photograph of Ashley rested forlornly nearby. His movements were languid, deliberate. He finally arose, the slowness of his actions emphasizing his internal turmoil. His gaze fell upon Ashley's broken image, now discarded on the floor; he fixated on it, lost in contemplation. He remained motionless, a prisoner of his thoughts. His eyes drifted to the window, the world outside a blurry distraction. Then, his attention was snagged by his dresser. An eight-by-ten photograph of Casey, perched atop it,

## INT. THOMAS KENNEDYS LIVING ROOM - DAY

On his plush sofa, Thomas cradled Casey's hand, his miniature keyboard resting invitingly on the low table between them. A delicate rhythm pulsed as his fingertips danced across the keys, guided by Casey's gentle, trusting fingers.

Their eyes met - Thomas's, intense with unspoken emotion, and Casey's, radiating a warmth that melted away the distance between them.

## INT. RILEY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Thomas entered Riley's office, his presence a palpable intrusion into the otherwise tranquil space.

Riley remained seated at his imposing mahogany desk, a picture of stoic contemplation.

RILEY

Are you ready?

THOMAS

Today. I play music again.

## INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

The theater's cavernous interior swallows Thomas whole. He occupies the stage, a solitary figure bathed in a single, stark spotlight. A neglected piano sits silently in the shadows. His gaze sweeps across the expectant, hushed faces in the darkness.

THOMAS

I have one last song for you, but  
it is hard for me to do.

(MORE)

## THOMAS (CONT'D)

I have never done this for anyone,  
and I was not sure if I wanted to  
do it at all. Music comes from  
inspiration and that inspiration  
comes from people around you. My  
biggest inspiration was my wife.  
Our marriage was short, but our  
memories were long. I see her every  
day in our daughter and there is  
not one moment that I did not  
cherish with her.

Thomas surveyed the expectant faces, a palpable tension hanging in the air. He approached the polished ebony grand, the weight of the moment pressing down on him. Hesitantly, he settled onto the bench, his fingers poised above the keys, a silent battle waged within.

## THOMAS (CONT'D)

I am sorry, excuse me for a moment.

Thomas exited the stage, his departure heavy with unspoken emotion. He reappeared, carrying a weathered guitar case, its worn leather whispering tales of countless gigs. With deliberate care, he deposited it atop the grand piano, a silent tribute to the instrument's majesty. The case sprung open, yielding Ashley's guitar, its gleaming finish a stark contrast to the somber mood.

A poignant pause ensued before he carefully placed his own instrument beside it, a subtle acknowledgment of their shared musical journey. His gaze drifted towards the wings, a searchlight in his eyes seeking something beyond the footlights. In the wings, Ashley cradled Casey, a picture of serene motherhood.

A tender smile touched Thomas's lips as he beheld this domestic haven, a quiet refuge from the clamor of the performance. Then, with a deep breath, he commenced his song, each note a raw, heartfelt confession.

## EXT. THEATRE - NIGHT

Night cloaked the theater in hushed expectancy. Emerging, Thomas, guitar in hand, paused, a solitary figure silhouetted against the inky canvas of the sky. His hesitant steps commenced, only to falter, arrested by an unseen force. A lingering gaze drifted back toward the theater's shadowed facade, then upward, searching the star-dusted heavens for answers.

EXT. BILLBOARD - NIGHT

Thomas Kennedy's electrifying live performance is announced on a towering billboard.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Overwhelmed, Thomas gazed at the towering billboard, a dam of joyous tears threatening to burst. He wheeled, his silhouette a poignant punctuation mark against the cityscape, and with his cherished guitar slung across his shoulder, commenced his journey down the street, his retreating form whispering a tale of triumph.

NO MUSIC PLAYS

END CREDITS

FADE TO BLACK