

**NOT ABOUT ME**

"Pilot: Five Plates, Not Four"

Created and Written by

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**CAST**

THOMAS.....21 YEARS OLD, MALE  
BRETT.....28 YEARS OLD, MALE  
JENNY.....28 YEARS OLD, FEMALE  
PAUL.....28 YEARS OLD, MALE  
DOCTOR ROBBINS.....60S, ANY GENDER

**LOCATION:**

LOS ANGELES SUBURBS.

**DEDICATION:**

FOR MY MOM. WHO DESERVED MORE TIME.

COLD OPEN

1. EXT. LA SUBURBS. BRETT'S HOUSE. MID-AFTERNOON.

It's a beautiful, summer day - not a cloud in the sky. Pop-rock music plays in the background. Many guests are mingling around an outdoor deck where an in-ground pool glistens. There is a house above the deck. Everyone is in a great mood - a perfect day to celebrate a wonderful person. After a moment, the camera pans to find THOMAS, in a jolly mood, mingling about the guests. Today is his 21st birthday. We are at his party. He has a gigantic video camera from the mid 90s resting on his right shoulder. The camera is almost three times the size of his head. He approaches a guest and "interviews" GUEST ONE

THOMAS  
(to Guest One)  
Hi! What's your name?

GUEST ONE  
(to Thomas)  
I'm Betty.

THOMAS  
Like "Betty Boop"?

GUEST ONE  
No.

THOMAS  
Damn. I'd never know. You have a very small waist and a very big head.

Thomas mingles around and finds another victim. He shoves the person the guest is talking to aside, a bit aggressively, and "interviews" GUEST TWO.

THOMAS  
(to Guest Two)  
Hey there! What's your favorite rom-com of all time?

GUEST TWO  
Hm. Let me think. Well - "When Harry Met Sally"!

THOMAS  
(becoming excited)  
Ugh. YES! That orgasm scene!

GUEST TWO  
Yeah -

THOMAS  
(cutting them off)  
Wanna see me do it?

Thomas begins to re-enact the 'orgasm' scene from "When Harry Met Sally". He goes over the top, really getting into it. Many of the guests begin to look at him with distasteful glares. After a moment, BRETT races over to Thomas and places himself between Thomas and Guest Two.

BRETT  
(interrupting, to Guest Two)  
Sorry! Sorry about this.

THOMAS  
(to Brett)  
Brett! This is what parties are for!

BRETT  
Fake orgasms?

THOMAS  
I can do it SO much better than Meg.

BRETT  
Tommy, let's go inside.

THOMAS  
Oh. My. God. Did you get me a  
stripper? Or better yet - a  
prostitute?!

Brett ushers Thomas through the sliding deck door and into the house.

CUT TO:

## **2. INT. BRETT'S KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS.**

The house is quaint, limitedly decorated, and cluttered. Despite it's down-graded appearance, it feels warm and cozy - a house that has been lived in for a long time while still retaining a sense of dignity. Thomas looks out the sliding glass door at the guests on the deck.

THOMAS  
God - who ARE these people? Did you  
pay people to come to my birthday  
party?

BRETT  
You know everyone here, Tommy.  
Don't be a brat.

Brett sets the video camera down gently on the kitchen table.

THOMAS

(to Brett)

Be careful! That camera is vintage.  
1995, actually. Do you know how heavy  
that thing is?! I think I sprained my  
shoulder.

Thomas tries to lift his right shoulder but cries out in  
pain. This is, of course, an over-exaggeration. He is not in  
pain. He giggles to himself. He begins to pace around the  
room, walking faster and faster as the dialogue continues.

BRETT

(sarcastically)

I'll get some ice.

THOMAS

I'd rather it be a big slab of steak.  
Like in the movies!

BRETT

That's for a black eye.

THOMAS

Should I punch myself in the face?!

Thomas curls his hand into a fist and 'fake punches' himself.  
Brett is not amused.

BRETT

Ok. Not funny.

THOMAS

(walking faster)

Did you make me a cake?

BRETT

(eyeing Thomas)

Of course I did.

THOMAS

Did YOU make it, or did that hot lady  
baker make it?

BRETT

Would you be happier if I said it was  
the "Hot Lady Baker"?

THOMAS

Duh! Ok, where are you hiding it?

BRETT

What?

THOMAS

The CAKE!

Thomas laughs. He enjoys this kind of game. He begins to open cabinets, opens the refrigerator, opens the oven - overly obsessed with finding his cake. Brett has been watching Thomas' manic nature and lowers his eyes. After Thomas bangs the oven shut, loudly - Brett must intervene.

BRETT

Tommy, we need to talk.

THOMAS

(pacing faster)

Ok. Jane Fonda or Lily Tomlin?

BRETT

Tomlin.

THOMAS

Hepburn or Streep?

BRETT

Thomas. I'm being serious. Can you sit down, please?

Thomas finds a new challenge - the dishwasher. He opens it, possibly expecting to find his cake inside. He looks down at the dirty plates, knives, forks, etc. A moment passes. He counts. He counts again. And again. He looks at Brett with desperation - as if the world has come to an end.

THOMAS

(to Brett)

I... I... I most definitely put five plates in this dishwasher twenty minutes ago. Why are there only four here?

BRETT

Maybe one of the guests needed a plate.

THOMAS

That's what the paper plates outside are for. Do you think someone came in here?

BRETT

(energy draining)

I don't know. Thomas, can you please -

THOMAS

(cutting him off)

- No! Nobody was supposed to come inside the house! Did you forget to tell someone?

BRETT

I told everyone, Thomas. Just like you asked me to.

THOMAS

(very upset)

But then, I don't... I don't understand -

BRETT

(intervening)

- I took the plate! I needed it for some of the appetizers.

Pause.

THOMAS

(accusingly)

Are you lying?

BRETT

No. Thomas, please sit down.

Reluctantly, Thomas sits down across from Brett. His trust and jolly mood return. Pause.

THOMAS

Well?! I have a party to get back to!

BRETT

I've been thinking about last night.

THOMAS

If you didn't get any sleep, that's not my fault. You were the one drinking coffee at 7am.

Pause. Brett takes a deep breath and exhales.

BRETT

(almost ashamed)

I called Doctor Robbins.

THOMAS

What!?

BRETT

I had to, Thomas.

THOMAS

But - but you said it was my decision.

BRETT

I know. I know what I said.

THOMAS

So you lied? You LIED to me!?

BRETT

I just -

THOMAS

You ASS HOLE! Jenny said I was doing better. YOU said I was doing better!

BRETT

(desperate)

This is all just so complicated!

Thomas stands and begins to pace.

THOMAS

(to himself, furious)

It's not! It's not "complicated". It's simple. You think I can't handle myself and only you can handle me FOR me.

BRETT

It's not about "handle".

THOMAS

I'm not going.

BRETT

Thomas -

THOMAS

(turning on Brett)

- What are you gonna do? Bring a swat team in here to drag me off somewhere?

BRETT

(begging)

It's not a hospital! It's a group home! You would be SAFE!

THOMAS

I AM SAFE! Maybe I'm just not safe from YOU!

From outside the sliding door, we hear familiar laughter. Both Thomas and Brett know these voices well.



After a moment, JENNY, followed by PAUL, push open the sliding door and enter the house.

JENNY  
Sorry we're late!

Before Jenny has a chance to turn to Thomas, he races to her frantically.

THOMAS  
Jenny! Help!

Thomas lunges into Jenny, almost toppling her over. Jenny immediately embraces Thomas. She holds him tightly.

JENNY  
Thomas. Breathe. Smell the roses and  
blow out the candles.

Thomas looks at Jenny with terrified and desperate eyes.

THOMAS  
(to Jenny)  
He's sending me away!

JENNY  
(to Brett)  
What?

BRETT  
Jenny, I -

JENNY  
Brett!

Paul sighs. He looks at Jenny and Thomas, then looks to Brett. He crosses to Brett and stands next to him, holding his ground.

PAUL  
Jenny. Maybe this is the best -

JENNY  
No. No! Paul, how can you -

Suddenly and without warning, Thomas yanks himself away from Jenny. He swiftly crosses to a drawer, opens it, and pulls out a long, heavy steak knife. He looks from Jenny, to Paul, and finally to Brett. He has fury in his eyes. He holds the knife up to his throat.

THOMAS

Don't come near me! Or I'll slice!

CUT TO BLACK.

ACT ONE

3. INT. LOS ANGELES. DAY. DOCTOR'S OFFICE, HOSPITAL.

Screen says: "Two Months Before". Paul and Jenny sit in an office. It is small, clean and neat with certificates and degrees on the walls. DOCTOR ROBBINS sits across a desk from them, looking over some paperwork. Doctor Robbins can be played by any gender, thus the words "they" and "them" will be used to reference this character. There is an awkward silence. Paul puts his hand on Jenny's arm. Jenny pulls away. Doctor Robbins clears their throat. After a moment, Brett races in - disheveled. He is wearing a cooking apron and chef's hat, covered in flour and long-since washed.

BRETT

Sorry! SO sorry I'm late. The restaurant was crazy.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

Nice to see you, Brett.

Brett sits in the empty chair next to Jenny and Paul. He takes a deep breath in and exhales slowly. He is anxious. Paul looks over at Brett.

PAUL

(quietly, to Brett)  
Brett.

BRETT

What?

PAUL

The hat.

Brett realizes for the first time he is still wearing his uniform from work. He takes off the chef's hat and puts it in his lap.

BRETT

Sorry! I came straight from the restaurant.

JENNY

(quietly, to Brett)  
Brett - the apron.

Brett looks down and, once again, is surprised to see he is wearing his work apron. It is covered in flour. He stands, takes it off, and puts it in his lap as he sits down again. He looks at Doctor Robbins awkwardly - quite embarrassed.

BRETT

God, you guys. I'm sorry. I'm a mess.  
I apologize, Doctor Robbins.

Doctor Robbins smiles a warm smile. They look at Brett with nurturing eyes.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

It's fine, Brett. Perfectly fine.

BRETT

(to Doctor Robbins)  
So? How have you been?

DOCTOR ROBBINS

Fine, thank you.

BRETT

Good to hear it.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

Well - I think it's time we discuss  
Thomas' discharge.

BRETT

(very anxious)  
Ok. Yes. Are the medications working?

Doctor Robbins looks down at their paperwork.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

We have increased his level of  
Lamictal and lowered the Buspar.  
Increased the Clonapin and added  
Zoloft. His episodes have decreased  
drastically and he seems to be doing  
much better.

BRETT

That's - that's really good. Really  
good to hear. Thank you, Doctor  
Robbins.

Brett, relieved, gives Jenny and Paul a "thumbs up".

DOCTOR ROBBINS

(to Brett)  
Of course. But please remember, Brett -  
psychiatry is no exact science. We  
have adjusted his meds the best we  
can, and - well. Now we hope for the  
best.

PAUL

That's it?

JENNY

Hope for the best?

BRETT

(to Jenny and Paul)

I can handle this.

JENNY

Are you sure, Brett?

BRETT

Yes.

PAUL

We'll be around. Every day.

A familiar look of trust is shared between Brett, Paul, and Jenny.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

(to all)

Thomas is very lucky to have such a wonderful group of supportive friends.

Pause. Brett, Jenny, and Paul await Doctor Robbin's words with baited breath.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

Brett - I trust you. I think you have done a wonderful job taking care of Thomas. Since - since you both lost your parents. But I need to reiterate, and I really need you to hear me - Thomas' condition may improve over time, but it also may not.

JENNY

It may not?

PAUL

What do you mean?

DOCTOR ROBBINS

There is a chance that his condition may reach a level where he may need to be somewhere, well - permanent.

Brett, Jenny, and Paul are shocked.

JENNY

But - he comes here and then he comes home and he's better.

PAUL

Yeah, but not for long.

JENNY

(to Doctor Robbins)

There has to be something more you can do.

PAUL

(to Jenny)

She's not a miracle worker.

JENNY

(agitated)

Paul, stop!

Pause. Brett looks at Jenny, Paul, and Doctor Robbins with pain in his eyes.

DOCTOR ROBBINS

He does come here and go home. Frequently. Six times in the past two years, in fact. All for suicide attempts.

Pause. Brett takes in a deep breath, holds it, and slowly exhales.

BRETT

(trying to stay calm)

What do you mean by "permanent"?

DOCTOR ROBBINS

There are places. Not hospitals. Places where he can live. Where he would be around other people like him, who deal with similar conditions. It's an option we might want to consider.

Pause.

BRETT

I - I, um -

DOCTOR ROBBINS

(soothingly)

We don't need to figure any of that out right now, Brett. For now, take Thomas home. He needs you.

A relief falls over Brett. He nods, trying to seem like he's got it all together.

BRETT

Ok. When can we see him?

DOCTOR ROBBINS

He's all set to go home. I just need you to sign some paperwork. I'll meet you downstairs.

Doctor Robbins stands, crosses to Brett and pats him on the shoulder - then exits. Brett, Paul, and Jenny look at each other.

PAUL

Well, fuck.

JENNY

Stop.

PAUL

Like he would LIVE there? Forever?

JENNY

Now is not the time, Paul.

Brett looks down. So many thoughts and fears are racing through his mind. We can almost see them swirling around his face.

PAUL

(to Brett)

Are you sure this is all OK?

Paul's words break Brett out of his dizzy mind.

BRETT

(reassuringly)

Yeah. Yes.

PAUL

(standing)

Ok. Well - I have to get back to the precinct.

JENNY

(standing)

And I have to get back to the Library.

BRETT

OK. Yeah. Fine. See you guys later.

Paul and Jenny kiss.

JENNY  
(to Paul)  
Love you.

PAUL  
(to Jenny)  
Love you too. See you at home  
tonight.

Jenny and Paul turn to Brett. He is staring off into space. They know not to bother him. They exit quietly. Close-up on Brett's face - full of confusion and fear.

**4. EXT. A FEW WEEKS LATER. BRETT'S HOUSE. DECK WITH POOL**

Another warm, sunny day. Jenny is sitting on the side of the pool, reading a book and soaking her feet in the water. Thomas is thrashing around in the pool, splashing water everywhere. He is having the time of his life. From across the other side of the pool, he shouts to her.

THOMAS  
(loudly)  
Jenny! The water is amazing!

Jenny glances up and looks at Thomas having so much fun in the pool. She smiles. Thomas' "good days" are rare. She knows not to take them for granted.

JENNY  
I'm fine where I am, babe!

Jenny puts her book down and gazes across the water to Thomas. Her face is full of joy.

THOMAS  
(loudly, to inside the house)  
Brett! Paul! Get out here! The water  
is SCRUM-DIDDILY-UMPTIOUS!

Not hearing back from Brett and Paul - who are inside the house - Thomas turns back to splashing about the water. He steps out of the pool, approaches the diving board, and jumps into a cannon ball. The water barely escapes Jenny. Thomas flies up from the bottom of the pool, laughing. He situates himself on a blow-up toy and floats over to Jenny.

JENNY  
(to Thomas)  
What do you wanna watch tonight?

THOMAS  
Notting Hill, duh! It's Friday night!



JENNY

I was thinking maybe The Notebook.

THOMAS

SO 2004.

JENNY

Um - Notting Hill was released in 1999!

THOMAS

(silly)

But Jenny - I'm just a boy, swimming in front of a girl - asking her to let him watch his favorite movie of all time!

JENNY

(splashing water at Thomas)

Ugh. Fine.

THOMAS

Yes!

Without warning, Thomas seizes Jenny by the legs and pulls her into the pool. Jenny pops up quickly. Furious in a playful way.

JENNY

You little brat!

Thomas takes Jenny in his arms. He wades her across the water.

THOMAS

I'll never let go, Jenny! I'll never let go!

Jenny and Thomas begin a "water fight" - splashing each other with glee and laughter.

CUT TO:

**5. INT. BRETT'S HOUSE. CONTINUOUS.**

Brett is lounging on the couch, watching television. He is wearing a red bathing suit with white flowers on it. His chest is bare, revealing abs and pecs. He clearly takes care of his physique. He is lost in thought once again. We hear the flush of a toilet and Paul enters the kitchen. He is wearing a bathing suit - blue with white flowers. He is also bare-chested and also has muscles.

He grabs some chips from the counter and begins to scarf them down. He crosses to the table and glances down. Below him is a pile of overdue bills. Red stamps, "Final Notice", etc. Paul puts the chips down, picks up one of the bills, and sighs. He slowly crosses to the TV and turns it off. Brett doesn't even notice. Paul sits down next to Brett.

PAUL

Brett.

Brett is still lost in thought.

PAUL

Brett!

Brett is pulled away from his dreamy state. He looks at Paul.

BRETT

Yeah?

PAUL

Wanna tell me what this is all about?

Brett glances at the bill Paul is holding.

BRETT

Shit. I meant to put those away.

PAUL

Well - you didn't.

Brett looks away from Paul and shakes his head, looking out the window.

PAUL

(earnestly)

What's going on?

BRETT

(avoidant)

Nothing. Everything is fine.

PAUL

Why do you have over due bills? This one's from a collections agency.

BRETT

It's none of your business.

Brett stands, crosses to the table, and begins to clean up the mess of bills.

PAUL  
(still sitting, turning to  
Brett)  
It is my business.

Brett takes a deep breath, holds it, and exhales slowly.  
Pause.

BRETT  
(his back to Paul)  
The trust. It ran out.

PAUL  
The one your parents left you? I  
thought there was like a million  
dollars in there.

Brett continues to clean up, not looking at Paul directly.

BRETT  
Yeah, well - eleven years and seven  
hospitalizations later, that much  
money doesn't go very far.

PAUL  
But the restaurant -

BRETT  
I got laid off.

PAUL  
What!? How? Why?

BRETT  
My manager said I was showing up late  
"too much" and was taking phone calls  
"too much" and a lot more of "too  
much" and so - yeah.

PAUL  
Did you tell them why?

BRETT  
No. I can't tell them what's really  
going on. He said my personal problems  
were inhibiting my ability to be a  
dependable employee.

Pause.

PAUL  
(standing)  
I can give you money.

For the first time, Brett finally looks at Paul.

BRETT  
(determined)

No.

PAUL  
Why won't you let me help you?

Pause. Paul crosses to Brett in the kitchen. Brett has now been cleaning up a mess that isn't there. Paul turns Brett around. Close up on their faces. Brett is longing for something, but is too scared to ask for it. Paul knows what Brett wants - and is happy to give it. After a moment, Paul pulls Brett into him. They kiss passionately. At first, Brett pulls away. Finally - he gives in. The kiss is filled with desire, fear, and desperation. After a moment, Brett pulls away. He wipes Paul's saliva off his lips and crosses back to the couch. He sits - his head in his hands.

PAUL  
What? What's wrong?

BRETT  
GOD, Paul. Jenny and Thomas are right outside.

PAUL  
They can't see us.

Paul crosses to Brett and sits down next to him on the couch. Paul runs his finger down Brett's bare chest. When he reaches Brett's belly button, Brett puts his hand on Paul's.

BRETT  
I can't. Not here. Not now.

PAUL  
Why not?

BRETT  
I can't risk it.

Paul holds Brett's face in his hand. He puts his mouth close to Brett's ear. Brett enjoys this, but is also extremely uncomfortable.

PAUL  
(whispering, in Brett's  
ear)  
Risk what?

Paul kisses Brett's cheek and then his neck. He continues to lower his hand down Brett's bare chest.

He touches Brett's crotch. Brett flinches. Paul smiles. After a moment, Brett pulls away from Paul. He stands and crosses into the kitchen. Pause.

BRETT

(his back to Paul)

Paul, I've been thinking. A lot. About this. About you. And I just can't. You and Jenny are getting married in a year. I can't and would never be able to live with the guilt. If we - if we continue. This.

Paul stands, crosses to Brett, and puts his arms around him. Paul kisses Brett's neck and puts his mouth to Brett's ear.

PAUL

(softly)

You don't have to worry. Everything will be -

BRETT

(turning on Paul, furious)

OK? God. How can you not see that it WON'T be OK? NOTHING is OK!

Pause. Brett goes back to cleaning up. Paul sits down on a chair in the kitchen.

PAUL

This is about Thomas, isn't it.

BRETT

Stop.

PAUL

He always comes first.

BRETT

What is that supposed to mean?

Paul, invigorated, crosses to Brett and turns him around to face him. He kisses Brett again. Brett pulls away.

BRETT

I said no!

Paul turns away. After a moment, he turns back to Brett. He turns him around once again.

PAUL

LOOK AT ME!

Pause. Tears well up in Brett's eyes.

PAUL

I get it. I'm not stupid. The truth?  
You can't love me - you can't commit  
to me - because Thomas is your fucking  
world. Every time I try to make us  
work, you're distracted and making  
excuses and lying. What about YOUR  
life?

BRETT

(exploding)

Thomas IS my life! Don't you get  
that?! That's the way it's always been  
and that's the way it will always be!

Paul crosses to the cabinet where Brett previously placed all  
the overdue bills. Paul begins to toss the bills at Brett as  
he speaks.

PAUL

How are you gonna pay your rent? How  
are you going to pay for Thomas'  
bills? Hell - how are you going to pay  
for anything!?

BRETT

I'll figure it out!!

Pause. The tension in the room could be cut with a knife.  
Finally, after a moment, both Brett and Paul begin to calm  
down. They don't have much fight left in them. Paul crosses  
to the couch and sits down. Brett sits in a kitchen chair.  
They both stare off into space, calculating their next move.  
A moment passes.

PAUL

(earnestly)

Look - maybe Doctor Robbins was right.  
If Thomas went somewhere like -  
permanent? You wouldn't have to worry  
about all of this. You and I could get  
a place together. I could break it off  
with Jenny. We could actually BE  
together.

BRETT

That will never happen, and you know  
it.

Paul stands, crosses to Brett, and kneels down in front of  
him. He puts his face right up into Brett's.

PAUL  
(giving up)  
Fine.

Paul begins to exit. Before he reaches the deck door, he looks at a bookshelf that flanks the side. There is a framed picture of a young Thomas and Brett with their parents. The picture is dusty, not having been touched in a long time. In the photo, Thomas, Brett, and their parents are at the park. Thomas swings on a swing set, barely five years old. A twelve-year-old Brett is climbing a play-ground tower, his hands in the air. Pure joy. Their parents are forefront - holding each other and laughing. Paul picks up the photo, dusts it off, and looks at it with longing eyes. Finally, he puts it back on the shelf. He turns to Brett.

PAUL  
Your parent's wouldn't have wanted you to do this alone. They would have wanted you to be happy. And you may love Thomas, but he doesn't make you happy. He is destroying you, manic episode by manic episode. Don't you get that?

Pause.

BRETT  
(not looking at Paul)  
Paul, you - you'll just never understand.

PAUL  
Yeah. Yup. I guess not.

Paul opens the sliding door and exits. Close-up on Brett. A tear leaks down his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

**6. INT. A FEW WEEKS LATER. BRETT'S HOUSE. THOMAS' ROOM.**

Thomas lies in his bed, having fitted the sheets into a 'burrito' around him. He is all tucked in - this is how he feels safe. With pressure on him and feeling like he's in a cocoon. The room is neat and clean. Art covers the walls, many bookshelves harboring expansive books, and a few romantic comedy posters adorn the walls. There is one poster of "Pretty Woman" that was signed by Julia Roberts. Thomas is currently watching "The Holiday". We see the screen and Thomas' face. He is in pure bliss. After a moment, Brett enters without knocking.

BRETT  
(to Thomas)  
Hey Tommy-Tom.

THOMAS  
(not looking up)  
Hey.

BRETT  
Whatcha watching?

THOMAS  
"The Holiday".

BRETT  
It's not even Christmas.

THOMAS  
So?

BRETT  
You watch it almost every week. Don't  
you get sick of it?

THOMAS  
Nope. Never. I learn a lot.

BRETT  
About?

THOMAS  
Like romantic stuff. It might come in  
handy some day.

BRETT  
How would it come in handy?

THOMAS  
Like if I meet a girl. And she's like,  
a romantic. I'll know all the right  
lines to say and how to act with her  
and how to get her to like me.

Brett sits down next to Thomas on the bed. Brett is so happy.  
He knows his brother is safe and content.

BRETT  
I think you'd be romantic enough for  
the two of you.

THOMAS  
So - you think I could?



BRETT

Could what?

THOMAS

Get a girlfriend?

BRETT

Of course I do.

THOMAS

What if she doesn't understand, my. My

-

BRETT

If she doesn't understand, she's not worth it.

THOMAS

You're just saying that because you're my brother and that's what your supposed to say.

BRETT

Not true.

Pause.

THOMAS

I'm turning 21. I don't want to be alone forever.

BRETT

You are young! You have plenty of time. To fall in love, to watch sappy rom-coms, to be your hilarious, corny self!

THOMAS

(quoting 'The Holiday')

"I like corny. I'm looking for corny in my life"

BRETT

(referencing the movie on the screen)

The fact that I know that quote is from THIS movie proves...

THOMAS

(cutting him off)

That you eavesdrop way too much.

BRETT

Ha. Yeah, I guess.

Pause.

THOMAS  
I wish I was normal.

BRETT  
Tommy, you are normal.

THOMAS  
You know what I mean.

Brett takes a deep breath in, holds it, and exhales slowly.

BRETT  
Tommy - We don't use the word "normal"  
in this house, remember?

THOMAS  
I'm keeping you from living a happy  
life.

BRETT  
Thomas. Stop.

THOMAS  
You could do so much more, be so much  
more - actually be happy - if I wasn't  
around holding you back.

Brett stands. He knows this dialogue much too well.

BRETT  
We are not having this conversation.

THOMAS  
Ok. Fine.

Thomas stares at the TV. Brett looks around at Thomas' room. He takes in all the new additions Thomas has made. New books, new posters, new art. Close-up on Brett's face. He is startled back to life by Thomas' words.

THOMAS  
Do you wanna watch the rest with me or  
do you have stuff to do?

Coming back to reality.

BRETT  
Well - I actually do love this movie.

THOMAS  
Grab the comforter.

Brett takes the comforter from a chair in the room, crosses to the bed, and throws the comforter over Thomas.

THOMAS

Hey! You're gonna suffocate me!

Thomas tries to wriggle free but Brett has the comforter tucked all around him. Finally, Thomas pulls his head out from under the sheet.

BRETT

I'm bigger and stronger than you.

THOMAS

Not a chance!

Brett and Thomas begin to wrestle gently - as only a big brother and little brother would do. After a moment, they both settle down. Brett wraps the two of them into the comforter, tucks Thomas in in his usual 'burrito' - style safety - and they continue to watch the movie.

THOMAS

Cameron Diaz is SO hot.

Brett laughs. He holds his brother tightly - as if nothing bad will ever happen to Thomas if Brett can keep him safe.

FADE OUT.

**7. INT. PAUL AND JENNY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT. A FEW WEEKS LATER.**

We discover where Paul and Jenny live. Perhaps once a stylish apartment - the bedroom has gone to shambles. It is messy, desolate, and smells a bit funny. Empty take-out containers have scattered themselves on the bedroom floor, the chairs, the side tables, etc.

Jenny and Paul lie in bed. Despite the mish-mash of the room, the bed seems like a safe-haven. It is a king-sized bed with many pillows and a Teddy Bear in the corner. Paul and Jenny are wrapped up in the disheveled sheets. Paul is holding Jenny tightly - he is the big spoon and embraces her as if he never wants to let go.

JENNY

(with a sigh)

I could stay like this forever.

PAUL

Same, Babe. Same.

Pause. Jenny pulls away from Paul, sits up a bit, and stares at him. She smiles. He can't help but smile back.

PAUL

What?

JENNY

I've been thinking.

PAUL

Never a good sign.

Jenny grabs the Teddy Bear and smacks Paul gently with it. Paul laughs.

JENNY

What if we just went to Town Hall? And got married? No big, fancy wedding. Just us. You can wear your uniform. You know how much it turns me on.

Paul smiles, but after a moment - he loses himself. He crumples down into the bed, staring into the space above him.

JENNY

Hello? Earth to Paul?

Paul barely responds. As he stares up at the ceiling, he smiles. His mind has gone somewhere else - probably thinking about Brett. After a moment, Jenny nudges him.

PAUL

Yes. Yes, we could do that.

After a moment, Paul groans and sits himself up in bed.

PAUL

We could definitely do that.

Paul kisses Jenny softly. The moment lingers. Paul looks at his watch.

PAUL

(suddenly)

Shit.

He jumps up out of the bed. He is wearing boxers and has broad, muscular shoulders.

JENNY

What? Where are you going?

PAUL

I have the night shift tonight,  
remember?

JENNY

Oh, right.

Paul crosses to the closet, opens it, and we see a finely-pressed 'cop' uniform. He begins to shake his way into the clothes. Jenny looks at him longingly - as if she would race over to him and rip off his clothes in a second. Instead - she lays herself back down in bed. Pause.

JENNY

I'm worried about Tommy.

PAUL

(still getting dressed)  
Isn't everyone?

JENNY

(sitting up)  
What does that mean?

PAUL

Nothing. Never mind.

JENNY

No. Don't do that. What were you going  
to say?

Paul has finished getting dressed. He crosses to the dresser where a belt and gun are sitting - ready to be worn and carried. He begins to strap on his gear.

PAUL

It's just Tommy. Always just - "Tommy,  
Tommy, Tommy".

JENNY

Yes, it is. As it should be.

Paul sighs. He crosses to the bed and sits down. He stares at Jenny for a moment. A look of intense anger crosses his face for a brief moment - then dissipates. He collects himself.

PAUL

Jenny - don't you see what's going on?  
For so long now? Ever since High  
School, and Brett and Thomas' parents  
dying, and Tommy getting worse -  
everyones life just revolves around  
him. Tommy - the huge mess. Tommy -  
who needs saving.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Tommy - who can't survive without a million people taking care of him.

JENNY

I don't think that's fair. Or true!

Paul looks away. He takes a deep breath in, holds it, and then exhales.

PAUL

When I found him, the first time -

Jenny gets out of bed. She is wearing a night shirt and underwear.

JENNY

I don't want to talk about that.

She begins to pick up a few of Paul's clothes he has left all over the floor from the night before. Paul's eyes follow her as he speaks.

PAUL

I just knew, in my head - that this was it. I'd probably find him again. Pills. Knives. Whatever. He needs HELP, Jenny. Brett has to let go of his fucking savior complex and put him in an institution. Permanently.

JENNY

(still cleaning)

Paul - Doctor Robbins said -

PAUL

(cutting her off)

Fuck Doctor Robbins! I bet she thinks the same thing I do but she's just waiting for things to get so bad that she's justified in sending Thomas away. Well guess what? He passed that point a long time ago!

JENNY

(whirling on Paul,  
accusing)

Why do you even care so much? You don't even like him!

Paul is taken aback.

PAUL

Wow - that's not fair.

JENNY

It's true!

PAUL

(sincerely)

I love Tommy.

JENNY

(heated)

Well, you sure don't show it!

PAUL

(trying to stay calm)

I show it in my own way.

JENNY

(exploding)

You are SO fucking selfish, you know that? All you do is strut around like you're a hot-shit cop with no feelings or true emotions!

PAUL

I'm plenty emotional!

JENNY

Well I don't see it!

PAUL

Other people do!

JENNY

Who? Who else "sees" it Paul? Brett?

Paul has reached his limit. He crosses to the bed and pounds his fist into it over and over. Jenny screams.

JENNY

Paul! What the fuck!

We hear a knock at the door. Paul freezes.

PAUL

Fuck.

JENNY

I -

PAUL

(cutting her off)

No! I'll get it. Jesus.

Paul shakes his head and heads down the stairs. He opens the front door. Standing on the other side is Thomas, holding a few books.

THOMAS  
(hesitantly)  
Hi! Hi, Paul. Um - I just wanted to return these books Jenny lent me from the library. I think they are due back soon.

Thomas hands the books to Paul.

PAUL  
Thanks.

A moment passes. Thomas eyes Paul - sizing him up.

THOMAS  
Is everything OK?

PAUL  
Yes, Thomas. Everything is fine. You should go home. It's late.

THOMAS  
Can I talk to Jenny?

PAUL  
She's not feeling well.

THOMAS  
Oh. Um - Ok. Bye, then.

Thomas runs off into the night. Paul slams the door behind him. Fade to black.

END ACT ONE.



ACT TWO

8. INT. BRETT'S HOUSE. A BIT LATER.

Thomas sneaks into the house quietly and tip-toes up to Brett's room. He opens the door to Brett's room quietly. It is dark, very dark. Thomas flips on the lights manically. Brett groans. Thomas, in a frantic state, sits down on the bed next to Brett.

THOMAS

(loudly)

Brett? Brett! Are you awake?

BRETT

(sitting up)

I am now.

THOMAS

I have to tell you something. But I'm scared.

BRETT

Scared of what?

THOMAS

Scared of getting caught.

BRETT

What? Did you steal something? Do I have to turn you in?

THOMAS

When I went to give Jenny her books back, before I rang the bell, I heard a loud, like - punching sound. And Jenny screamed!

BRETT

Fuck.

Brett gets out of bed. He has been sleeping in his underwear and begins to put on pants and a T-Shirt. Thomas begins to pace around the room. Finally, Brett is ready to go. He crosses to the door and exits. He races down the stairs, into the kitchen, and to the sliding deck door. Thomas has followed him all the way down.

THOMAS

Where are you going?

BRETT

To make sure Jenny is OK.

THOMAS

Paul will know I told you!

BRETT

I don't care. Stay here.

Brett opens the door into the darkness. Thomas begins to pace. He finally reaches a climax and exits the house, following after Brett secretively.

**9. EXT. PAUL AND JENNY'S APARTMENT. A BIT LATER.**

BRETT BANGS ON PAUL'S DOOR.

Brett approaches the door to Paul and Jenny's apartment. He bangs loudly on the door.

BRETT

Paul! Open up!

No response is heard.

BRETT

Paul!

After a moment, Jenny answers the door. She is wearing a night-dress and looking terrified.

BRETT

(to Jenny)

Jenny, what's going on?

JENNY

What? Nothing. It's the middle of the night, Brett. Why are you here?

BRETT

(heated)

Where is Paul?

JENNY

Working. Night shift.

BRETT

When will he be home?

JENNY

Later.

Pause. Jenny looks very confused - staring at a very angry Brett.

JENNY

Why are you acting so weird? What's going on? Is it Tommy!?

BRETT

No. No, Tommy's fine.

From the darkness, Thomas emerges. He races up the stairs to Brett. He stands next to him, with all of the bravery he has in him.

THOMAS

(to Jenny)

No! I'm not fine! I heard what he was doing to you, Jenny! You can't -

JENNY

(cutting him off)

Thomas - you don't know what -

THOMAS

I do!

JENNY

It's not what it -

Thomas screams. His mood has shifted and he is now very manic. He begins to pound his fist into the wall next to the door. Both Brett and Jenny try to embrace him but he pulls away, frantically.

THOMAS

(screaming)

Why doesn't anybody BELIEVE ME!?

Without warning, Thomas runs off into the night. Brett looks at Jenny and Jenny looks at Brett, unspoken words being shared between them.

BRETT

I -

JENNY

(to Brett)

No. I'll go.

Jenny crosses past Brett and proceeds to chase after Thomas. Brett looks after her. Close up on Brett's face. He takes a deep breath in, holds it, and exhales slowly. He is sweating and begins to sob. He sits down on the steps, his head in his hands.

**10. EXT. SAME NIGHT. HOURS LATER. PAUL AND JENNY'S APARTMENT.**

Brett is still sitting on the steps outside Paul and Jenny's apartment. He is no longer crying - he has reached a boiling point. After a moment, Paul emerges from the darkness. Brett sees him and stands, fury in his eyes.

BRETT  
(to Paul)  
You've got some nerve.

PAUL  
Huh?

BRETT  
I know about what you did to Jenny.

PAUL  
Stop jumping to conclusions.

BRETT  
You are such an ass hole! Next time I  
fall out of line, what are you gonna  
do? Beat me up?

PAUL  
Nothing happened. We just had a fight.  
No big deal.

BRETT  
No big deal? You hit her!

Brett punches Paul in the stomach. Paul falls backwards onto the sidewalk. He stands, ready to fight. Paul punches Brett in the face. Brett tackles Paul. They fight during the following dialogue.

PAUL  
I punched a fucking wall, not her!

BRETT  
Why do you do this!?

PAUL  
Do what?!

BRETT  
Make everything about yourself!

PAUL  
Because nobody ever makes anything  
about me!

Finally, both exhausted, they fall to the ground. They breath heavily. Brett stands and looks down at Paul

BRETT

I'm not doing this anymore.

Paul stands, holding his stomach.

PAUL

Do what?

BRETT

YOU!

PAUL

What are you talking about?

BRETT

We're over. For good.

Brett begins to wander into the night, but he turns back.

BRETT

(to Paul)

We don't make it about you because it shouldn't be about you. It should be about Thomas. And maybe if you weren't so obsessed with getting what YOU want all the time, you would see that.

Brett turns and exits into the night. Paul is left staring after him, wiping blood from his face.

**11. EXT. PARK. LATER SAME NIGHT.**

Thomas sits on a park swing, eyes lowered, swinging slowly and humming a song he loves. After a moment, we see Jenny in the distance. She cautiously approaches Thomas. He knows she's there but he doesn't look up. Jenny sits down on the park swing next to Thomas and begins to swing along with him. She knows the tune he's humming. She hums along. After a moment, they both fall silent.

JENNY

(cautiously)

I knew I'd find you here.

TOMMY

Our spot.

JENNY

Our spot.

Pause.

JENNY

Does Brett know where you are? That  
you're OK?

THOMAS

(standing, turning to  
Jenny)  
I'm not OK. YOU are not OK!

JENNY

(standing, crossing to  
him)  
I am!

THOMAS

You're not!

JENNY

(comforting)  
Babe. I got you. I got this. Don't  
worry.

Jenny puts her arms around Thomas. They hug tightly. Thomas  
begins to sob in Jenny's arms.

THOMAS

(through tears)  
I heard you scream. I -

JENNY

It was a misunderstanding.

Pause. Thomas pulls away from Jenny and looks her directly in  
the eyes.

THOMAS

I can't lose you!

JENNY

Tommy, you have nothing to worry  
about! Nothing is wrong and I'm not  
going anywhere.

THOMAS

You're lying. About everything. Just  
like everyone does. Everyone thinks I  
can't handle anything. Everyone is  
always protecting me when I don't need  
to be protected! I can keep you safe,  
Jenny!

Jenny hugs Thomas again. Even tighter.

JENNY

Breath.

Thomas does. They take deep breaths in and out together, calming each other down slowly.

THOMAS

(looking at Jenny)

Did he hurt you?

JENNY

No.

THOMAS

You SWEAR!?

JENNY

Yes, babe.

THOMAS

I might be scrawny and kinda weak, but  
I'll KICK HIS ASS!

JENNY

(laughing)

I know you would.

After a moment of shared laughter, they both sit down on the swings and swing together.

THOMAS

I can't stop thinking.

JENNY

About what?

THOMAS

About what my life would be like.

JENNY

You mean, if you -

THOMAS

Yeah.

JENNY

Life is hard for everyone, Tommy.

THOMAS

I know. But for me?

JENNY

I know.

THOMAS

I don't want to go back to the hospital.

JENNY

You don't have to, babe. You're doing so much better!

THOMAS

For now.

JENNY

What do you mean?

THOMAS

The monsters always come back. The demons always resurface. Eventually.

Pause.

JENNY

You can talk to me, Tommy. Any time, day or night. I won't judge.

THOMAS

(after a moment)

Do you ever wonder what it would be like if you were a different person? Like - if you had all the things you wanted but never could have? Like - be a person you could make up in your mind and never go back to the "you" you really are?

JENNY

(after a moment)

Yeah, I have that feeling. Sometimes. I wish I were braver. Stronger. I wish I spoke up more.

THOMAS

You always speak up.

JENNY

About some things, yes. But not always about the important things.

THOMAS

What important things?

JENNY

It's hard to explain.



THOMAS

Yeah, I get that. Trust me. I REALLY get that.

JENNY

I know you do.

They continue to swing in silence. After a moment, Thomas gets excited.

THOMAS

What movie would you want to live in?

JENNY

Huh?

THOMAS

Like - if you could escape - and live inside a different world, where would you go? Pick a movie!

JENNY

I'm worried if I don't say "Notting Hill" I'll be in big, big trouble.

THOMAS

Haha.

JENNY

Um - well. I'd like to be a princess, maybe. Rapunzel!

THOMAS

Have a dashing young prince climb up your hair? Sounds painful.

They laugh together. Pause.

JENNY

How about you?

THOMAS

Tom Hanks in Cast Away.

JENNY

That is VERY morbid. He almost died!

THOMAS

(in his imagination)

But he didn't. He survived. He was strong. He figured out how to make his own food and create his own shelter. And he had a best friend to keep him safe.

JENNY

Yeah - a volleyball!

Thomas and Jenny smile as they keep swinging. Pause.

THOMAS

He didn't need anyone's help. He was free. He knew how to take care of himself.

JENNY

You mean - no doctors?

THOMAS

No doctors.

JENNY

Just wide-open space.

THOMAS

A beautiful beach.

JENNY

And he was saved.

THOMAS

Yeah. He was saved.

Pause.

JENNY

I think you have a gift, Tommy. In fact, I think you're more "normal" than the rest of us.

THOMAS

Very funny.

JENNY

I mean it. You see the world in a different way. You've been through so much trauma. And it's made you smart. And strong. And loving. You care. You genuinely, genuinely care. That is a quality very few people have. But YOU survived. And you will continue to.

THOMAS

Thanks to you.

JENNY

No. Thanks to YOU.

Thomas reaches his hand out. Jenny takes it. They swing in silence.

END ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

12. INT. BRETT'S HOUSE. EARLY MORNING. SAME NIGHT

Brett sits at the kitchen table, staring at a cup of coffee that has long-since gone cold. He has a few scrape marks on his face and hands. After a moment, Paul enters the house quietly. Paul, sheepishly, makes his way to the kitchen table. He also has scrapes on his face. He stands in front of Brett. Brett does not look up.

PAUL

I'm sorry.

Pause.

PAUL

Did you hear me?

Brett does not look up.

PAUL

So, you're just going to ignore me forever?

Pause.

BRETT

I know you are.

PAUL

Are what?

BRETT

Sorry.

PAUL

Ok. And?

BRETT

If you're expecting me to apologize, you've got this all wrong.

Pause. Paul leans his hands on the table, looking down at Brett.

PAUL

If you think I don't care, if Jenny thinks I don't care - you're both very, very wrong.

BRETT

How are we supposed to think you care  
when you act the way you do about him?

PAUL

I worry. A lot, Brett. I honestly  
don't know what to do or think or  
feel. I just want him to be OK.

BRETT

He is OK.

PAUL

Why can't you see that he's NOT?

BRETT

And here we go - the same old fight.

Brett stands, brings the cup of coffee to the sink, pours it  
out, and fills the cup with hot coffee from the coffee maker.  
Paul has turned away.

PAUL

(hands in the air, giving  
up)

Ok.

BRETT

Ok?

PAUL

Yes. He's fine.

BRETT

Don't do that.

PAUL

I'm not, Brett. I'm serious. Maybe I  
do have this all wrong. Maybe I'm  
looking at it the wrong way or  
something - I don't know. But Brett -  
you have to try to see this from my  
point of view. I've seen how things  
like this can go.

Pause.

PAUL

Do you know how many times I've been  
called to a scene involving suicide?  
I've seen people jumping off bridges,  
suffocating themselves - and worse.

Pause.

BRETT  
(sitting at the table)  
I know.

PAUL  
Do you?

BRETT  
I'm sorry.

PAUL  
I thought you weren't going to  
apologize.

BRETT  
Well - maybe Tommy is rubbing off on  
me.

PAUL  
Hm?

BRETT  
You wouldn't get it.

PAUL  
Then TEACH me! Help me see what I'm  
not seeing!

BRETT  
Ok.

PAUL  
Ok?

BRETT  
Yes. Just - just give us time. All of  
us. I think we all just need time. To  
figure this out. Tommy is doing  
better. Much better. And I need to  
hold onto that. Maybe all those  
therapist I've seen are right - live  
in the moment.

PAUL  
I'm not good at that.

BRETT  
I know.

Pause. Paul sits down at the table. Brett pushes the coffee  
cup towards Paul, letting him know he can have some. Paul  
drinks, then leans forward and puts his hands over Brett's.

PAUL  
(earnestly)  
I really do love Jenny.

BRETT  
I know you do.

PAUL  
But -

BRETT  
You love me too.

PAUL  
Yeah. Yes. So much.

Pause.

BRETT  
You have to choose, Paul. You have to  
choose - and soon.

PAUL  
It's not that easy.

BRETT  
It needs to be.

PAUL  
And what if I can't choose?

BRETT  
Then I guess this has all been a big  
waste of time.

Pause. Paul sighs. He leans back in his chair.

PAUL  
Jenny texted me a bit ago. She's with  
Thomas at the park.

BRETT  
I know.

PAUL  
Of course you do.

Pause.

PAUL  
So?

BRETT

Go home. Get some sleep. We'll talk later.

PAUL

Ok.

Paul stands, begins to exit, but turns back.

PAUL

"So it's not gonna be easy. It's gonna be really hard, and we're gonna have to work at this every day. But I wanna do that because I want you. I want all of you, forever. You and me. Every day"

BRETT

That's from The Notebook.

PAUL

One of Thomas' favorite movies. I get more than you think I do.

Pause. Paul takes out a filled-out check from his pocket. He places it down gently on the table in front of Brett.

PAUL

It's a loan. I don't want to hear one word come out of your mouth.

Paul exits. Brett stares at the check.

FADE OUT.

**13. INT. BRETT'S KITCHEN. A BIT LATER.**

Brett is still sitting at the table, his coffee now cold again. He takes a deep breath in, holds it, and exhales slowly. We hear the door open and close softly and footsteps tip-toing up the stairs.

BRETT

Stop it right there, young man.

Footsteps halt, then resume walking back down the stairs. Thomas appears at the door to the kitchen.

THOMAS

God, you have better hearing than a bat.



BRETT

Sit down.

With a huff, Thomas sits down at the table across from Brett.

THOMAS

You're not gonna offer me any coffee?  
Rude.

BRETT

You scared the shit out of me. Out of  
all of us.

THOMAS

I was with Jenny. I was fine.

BRETT

It's not about that.

Pause.

THOMAS

I'm sorry, Brettifer.

BRETT

You only call me that when you know  
you've done something wrong.

THOMAS

Oh no! You've caught on to me! I'm  
ruined!

Brett is silent. Thomas leans in to Brett.

THOMAS

The smile is coming. I see it! It's  
almost there!

Brett slaps Thomas playfully on the head and smiles.

THOMAS

You can't resist me. I'm too adorable.

Pause. Thomas starts to arrange items on the table.

BRETT

I've been thinking.

THOMAS

About what?

BRETT

About how you said you want a girlfriend.

THOMAS

Yeah. What 21-year-old doesn't?

BRETT

What if you did go somewhere. To get better. Like - REALLY better. And not stay there forever. Just a month or something. And not a hospital. Like, a group home. You'd be around other people who deal with the same issues as you. Maybe you'd meet a girl who is

-

THOMAS

- As fucked up as me?

BRETT

That's not what I meant.

Pause.

THOMAS

I know. I mean - I...

BRETT

What?

THOMAS

(losing hope)

Maybe that's where I belong.

BRETT

(encouraging)

Just for a little bit! There are things they can do there for you, things that can help you that a hospital can't provide. And then you'd come home and you would feel better. I know you would.

THOMAS

Yeah.

Pause. Thomas stops fiddling with the items on the table. His head is down.

BRETT

Hey, Tommy. Look at me.

After a moment, Thomas looks up at his brother. Tears are streaming down his face. Brett stands, crosses to his brother, kneels down and takes Thomas' hands. He wipes tears from Thomas' face. He suddenly hugs Thomas with all his might, as if letting him go would shatter the earth.

THOMAS

(after a moment)

Brett. Brett! I can't breathe!

Brett lets go of Thomas. He kisses his forehead. He stands and crosses back to his chair, sitting down.

BRETT

Tommy, I'm not going to force you.  
It's up to you. I do believe you.  
About everything. And I trust you. So  
if you want to stay here, that's fine.  
But if you want to go somewhere -

THOMAS

(interrupting)

I'll think about it.

Pause.

THOMAS

I'm really tired.

BRETT

Ok. Go get some rest.

Thomas stands and pushes his chair in. Suddenly, he looks up at Brett with a huge smile on his face.

THOMAS

The party is tomorrow. Well, today.

BRETT

The guests arrive at 4.

THOMAS

Not as much beauty rest as I deserve,  
but I'll take what I can get.

Thomas crosses to Brett and hugs him tightly. After a moment, he pulls away and exits the kitchen, up the stairs to his bedroom. We hear the door close. Brett sighs. He takes a deep breath in, holds it, and exhales slowly. He picks up his cell phone from the table and dials. He quickly ends the call. He stands and paces around the kitchen. After an intense moment of thinking, he dials again.

BRETT

(leaving a message)

Hi, Doctor Robbins. This is Brett. Can  
you call me when you get into the  
office? Thanks.

He hangs up. He sits down at the table. He drinks his cold  
coffee in silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

TAG

14. INT. BRETT'S HOUSE. TIME OF THE BIRTHDAY PARTY.

We pick up where the opening left. Jenny and Paul enter the kitchen, day of the birthday party.

JENNY  
(entering)  
Sorry we're late!

Before Jenny has a chance to turn to Thomas, he races to her frantically.

THOMAS  
Jenny! Help!

Thomas lunges into Jenny, almost toppling her over. Jenny immediately embraces Thomas. She holds him tightly.

JENNY  
Thomas. Breathe. Smell the roses and  
blow out the candles.

Thomas looks at Jenny with terrified and desperate eyes.

THOMAS  
(to Jenny)  
He's sending me away!

JENNY  
(to Brett)  
What?

BRETT  
Jenny, I -

JENNY  
Brett!

Paul sighs. He looks at Jenny and Thomas, then looks to Brett. He crosses to Brett and stands next to him, holding his ground.

PAUL  
Jenny. Maybe this is the best -

JENNY  
No. No! Paul, how can you -

Suddenly and without warning, Thomas yanks himself away from Jenny. He swiftly crosses to a drawer, opens it, and pulls out a long, heavy steak knife.

He looks from Jenny, to Paul, and finally to Brett. He has fury in his eyes. He holds the knife up to his throat.

THOMAS

Don't come near me! Or I'll slice!

Pause. Everyone freezes.

PAUL

(cautiously, calming)

Tommy, put down the knife. Please.

THOMAS

No! I'm not eleven years old anymore!

I can take care of myself!

The air could be cut with a knife. Brett softens his tone.

BRETT

(soft, begging)

Tommy, please -

JENNY

(soft, begging)

Tommy, listen to me -

THOMAS

(exploding)

Just SHUT UP! EVERYONE!

Silence. Pause.

THOMAS

There are so many things I want to say right now. But I don't think anything I could possibly say would change any of your minds. I could say, "I'm not crazy" - but I've said that a million times and nobody believes me. I could say, "I can take care of myself" - but nobody would think that's true. I'm sick of this. Of my mind. Of the demons in my head. I can't handle the pain in my brain anymore! I love you all. I'm sorry -

Thomas slowly and steadily brings the knife to his neck. He takes in a deep breath and exhales slowly. Suddenly and without warning, Brett lunges at Thomas and yanks the knife out of his hands. Thomas falls down to the ground, defeated.

THOMAS

(ferocious)

No. NO!

BLACKOUT. END OF PILOT