

JOHN

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - LATE AFTERNOON (MEMORY)

Silence.

A quiet suburban street. Ordinary. Almost too calm.

Houses lined up. Trees barely moving.

JOHN(8) walks down the sidewalk his backpack looks to big for him.

Hes holding something in his hand—we never see what it is.

Laughter in the distance. Other kids. Somewhere.

JOHN slows down.

Something feels wrong.

He looks across the street.

FRAGMENTED IMAGES. QUICK CUTS.

- A familiar face, out of focus

- A sudden SHOUT

- The sharp sound of something hitting the ground

- John's hand tightening into a fist

The sound begins to distort.

JOHN tries to move.

He can't.

His breathing become shallow. Panicked.

A voice(o.s)
John-

CUT TO BLACK.

Total silence.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

John jolts awake.

JOHN (16)

Sweat on his forehead. Eyes wide open.
He sits in the edge of the bed, disoriented.
The same silence from before.
He looks down at his hand.
It's empty.
John take a breath.
Then another.
Neither helps.
He stands.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

John stares at himself in the mirror.
Not checking his appearance, checking if he's real
His reflection doesn't react right away.
Muffled sounds from the house- Tv noise, distant voices.
Life going on without him.
John looks away.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John enters. His PARENTS are already there, distracted.

JOHN'S MOTHER: MILLER
Morning.

John nods. Grabs a glass of water.

JOHN'S MOTHER: MILLER (CONT'D)
Sleep okay?

A brief pause.

JOHN
Yeah.

John drinks. His hand trembles slightly.

He notices.

Tightens his grip.

CLOSE ON JOHN

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Student everywhere. Talking. Laughing.

John walks through them.

Alone.

A GROUP OF **BOYS (16-17)** passes by him.

One of them deliberately **BUMPS** into John's shoulder.

John stumbles slightly. Catches himself.

BOY #1

Watch it.

They keep walking. Laughing.

John stops.

For a moment, it looks like he might turn around.

He doesn't.

He keeps walking.

Alone.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

Students filter into the classroom.

Backpacks drop. Chair scrape. Loud,

Unfocused energy.

John enters last.

He takes a seat near the middle. Not the front. Not the back.

He sits stiff. Alert

MARK (16-17) and his **FRIENDS** enter,

Laughing too loudly.

Same group from outside.

They take the seats behind John.

The TEACHER steps in, placing books on the desk.

TEACHER: SUZAN

Alright. Open your books to page
fifty-three.

Pages flip. Pens click.

The teacher turns to the board and starts writing.

Chalk against slate.

Laughter behind John. Whispered jokes.

John shifts in his seat. Uncomfortable.

A small **PAPER BALL** hits the back of his head.

John freezes.

He doesn't turn around.

The teacher keeps writing.

Another paper ball lands on his shoulder.

John exhales slowly.

Still nothing.

A third paper ball hits him - harder this time.

John turns.

MARK smirks. Innocent face.

Their eyes lock.

A beat.

John turns back around.

His jaw tightens.

Another paper ball flies.

John snaps

He stands up fast, chair screeching.

JOHN

What's your beef?

The room goes quiet - then instantly loud.

MARK

Chill, dude. It's just a joke.

John lunges forward, grabbing mark by the shirt.

Desks slam back.

Students shout. Laugh. Phones come out.

FRIEND #1

Yo, chill!

FRIEND #2 pushes John from the side.

John stumbles - then **shoves back harder**.

The teacher turns around, shocked.

TEACHER: SUZAN

HEY! STOP-!

Too late.

Chaos.

Hands pulling. Bodies colliding.

John's breathing is wild now - uncontrolled.

Someone yanks him back.

MARK regains his balance, smiling like he won.

TEACHER: SUZAN (CONT'D)

ENOUGH! All OF YOU!

Silence crashes down.

John stands there, chest heaving.

Every eye on him.

Not MARK.

John.

HOLD ON JOHN

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The hallway is quiet. Too quiet.

JOHN and MARK stand against the wall.

Separated. Tense.

John's breathing is still uneven.

Mark looks relaxed. Almost bored.

A SCHOOL STAFF MEMBER gestures down the hall.

STAFF MEMBER

To the coordinator's office, now.

They start walking.

Mark glances at John. A half-smile.

John doesn't look back.

COORDINATOR: PAUL

I need both of you to explain
what happened in the classroom.

MARK

(Rolling his eyes)
It ain't no biggie.

JOHN

(Firm)
He started it.

COORDINATOR: PAUL

John, im asking you to calm down.

John clenches his fists but stays silent.

Mark smirks.

The COORDINATOR sighs, rubbing his temples.

COORDINATOR: PAUL (CONT'D)

Both of you will stay after school
tomorrow. And Mark, no more messing
with John.

John exhales slowly. Mark looks annoyed but doesn't respond.

EXT. SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Students spill out of the building.

John walks alone, backpack slung over his shoulder, lost in thought.

MARK spots him from a distance, grinning.

MARK

Yo... you scored, dude.

Mark turns and heads towards his bus, whistling a little.

John watches him go, jaw tight, fists slightly clenched.

The bus doors close. Mark leans back in his seat, smirking.

John exhales, shoulders sagging, and keeps walking alone.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

John walks alone, backpack slung over his shoulder, eyes on the ground.

A figure appears behind him, jogging to catch up.

Its **TYLER (16)**, another student from school.

TYLER

Yo! John! Hold up!

John glances back, wary

TYLER (CONT'D)

(Catching his breath)

Caught what went down back there...
dude, that was mad rough. They
really threw shade at you.

JOHN

Yeah...it's whatever.

TYLER

Nah, dude. It ain't "whatever." I
feel that. Folks messin' with ya...
throwin' shade. Happens to me too.

John looks at him, silent for a beat.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I mean, some days it's just... too much, ya feel me? Makes you wanna shut down completely.

John shrugs slightly, keeping his pace.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I was thinkin'... you don't gotta handle that solo. Sometimes just chattin' or chillin' helps. Ain't gonna fix all the stuff, but it's a vibe.

John hesitates, eyes softening a little.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I live just up this street. You ever wanna... I dunno, chill or something, you could come by, no pressure.

John nods faintly, a small sign of acknowledgment.

They reach Tyler's house. Tyler waves.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Catch up later, man

John nods and keeps walking, turning down his own street towards his house.

The afternoon sun casts long shadows as he walks, alone, but...a little less burdened.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

John enters, drops his backpack gently on the bed.

He walks into the kitchen, shoulders tense, jaw tight.

His MOTHER (40S) looks up from drying dishes, concern mixed with frustration.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

John...what happened at school today?

John looks at the floor, take a slow step toward the fridge.

JOHN

Nothing.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(Softly,patient)

I just want to understand...I can't help if you don't tell me.

John grabs a glass of water, fingers trembling slightly. He drinks slowly, then sets it down a bit too hard.

JOHN

I said nothing happened!

MOTHER

(Sighs)

John... I know you're frustrated. But shutting me out won't fix anything.

John paces a little, fists clenched, then opens his hands, running them through his hair.

JOHN

(Frustrated, voice rising)

You don't get it! Nobody gets it! Every day... it's the same crap!

A small tear slide down his cheek. He wipes it quickly, embarrassed.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

I do get it...more than you think. I've seen how hard it's been for you.

JOHN

(Snapping)

No! You ain't! You wasn't there! You don't peep 'em starin' at me, crackin' up at me, shovin' me 'round!

He leans against the counter, breathing heavily. His mother steps closer, cautious but firm.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

I see it, John. And i hate that it hurts you... I hate that you feel alone.

JOHN

(Voices breaking, almost shouting)

I'm not alone! I just... I just can't deal with this anymore!

He wipes his eyes, takes a shaky breath, still trying to control himself.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(Softly, reaching out)

You don't have to deal with it alone. I'm right here... I'm always here.

John exhales sharply, turning away toward his room, voice quieter:

JOHN

I... I just...need to be alone.

The mother watches him go, worry and helplessness written all over her face. John's room door closes. Silence fills the house.

CUT TO BLACK.

-DAY TWO-

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

John's eyes snap open.

He didn't rest.

He just stopped moving.

He sits up slowly.

Checks his phone.

Unread messages. He doesn't open them.

He puts the phone face down.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John walks in.

His MOTHER is already there, coffee in hand.

She looks at him, careful.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Morning.

John grabs a piece of bread. Doesn't look at her.

JOHN
Yeah.

Silence.

She wants to say more. She doesn't.

John leaves.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Same building.

Different weight.

John walks in.

MARK is leaning against a wall with his friends.

Mark notices John.

A slow, knowing smirks.

John looks away.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

John walks down the hall.

A STAFF MEMBER approaches.

COORDINATOR: PAUL
John, Office now.

Students watch.

Whispers.

John nods, Follows.

INT. COORDINATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

John sits stiff in the chair.

The COORDINATOR flips through a folder, calm but firm.

COORDINATOR: PAUL
John, this is your final warning.
You'll stay after school for a
week.

John nods once.

COORDINATOR: PAUL (CONT'D)
Understood?

JOHN
Ok...okay.

John leaves the COORDINATOR'S OFFICE.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (LUNCH BREAK)

Students fill the hallway. Loud. Chaotic.

John walks toward the cafeteria, hands in his pockets.

Trying not to be noticed.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Noise everywhere. Trays clatter. Voices overlap.

John steps inside.

TYLER
Yo, John!

Tyler jogs up to him, smiling.

TYLER (CONT'D)
I was hoping I'd see you. How's
your day going?

John shrugs.

JOHN
It's okay.

Short. Careful.

They walk toward the food line together.

TYLER
You into games or something?
Soccer? Basketball?

JOHN
I used to play soccer.

TYLER
Used to?

JOHN

Yeah. A while ago.

They grab their trays and head toward a table.

MARK and his group pass by.

One of them bumps into the table on purpose.

The trays fall. Food hits the floor.

John freezes.

His fists clench. His jaw tightens.

He looks ready to snap - but he stops himself.

TYLER

(Low, to John)

They're such assholes.

John stares at the mess.

JOHN

It's fine.

It clearly isn't.

TYLER

Forget it. The janitor'll clean it up later.

Let's just grab new trays.

John hesitates, then nods.

INT. CAFETERIA LINE - CONTINUOUS

The two of them are going to get their lunch again, and while they're getting it, they're talking about what they're going to do after school.

TYLER

What are you going to do after school?

John looks at him somewhat seriously.

JOHN

Well... I have to stay after school once the bell rings. Im in detention because of the fight. Remember?

Tyler looks somewhat confused but agrees.

They, with the tray in their hands, go to the table.

While they are eating, Tyler asks about John's life.

TYLER

You don't talk to much about
yourself. What's life like for you
outside of school?

John looks a little thrown off by the questions.
He hesitates, stumbles over his words, then speaks.

JOHN

(A little bit serious)
I don't really talk about myself.
I'm just... not good at opening up.
I dont feel safe.

Tyler looks at him, confused, trying to understand.

TYLER

(Confused)
What do you mean you don't
feel, like... okay talking about
yourself?

John struggles to explain it.

He speaks stiffly, not angry.

JOHN

I just don't wanna talk about it,
okay?

The mood turns heavy.

They eat in silence.

The bell RINGS, calling students back to class.

John stands, serious, and heads back to class.

Tyler watches the way he leaves.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

John's mother, in the living room, talks on the phone with a
psychologist, her expression tense and worried.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

He's not eating properly.
He doesn't talk to me...he doesn't
open up.

Pause...(6s)

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

Tomorrow at eight in the morning,
right?

Pause(3s)...

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

Okay, thank you.

The call ends.

She looks around the room, then lets out a worried sigh.

INT. JOHN'S SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

The bell rings.

Time to go home.

The TEACHER looks at the class.

TEACHER:SUZAN

Alright, class.
That's it for today.

Students star packing up and heading out.

John grabs his backpack, slings it over his shoulder, and
walks out of the classroom.

Tyler catches up to him in the hallway.

TYLER

Yo, man... mind if i walk with you
for a bit?
Like, up to my street?

John keeps walking. He answers quietly, without really
looking at him.

JOHN

Yeah, let's go.

Tyler notices John is still closed off, a little sad.

He clocks it - but doesn't ask.

They keep walking side by side in silence.

EXT. STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

John and Tyler walk side by side in silence.

Tyler keeps walking, glances over at John, curious, and says:

TYLER

Hey man, you good?

Tyler stumbles over his words, trying not to come off rude.

John just listens, keeps walking.

TYLER (CONT'D)

It's just that you didn't stay at school. You were supposed to do detention, you know..

John sighs, clearly fed up with the school talk. He stops walking, turns to Tyler, looks at him seriously, and says:

JOHN

Man, why do you always wanna know how I'm doing? Everyone keeps asking me that, and I know if I say something, they...

John stops. Closes his eyes, takes a breath before finishing his words.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Won't and can't fix my problems. So just stop asking me all the time if I'm okay.

They lock eyes for four seconds. John turns and starts walking.

Tyler, not satisfied, follows him and grabs John by the shoulders.

John looks startled, but also tense, as Tyler speaks.

TYLER

Man, what do you mean nobody can help you? You don't even open up to people, you don't even-

Tyler doesn't finish the sentence as John shoves him away, creating distance between them.

JOHN

(angry, voice shaking,
barely holding it
together)

You... you don't know a damn thing
about my life. You have no idea
what I've been through.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(pointing at himself,
pissed)

You have no idea what it's like to
feel wrong no matter how hard you
try. So don't act like you know how
I feel.

John, slightly out of breath from his words, turns away and walks toward his house, tears in his eyes, as Tyler watches him leave.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

John storms in, stressed, walking past his mother without looking at her.

He heads to his bedroom and SLAMS the door shut.

John's mother walks to his bedroom door, worried, and asks what happened.

She knocks lightly on the bedroom door, worried.

JOHN'S MOTHER: MILLER

(Worried)

Honey? ... honey, are you okay?

She gets no response.

JOHN'S MOTHER: MILLER (CONT'D)

(Worried)

Honey, open the door so Mom can
talk to you.

JOHN (O.S.), angry and crying, yells from inside the bedroom.

JOHN

(Crying)

Leave me alone!

John's mother sighs outside the bedroom door, rests her head against it, and speaks gently.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(teary-eyed)

Sweetheart... I know your father
hasn't really been around much...

She tries to sound strong from behind the door... but her eyes are still holding back tears.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(teary-eyed)

I know the last time he came here...
he didn't stay by your side for
very long.

She lets out a slow breath before speaking, then says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(sniffling, teary-eyed)

I know I haven't been a very good
mother lately, but I want you to
know that I'm here for you, okay?

No response comes from behind John's bedroom door.

With tears starting to roll down her face, she steps away from the bedroom door.

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

John lies on his bed, his eyes still filled with tears, thinking about what just happened.

FLASHBACK BEGINS.

John begins to reminisce about the past, when he was still a child, he was playing in the street when suddenly some boys came and started bothering him and fighting with him, wanting to hit him.

While he was lost in past memories, his mother called him for dinner.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(Softly)

Honey, it's dinnertime, your plate
is already on the table.

John, somewhat dazed, replies

JOHN

Okay...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

John was sitting in the chair, eating listlessly, with a pensive look on his face.

John's mother tells him that he will have a visit to the psychologist in the morning at 8 o'clock.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(Softly)

Honey, I know you're not doing well and with all that's happening, Mom thought it would be good for you to visit a psychologist; they can help you.

John looks at her, confused.

JOHN

(confused)

Psychologist?, do you think I'm crazy?
Or am I lying about it?

John looks at her, trying to understand.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

(Softly)

Honey, there's no one better suited to understand your problems than a psychologist; they can help you overcome your traumas, etc.

John was confused and somewhat disappointed with his mother's idea.

JOHN

What's wrong with you guys, huh?

John speaks seriously, looking at her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You think you understand me, but in reality you don't know the slightest thing about how I feel.

John's mother starts to speak but is interrupted by John.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Yes, yes, I understa-

John interrupts and says

JOHN
 (yelling)
 No...You'll never understand,
 psychologists won't understand,
 nobody will understand
 what's wrong with me!

John leaves the table, goes to his room angrily, and slams the door.

John's mother, sitting at the table, watches him go to his room, thoughtful.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. PSYCHOLOGICAL RECEPTION - MORNING.

CLOSE ON a wall clock.

The second hand TICKS. Loud in the silence.

The camera slowly PANS to reveal JOHN and John's mother sitting in a waiting room.

JOHN is anxious, fidgeting with his hands, lightly tapping the tip of his foot against the floor as he waits for the psychologist to call him.

JOHN'S MOTHER sits beside him, lost in thought, staring into nothing.

The **PSYCHOLOGIST** approaches.

John's mother stands up quickly as he speaks.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON
 (Calm)
 Mrs. Miller, would you mind waiting
 in the waiting room while I talk to
 him alone?

She hesitates, worried, then nods in agreement.

The **PSYCHOLOGIST** looks at John and say.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)
 (Calm)
 Alright, John?
 Let's go.

They turn and head into the office.

As they walk away, the camera lingers on John's mother's face, worried.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

John sits in a chair, the psychologist seated across from him.

John looks anxious, nervous about what might be asked of him.

The psychologist picks up a notebook and begins asking John questions.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

Alright, John. Let's get started.

John avoids eye contact.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

John... your mother told me you haven't been eating well, and you're not sleeping much either. Do you want to tell me what's been going on?

John avoids eye contact, staying silent.

The psychologist sighs patiently and speaks.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

John, you know this is a safe space. You can open up here.

John looks at him with a deep, intense stare and speaks.

JOHN

Why should I?

The psychologist speaks calmly.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

Well, this is a place where you can open up... where you can talk about what's really going on.

He looks at John more firmly now, but still calm.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

And that's a good thing for you.
When you open up and talk about
your feelings, it can help you feel
lighter... freer.

John keeps avoiding eye contact, not responding.

Seeing he gets no response from John, the psychologist begins making notes in his notebook.

He sighs, looks at John, and says...

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

(Calm)

That's okay. Take your time. I'll
ask the questions, and you don't
have to answer if you don't want
to... but it would help if you could,
alright?

John rubs his shoulders, a subtle sign that he doesn't feel comfortable in the room.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

John, do you want to tell me what
you like to do during the day?

John looks at him and says.

I like staying in my room. By myself.

The psychologist nods and writes it down in his notebook.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

(Writing)

Okay...hum.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

Do you have a favorite song... or a
favorite artist?

John responds.

JOHN

Billie eilish.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

Billie Eilish, huh?... She's a great
artist, isn't she?

John looks at him and says.

JOHN

Yes, she is.

The psychologist closes his notebook and speaks.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

Okay, John, that's all for today.

The psychologist and John left the room and called John's mom in to talk, while John stayed in the waiting room.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (CONT'D)

MR. MILLER... please follow me.

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE - DAY

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

(Calm)

Alright, Mr. Miller, I had a talk with your son, and there are a few points worth highlighting.

John's mom looks worried and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER: MILLER

What... what points?

The psychologist looks at her and says:

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

(CAREFULLY)

Your son might be showing early signs of depression... and it's getting worse.

John's mom looks at him, a bit desperate but holding back, tears welling up in her eyes.

JOHN'S MOTHER: MILLER

Okay, okay... what can I do, or... what can you do to help?

The psychologist sighs and says:

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON

Well, what we can do is... bring him here every week. I'll talk with him, help him out.

John's mom looks at the psychologist, points to herself, and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

And... me? What should I do?

The psychologist speaks patiently to John's mom:

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON

You, as his mom, should try to get closer to him. Whether he wants it or not, try to hang out with him somewhere, visit relatives, or do something he likes.

John's mom thinks for a moment, looks up, and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

He hasn't left his room for days to do anything he enjoys, except for going to school or having lunch and dinner.

The psychologist looks at her and says:

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON

He told me he really likes listening to music. Have you ever tried putting him in a music school?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

No... not really... I haven't really thought about it.

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON

Then that's a good way to try getting him out of his room.

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON (CONT'D)

Here's one of the schools I'd recommend.

He hands John's mom a paper with the name and address of the school.

She looks at the paper, then at the psychologist, and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

When will his next session with the psychologist be?

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON

Well, let me check... next week, Friday at 8 a.m.

John's mom nods and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Okay...thank you.

She leaves the room and tells John it's time to go home.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

Alright, sweetie, it's time to go home.

John, with his headphones on listening to music, gets up and walks to the car with her.

Inside the car, the two of them, John's mom sighs, starts the car, and drives off.

While she's driving, John stares out the window, listening to Billie Eilish's song "Blue."

John's mom calls him, but he doesn't hear her.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

John?

She calls him again.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

JOHN?

John snaps out of his thoughts and takes one side of his headphones off to listen to her.

JOHN

Hum?

She says, worried:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Are you okay, honey?

John responds:

JOHN

Yeah..im alright.

HE PUTS HIS HEADPHONES BACK ON, LISTENING TO THE MUSIC AGAIN AND STARING OUT THE WINDOW.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

John is at home, scrolling on his phone, when suddenly someone rings the doorbell.

He walks up to the door carefully, trying to see who it is.
 He sees it's Tyler, takes a breath, and opens the door.
 The mood is kind of heavy because of what happened earlier.

TYLER

Hey buddy.

JOHN

(awkward smile)

Hey...

Hum...come in.

Tyler steps into John's house, looking a bit embarrassed.

He sits down on the couch while John calls his mom over to meet Tyler.

John's mom comes into the living room with a warm smile and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Hi, sweetheart. So you must be Tyler. John's friend, right?

Tyler, shy and stuttering a little, says

TYLER

Hi, Mrs. Miller... yeah, I'm John's friend.

John leaves the two of them alone so they can get to know each other.

Tyler asks John's mom, curious and a little worried:

TYLER (CONT'D)

How's John doing?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Well... John's been having a lot of rough days, you know...

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

He got into a few fights at school and... I still have to go there to sort things out.

TYLER

Wasn't he supposed to be in detention that day because of the fight?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Yeah. He was supposed to stay after school for a whole week once the bell rang... but he didn't.

TYLER

I can try to help him in any way I can... if you'll let me.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

How?

TYLER

I was thinking about asking him to walk around the city, or maybe go to the park, just to get him out of his room a bit... see if he can try to have some fun.

John's mom looks at him with a calm, relieved expression and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Would you do that for him?

TYLER

Yeah, of course.

John's mom smiles with a proud look and hugs him.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Thank you.

TYLER

So... can John go out now?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Yeah, yeah.

John's mom calls him over to come to her.

JOHN

Yeah?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Sweetheart, I think it would be good for you to get out of the house for a bit. Have some fun. Go with Tyler... enjoy yourself.

John looks at Tyler, then back at his mom.

JOHN

Okay... I guess.

JOHN (CONT'D)

See you soon mom.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. PARK - DUSK

Tyler and John are walking through the park. As they walk, Tyler carefully and calmly asks John:

TYLER

You don't really talk about him much, do you? Your dad.

JOHN

Well... he's not really around, you know? Not in my life. And that kind of makes me not want to think about him too much.

John says, thoughtful:

JOHN (CONT'D)

He doesn't even really like me. He just pretends.

TYLER

(Curious)

Why..Why do you think that?

John's mind drifts back to a memory from when he was eight years old.

JOHN

(Holding back tears)

I heard him say it... that I'm a burden to him. That I ruined everything.

Tyler looks a little sad after hearing the reason.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(Holding tears)

You know what it's like to feel
guilty for something you never even
did?

Tyler places his hand on John's shoulder, listening to him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I feel like I've been a burden to
them my whole life. I always ask
myself... maybe I wasn't even
supposed to be born.

Tyler, worried, speaks quickly, trying to stop John from
believing the things he's saying:

TYLER

Hey, hey, John. You're not a burden
to anyone, okay?

John starts to cry a little more.

JOHN

How am I not? I've been through so
much already... I don't even know why
I was born in the first place.

Tyler, still holding John by the shoulders, says softly but
firmly:

TYLER

Dude, I... I can try to help you get
through this, okay? It was just him
who hurt you, right?

TYLER (CONT'D)

Like... your trauma is just about
your dad, right?

John looks at him, his eyes filled with tears.

JOHN

No... but that other stuff doesn't
matter right now.

TYLER

John... you've gotta tell me
everything if I'm gonna help you.
It doesn't have to be right now,
but... I'll really try my best.

(MORE)

TYLER (CONT'D)
 Because that's what friends are
 for, right?

John looks at him, eyes full of tears, gives him a small
 smile, and says:

JOHN
 Yeah...Yeah.

TYLER
 Come here.

Tyler hugs John as the camera slowly pulls back, creating
 distance between them, the park fading into the background
 while they remain there, holding onto each other in silence.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

John's mom is sitting in an armchair, reading a book about
 anxiety and depression, when suddenly she receives a call
 from the psychologist.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
 Hello?..

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON (V.O.)
 Mrs. Miller, this is Dr. Brendon.

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I want to check on John... see how
 he's been since leaving the clinic.
 I need to know if he's doing okay
 or if he had another episode.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
 (Calm)
 Well... he has a friend named Tyler.
 He's a good friend. He came over
 and took John out for a walk. Now
 John's asleep, so... we can say today
 was calm.

PSYCHOLOGIST:BRENDON (V.O.)
 (Surprise, calm)
 Well, that's good. I'm certain what
 he needed was just some company—
 someone his own age.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
 Yes, yes... it seems like it's really
 helping him.

PSYCHOLOGIST: BRENDON (V.O.)
 Alright, that's all for now, Mrs.
 Miller. Have a good night.

The call ends.

"Monday"

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

John walks through the school courtyard and spots Tyler.

TYLER
 (Smiling)
 Hey bro..

JOHN
 (Little smile)
 Hey...hey

As John and Tyler are talking, Mark and his friends walk by and speak with a mocking tone.

MARK
 (Mocking tone)
 Hey, you sluts.. not gonna hook up
 right here at school, huh?

Mark and his little group walk away, laughing.

John glares at them, full of hatred.

TYLER
 Hey, John, don't mind them, man.
 They're just assholes.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 They don't even know what one plus
 one is.

Tyler laughs, and John lets out a small smile.

TYLER (CONT'D)
 So... come on, let's head to class.

The bell rings, and all the students start heading to their classrooms.

As everyone heads to class, a background song plays.

INT. CLASSROOM - MORNING

John sits in his chair, watching the teacher explain the lesson. Students in the background chat quietly, while a soft song plays in the background.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

John's mom parks the car in front of a music school and looks at the flyer the psychologist gave her. She checks to make sure it's the right place... then walks toward the entrance.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

She steps inside, looking around. Suddenly, the musical teacher appears in front of her.

She jumps slightly, startled.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
(Startled)

Oh, morning.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN
Good morning, how can i help you?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
Um, I'd like to enroll my son here...
I wanted to know how I go about it.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN
Great choice! Our school is one of
the best in the city, and we teach
students of any age.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
That's good...

A brief silence.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN
So... shall we go ahead and register
your son?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER
Yeah...yeah

The **MUSICAL TEACHER** moves to the computer and starts asking John's mom questions about his name and age.

Their voices fade as the camera slowly pulls back, the screen going black, with a soft melody playing in the background.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. JOHN'S CLASSROOM - NOON

The room is quiet, focused.

Students sit hunched over their desks, pens scratching notebooks.

Pages turn. Someone coughs.

At the front, the TEACHER writes on the board.

The chalk squeaks softly as it drags across the surface.

John sits still, eyes on his notebook.

He writes. Stops. Thinks. Writes again.

The SCHOOL BELL RINGS – loud, sudden.

The students start packing up their things and leaving the classroom.

The teacher looks at John and says.

TEACHER: SUZAN

John, can we talk for a minute?

John looks a little curious and surprised by the teacher's question.

JOHN

Oh, uh... sure.

John looks at her attentively, trying not to seem worried or anxious.

John's teacher looks at him carefully and speaks.

TEACHER: SUZAN

John, remember when I told you I wanted to talk to you? Yeah... this is the moment.

Looks at her, confused by the teacher's words, and speaks

JOHN

M-moment of what? W-what are we really talking about?

The teacher sighs and speaks.

TEACHER: SUZAN

John, your fight with Mark... that was horrible... a-and I don't want that to happen again. You're young, you shouldn't let small things get into your mind and hurt you...

John looks at the teacher with a furrowed brow, seeming not to like her bringing the subject up again.

JOHN

W-why are we bringing this up again? That's in the past.

John starts looking to the side, distressed by the conversation.

TEACHER: SUZAN

John, I just don't want you getting into fights again, okay? You have me—and the entire school staff—to help you with this.

John looks to the side, then meets her eyes, nods his head, and leaves the classroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL GATE - LATE AFTERNOON

Tyler was waiting at the school gate. He spots John walking toward him and gives a small smile.

TYLER

(Small smile)
Hey, hey, hey, man... how you been?

They give each other a quick hand tap.

John doesn't show much enthusiasm, but gives a small smile.

JOHN

Hey man, sorry I took so long, I had to, uh... handle some stuff.

TYLER

(A wary look.)
Uh-huh...

TYLER (CONT'D)

Let's go home.

The two start walking. Tyler keeps his eyes forward and speaks slowly

As John and Tyler walk, Tyler looks at John with a hint of excitement and starts to speak, building suspense.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Guess who... just got enrolled in music instrument class?

John stops walking, surprised, and says.

JOHN

(Surprised)

Hey... no. No, no, no. No way.

Tyler looks at John with a happy smile, pleased to see he managed to pull a strong emotion out of John's face.

TYLER

Hey, hey—haha, wait a sec. Why are you so hyped? You look like... like you just heard the best news of your life.

JOHN looks at him, excited, his eyes slightly shining, and speaks.

JOHN

Ahm... my mom was thinking about enrolling me in a music school, and I was scared because... I wouldn't know anyone there... you wouldn't happen to—

John starts to wonder if his mom might have contacted Tyler about the music class.

Tyler looks slightly amused, waiting for John to finish speaking.

JOHN (CONT'D)

My mom told you about the music school she was planning to put me in, right?

Tyler smiles slightly, looks at John, and says.

TYLER

Yeah... she told me about it, but the choice was mine. Can't leave my buddy hanging, right?

The two smile and turn away from the camera, continuing to walk.

A Background song starts playing.

The camera pulls back, showing an aerial view of the city.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

John's street is quiet.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John is sitting on the couch, watching a cartoon. Suddenly, a notification pops up on his phone—it's Tyler sending him a message saying..

TYLER(TEXT)

Heyyy, u hyped for music class
tmrw?

Background music begins to fade in, gradually building up.

John gives a small sideways smile and replies.

JOHN(TYPING)

Yeah... I guess... I'm kinda nervous
about the first day... it's normal,
right?

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tyler is lying in his room with the lights off, only the glow of his phone lighting up his face. He smiles at John's messages and replies.. The camera slowly pulls back from him.

As Tyler types, his phone's keyboard vibrates

TYLER(TYPING)

Well... it's normal, I guess, but
it'll be cool. Learning new stuff
shouldn't be that bad.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John's phone vibrates with a message notification.

John gives a small sideways smile.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tyler starts typing on his phone... unsure if he should send the message or not. After a moment, he decides to write and send it.

TYLER(TYPING)

Well, what could go wrong? Your boy
—that's me—will be there with you.
Ah, c'mon, get hyped, man!

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John looks at the message Tyler sent, smiles, then glances around the room like he's in a dream. He looks back at his phone and replies.

JOHN(TYPING)

Yeah, you're right. Nothing's gonna
go wrong, and... thanks for being
such an awesome friend, okay?... Good
night.

He taps to send the message—sent! He turns off his phone screen, a small smile on his face, and returns his attention to the TV.

INT. TYLER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tyler's phone vibrates with John's message. He looks at it, gives a small smile, sighs, and sends a reply.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John's phone vibrates with Tyler's latest message. He looks at his phone, gives a small smile.

TYLER(TEXT)

Yep, good night little stranger
haha.

John reacts with a heart emoji. John then turns his attention back to the TV, his face fully smiling.

The camera begins to pull back over John's shoulders, showing him sitting and watching TV as the music swells. Suddenly... everything cuts.

The music stops playing.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING.

John's alarm goes off. Still half-asleep, he reaches out with his hand to turn it off.

MOTIVATIONAL MUSIC plays.

John sits up on the bed, yawning and rubbing his face. He looks around, still a bit disoriented, then gets up and heads to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING.

John looks at himself in the mirror, rolls his eyes, sighs, then leans down to splash water on his face and brush his teeth.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

John's mom is making American pancakes, coffee on the table. Her face is a little happier than before. She looks toward the bathroom and calls out:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Miller! John, breakfast is on the table. Hurry up and finish your shower, or your coffee's gonna get cold!

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

John rushes out of the bathroom, already dressed and ready for school. He sprints toward the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

John sits down and starts eating the pancakes a little too quickly. His mom notices and says:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Easy there, sweetie. The pancakes aren't gonna run away, haha!

MUSIC begins to fade out.

John's mom sits down, watching her son. She notices he's different—more excited about something, like he wants to finish what he's doing to go do something else. She looks at him and asks with a small smile:

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

John, tell me something... why are you so hyped and in such a rush? Got something special at school today that I don't know about?

Still eating, he replies.

JOHN

Uh...nah...nothing much...it's just that yesterday I found out Tyler signed up for the same music school as me. I just wanna finish up so we can talk about it.

John's mom looks at him with pride and says.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Wow, that's awesome, John! You know what's even better? Uh...you already have a friend there!

JOHN'S MOM GIVES HIM A SMALL SMILE. JOHN RETURNS A TINY, SHY SMILE.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

You know, John... I'm sure Tyler's a great person for you to hang out with. Don't let anything mess up your friendship.

John looks down at his food, nods quietly, and says:

JOHN

Yeah... he's a great friend... he helps me—

Before John can finish what he was saying, the doorbell rings.

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Tyler stands in front of John's door, waiting for him to come out so they can head to school.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING**JOHN**

Oh, its him.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Who? Tyler?

JOHN

Yep.

John puts his backpack on.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Take care, you two.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

John walks to the door, opens it, steps outside, closes the door.

EXT. JOHN'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - MORNING

John looks at Tyler with a smiling face. They start walking toward school.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Tyler looks at John and asks:

TYLER

Yo, dude, you pumped today... today's the big day—school, and then music class!

Tyler lets out a deep sigh, stands a bit taller, and says:

TYLER (CONT'D)

Well... your buddy here already knows a bit of piano... I'm just... uh... kinda rusty.

They both smile.

John With a teasing look at him, says...

JOHN

Kinda rusty, huh? Or maybe this "my buddy" doesn't even know how to play piano?

John smiles at Tyler, Tyler makes a fake offended face and gives him a light shove, saying:

TYLER

Yo dude, that ain't cool, you hurt
your buddy's heart, ya know? Hah, I
got a heart too, man, hahaha.

The two smile as the camera follows them from behind, showing
them walking away.

JOHN

(Laughing)
Shut fuck up man.

They are laughing.

A Background song start to play.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL - MORNING

Several students walking and chatting in groups. Some enter
the school, others ride skateboards, and a few are putting
their bikes in the bike rack.

John and **Tyler** walk through the crowd of students, bumping
into people as the area is packed.

TYLER

Ugh...today's gonna be rough... but we
ain't gonna let that stop our day
from being good, right?

Tyler winks at John and grabs him, half-running toward the
school. But before they get inside, Mark and his crew walk in
front of John and Tyler, stop, and speak...

MARK

Well, well, well... look who we got
here, John and his little buddy
Tyler... or not... or actually,
boyfriend Tyler...

John looks confused, starting to get stressed, his fists
clenching, but Tyler steps in front of him, glaring at Mark
and says

TYLER

(Sarcastic)
Well, well, if it isn't the tough
guy... or should I say, the little
girl, acting all tough but really
just craving attention.

Mark's friends start booing and jeering.

MARK'S FRIENDS

(Booing)
Ohhhhhh brooo!

Mark looks at his friends, confused and slightly embarrassed, but doesn't back down to Tyler. He glares at Tyler with a fake, threatening look.

MARK

Yo, shut the hell up, dude. You really don't wanna mess with me bro.

TYLER

Yeah, sure. Wouldn't wanna give your mom the trouble of you getting your ass kicked and her having to bring you food to your room afterward.

Gets closer to Mark, speaking almost in a whisper

TYLER (CONT'D)

You know, man... I'm really not in the mood to end up in the principal's office today. So let me make this clear if you touch him, or mess with him again... be ready. It's not gonna be fun for you.

Tyler steps back from him, looks straight at Mark, and shouts at him.

TYLER (CONT'D)

What are you waiting for? Get the hell outta here, you bitches.

Mark glares at John and Tyler for a few seconds, then he and his crew walk off.

John looks at Tyler, shocked by what just happened, stammering as he says.

JOHN

W-wow man, first time I've seen that idiot get roasted in front of his dumbass friends.

John still not processing what happened, looks at Tyler and says.

JOHN (CONT'D)

T-thanks, man, you didn't have to get into trouble for me, we could've just ignored it, but... thanks.

Tyler looks at John with a loyal, protective gaze, places both hands on his shoulders, looks deep into his eyes, and says.

TYLER

Hey, man... you're my friend. I've got your back, and you've got mine, remember? One for the other. Doesn't matter if it's a bad day or a good one—I'm always here for you.

John gives a small smile, nods in agreement, and says.

JOHN

Yeah, yeah, yeah... I know... one for the other... but that doesn't mean you gotta get yourself killed for me, okay?

Tyler smiles, looks at him, and says.

TYLER

I can't promise anything haha, but... tell me, you busy today after music class?

John looks at Tyler like he can't believe that silly question, and says to him...

JOHN

Dude... you know when I got nothing to do, I just chill in my room listening to music or crashin', hahaha.

TYLER

(Laughing and shaking his head)

Aight aight... how bout you come over to my place after? We can play some video games if you want... or we can play chess, or hit the park again, or... I don't know?.

Tyler looks at him, glances to the side, then shifts his gaze back to John and says...

JOHN

Dude... I can't really promise if I'll come... but when we get back from music class... we can ask my mom, how's that?

Tyler gives a small grin, lightly bumps John's shoulder, and says

TYLER

Okay, okay, we'll see about that later. Leave it to me—your buddy here can totally change your mom's mind in no time, hahaha.

John starts walking into the school, Tyler following him. John looks at Tyler with a challenging gaze and says.

JOHN

Yeah, yeah, Mr. Powerful—but I'm telling you right now, if my mom starts liking you more than me... I'm gonna kill you, hahaha.

They start smiling.

An energetic music starts playing.

the camera pulls back from behind them, showing students all around entering the school.

Camera shows students talking, students entering classrooms, kids playfully wrestling, classrooms.

While the camera films the school from above, the school bell rings.

Bell rings

Energetic music stops.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John's mother is sitting on the couch, reading a book. Suddenly, the doorbell rings. She gets up to see who it is, looks through the peephole, then opens the door—revealing an old friend of hers.

They hug, smiling, relieved — a hug filled with happiness.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

CLARA, it's been so long since I
last saw you. Come in make yourself
at home.

Clara looks at her and steps inside. Miller closes the door
and sits on the couch. Clara sits on a different couch,
across from Miller.

Miller smiles brightly, clearly excited.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

Wanna grab a drink, Clara? Coffee,
juice, water, tea? Your call.

CLARA

Hum...just tea please.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Aight, aight

Miller heads to the kitchen, prepares the tea, hands it to
Clara, then settles back onto the couch.

Clara takes a careful sip of the tea. She glances at Miller,
curiosity in her eyes, then asks a question.

CLARA

So, Miller... how are things? Work,
John... your personal life, you know.

Miller takes a sip of her tea, looks at Clara, and speaks.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Well, Clara, things are going well
for now. Before, they were really
difficult. John he's doing fine.
Actually, he's at school right now.

Clara looks directly at **Miller**.

CLARA

Is John doing better? Did he stop
having those episodes of his? Like...
staying locked in his room, not
wanting to eat?

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Yes, yes, yes... he's better than
before. Before... he was very
aggressive toward himself. He
blamed himself for things that...
weren't even his fault.

(MORE)

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

I've seen him hurt himself with his own hands. That... that was painful for me as a mother. I didn't know what to do... but now he's seeing a psychologist. He's also enrolled in a music school, and he's made a friend... an incredible friend... TYLER. That's his name. That boy is a light in John's life. I think it's not the psychologist who's really helping him, but Tyler. Tyler must be the one helping him.

Clara listens attentively and carefully places the cup on the side table. She looks at **Miller** and says.

CLARA

I understand. I completely understand you, Miller. But what I think is that John really needs more maternal support, especially since his father isn't around.

Miller furrows her brow, slightly confused. She tilts her head, shakes it subtly, and looks at **Clara** with a questioning expression.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

What do you mean... more maternal support? I-I don't understand.

Miller looks at **Clara** with tear-filled eyes, holding back the urge to cry. Her gaze reveals a pain she has carried alone for a long time.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

Are you saying... that I'm not giving John enough support?

Clara tries to explain herself, but she is interrupted by **Miller**.

CLARA

No, no, I'm saying that you could try sitting closer to him and tal-

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Do you think I haven't tried? Do you think I'm not trying to be a good mother to my son?

A tear runs down **Miller's** face, but she quickly wipes it away, trying to keep her composure.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

I tried... I'm still trying... trying to be a good mother, trying to give him everything I can... and you're saying I'm not supporting him?

CLARA

Yeah miller of course you tried but-

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

But what? What else am I supposed to do? Just walk up to him and say, "Son, tell mommy everything, you don't need to be afraid"?... He wouldn't talk even if I promised him the greatest gift in the world.

CLARA

Just...listen to me

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

No, no. I don't need anyone telling me how to raise my son or trying to throw it in my face that I'm not a good mother. Please, get out of my house.

CLARA

Miller...

Miller loses control, her voice rising, sharp and broken.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

I told you... Get. Out. Of. My. House. Now.

Clara stands up, her expression serious and slightly shaken. She gathers her things and exits through the living room door.

A melancholic instrumental begins to play in the background.

Miller stares at the door as it slowly closes. Her face tightens with emotional pain, and she breaks down, crying.

The camera slowly pulls away from her face.

Stop melancholic instrumental

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S CLASSROOM - NOON

John is writing in his notebook. The wall clock shows one minute until 12:00 p.m. The teacher walks slowly between the desks, checking if the students are copying. Tyler glances at John, trying to hide that he's watching him. As he stares, the school bell rings, signaling dismissal.

TEACHER: SUZAN

Alright, class. That's it for today. See you tomorrow.

Students begin to stand up and pack their belongings. They start leaving the classroom.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS - NOON

Students walk and chat on their way out of the school. Tyler and John stick together, weaving through the crowd, careful not to lose each other.

Struggling through the crowd, Tyler takes John by the hand, guiding him out as he talks.

TYLER

Yo, come here, man.

JOHN

Oh...okay

They push through the students, heading for the school exit.

EXT. STREET - NOON

Yellow school buses stop along the street, students boarding and heading home. Tyler and John walk past the buses, continuing down the road toward John's house.

Tyler looks at John, clearly excited, smiling as he speaks.

TYLER

Bro, I swear, I can't wait to get to music school. Today's gonna be sick.

John glances at Tyler, then speaks.

JOHN

(Little smile)
Easy, dude. It's just a music class.

TYLER

(Sigh)

I know, man... it's just... feels like it's gonna be lit, you know? Me and you, we don't really know how to play shit, we're just gonna end up looking hella dumb.

JOHN

(Sarcastic, smiling)

We don't know yet, but that's exactly why we're going, music school, you feel me?

Tyler's walking, glancing around at the scenery.

TYLER

Yeah...

TYLER (CONT'D)

I dunno 'bout you, but this place is pretty dope, ya know?

John looks at Tyler, kinda skeptical about what he's saying.

John snickers

JOHN

Dude, what are you even saying? We walk past this place every day just to get to that damn school.

TYLER

I know... have we ever stopped caring so much about our problems... and just noticed the beauty of the world?

JOHN

Oh, c'mon, you're getting crazy...

Tyler puts both hands on John's shoulders and shakes him a little, saying

TYLER

Crazy? Getting crazy?

TYLER (CONT'D)

Alright, alright, I might seem a little crazy, but dude, there's so much stuff we could enjoy instead of stressing about everything.

John looks at Tyler, curious.

JOHN

So what should we do then? Just act like a couple of crazy people hugging a tree while everyone walks by and laughs at us?

TYLER

(Sigh)

Nah man... it's not like that either, we just gotta enjoy life, you know?

John looks a bit confused and says.

JOHN

What...Whatever, let's go before we're late for music class.

Tyler suddenly remembers music class and makes a dramatic face of panic.

TYLER

Oh my God, let's go, John. We can't miss our music class - if we show up even a little late, we're dead.

John sighs, shakes his head, giving a small hidden smile, and mutters to himself.

JOHN

Idiot.

As they walk, Tyler reaches his street. They say their goodbyes with a quick handshake.

TYLER

Oh...this is my street, so I gotta bounce...don't take too long getting ready, aight?

JOHN

Yeah, I know this is your street, you don't take too long either.

A soft track begins playing in the background.

Tyler waves goodbye to John, and John waves back. John walks toward his house as the camera slowly pulls back for (18)seconds.

A soft track stop.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NOON

The door opens. John steps inside. The door closes behind him.

JOHN

Mom, I'm home

John sees his mother sitting on the couch. He looks slightly worried and asks,

JOHN (CONT'D)

Mom?...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

John's mother, still carrying the weight of the earlier argument with her old friend, looks at him while holding her emotions in. She clears her throat and speaks.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Yeah, yeah, sweetheart... I'm just a little lost in thought.

John's mother sighs.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER (CONT'D)

So... how was school?

JOHN

(Sigh)

It was good. Kinda exhausting, but I gotta get ready. Tyler and I are heading to music class, remember?

John's mother looks surprised, as if she had momentarily forgotten that John was going to music school.

She lets out a quiet sigh, realizing her mistake, the weight of everything still evident in her eyes.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Oh, that's right... silly me. Go get ready, honey, before you're late.

JOHN

Okay.

John heads to his room. Once he's gone, his mother lets out a quiet breath. The worry returns to her face — the calm she showed was only for his sake.

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN'S BEDROOM - NOON

A slightly upbeat instrumental kicks in.

– John pulls open the closet doors.

– He grabs a shirt, slips it on. Looks in the mirror.

JOHN

Nah.

– Another shirt. Still not it.

– He tosses clothes onto the bed, the chair, the floor.

– He exhales, frustrated.

John stands in front of the mirror, staring at his reflection.

A beat.

He reaches for a black shirt.

Black pants.

White sneakers.

He puts them on.

John checks himself in the mirror one last time.

A small, confident smile forms.

The music continues as he grabs his bag and heads for the door.

The doorbell rings.

John straightens his clothes, takes a quick breath, and exits the bedroom.

INT. JOHN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NOON

John's mother opens the door. Tyler's car is parked in front of the house.

Tyler's mother rolls the window down and waves at John's mother.

John's mother waves back.

John appears at the door in a hurry and says goodbye to his mother.

JOHN

Bye, Mom. Bye, Mom—see you later.

John heads toward the car.

JOHN'S MOTHER:MILLER

Bye, take care you two.

John's mother watches as the car drives away. The horn honks.

INT. CAR - NOON

John stays quiet, feeling shy for never having met Tyler's mother before. Tyler looks at John and starts introducing his mother to him — and John to his mother.

TYLER

Uh... so, John — this is my mom, Marie.

JOHN

Nice to meet you, Mrs. Marie.

TYLER

And mom, this is John... my friend.

Tyler's mother glances at the rearview mirror, looks at John, and gives him a small, warm smile.

TYLER'S MOTHER:MARRIE

Nice to meet you, John.

TYLER'S MOTHER:MARRIE (CONT'D)

So, you're the kid Tyler keeps telling me about all the time, huh? He's said a lot of good things about you.

Tyler, embarrassed, looks at his mother and speaks in a slightly annoyed tone.

TYLER

Mom!!

Tyler's mother lets out a soft laugh and says:

TYLER'S MOTHER:MARRIE

Well, my son's best friend has to know how much he talks about him, right?

Tyler runs a hand over his face, embarrassed, looks at John, stuttering as he speaks.

TYLER

Holy shit.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Dude, don't worry about my mom. She just talks a bit too much sometimes.

Tyler's mother glances at the rearview mirror, her expression serious, edged with sarcasm, then speaks.

TYLER'S MOTHER:MARRIE

I can hear everything, you know, Mr. Tyler.

John lets out a quiet chuckle while Tyler rolls his eyes, clearly annoyed. Tyler notices that John is enjoying the situation and says:

TYLER

Hey, knock it off, man. Stop laughing.

John smiles and says.

JOHN

Dude... you should've seen your face. You looked hilarious.

Tyler rolls his eyes

TYLER

Shut fuck up.

John laughs, then starts teasing Tyler playfully, acting childish just to mess with him.

JOHN

Noo, shut fuck up you

Tyler rolls his eyes and speaks in a playful yet mock-threatening tone.

TYLER

Ohhh, you're so gonna regret that.

John stops laughing as he realizes Tyler is about to get back at him.

JOHN

uh-oh.

Tyler lunges at John, tickling him, while Tyler's mom watches calmly through the rearview mirror, giving a small smile before continuing to focus on driving. Soft music starts playing over their laughter.

TYLER

I told you.

JOHN

(Laughing)

Stop stop stop

EXT. STREET - NOON

The car drives down the street as soft music continues.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. MUSIC SCHOOL - NOON

The car of Tyler's mom stops in front of the music school. John and Tyler get out. John closes the door. When Tyler goes to close his side, his mom puts her hand up, stopping him, and says:

TYLER'S MOTHER:MARRIE

Hey... if you need anything, just call me, okay?

TYLER

Okay.

Tyler closes the car door. Tyler's mom drives off.

Tyler looks at John and nods, pointing toward the school entrance.

INT. MUSIC SCHOOL - NOON

They walk in and see the music teacher at the reception, looking over some papers.

Tyler closes the car door, his mom drives off, he looks at John and nods, pointing toward the school entrance; they walk in and see the music teacher at the reception looking over some papers, John looks anxious, Tyler pats him on the back, and they walk over to him.

TYLER

Hi...hum... I'm Tyler and This is John my friend, we're the new students, and our class is today.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

(welcoming, smiling)

Welcome, im musical teacher dean, yeah you can call me dean. hmm... I remember your mom, John... she came by recently to enroll you.

John gives a shy little smile at Tyler, who returns it with a subtle smile.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

And you, Tyler, it wasn't your mom who enrolled you, right? You did it yourself?

TYLER

Yeah, yeah, of course.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

Okay, okay, let's move along. I'll show you to the classroom—make yourselves feel at ease and comfortable, alright? You're gonna have an amazing class.

As they walked toward the classroom, Tyler noticed John starting to get anxious.

Tyler, in a soft voice while walking, places his hand on John's shoulder and says.

TYLER

Hey, im here okay...

John looks at Tyler, trying to keep his composure, and gives a slight nod. They keep walking and arrive at the classroom. The teacher opens the door and says.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

We're here—go ahead, grab a seat and make yourselves comfortable.

The classroom has about 20 students seated, some quietly chatting with each other, as Tyler and John walk in. John is clearly anxious—it's his first day at a music school, something completely new for him. A few students glance at John and Tyler, whisper to each other, and let out small, teasing laughs. Feeling completely uncomfortable, John sits down in his chair, with Tyler taking the seat next to him.

The teacher enters the classroom and gives a small clap to get the students' attention.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

Okay, everyone, let's pay attention. Today we have two new students, and we'd like to hear a little about them. Please keep quiet and show respect.

John looks at Tyler with a fearful and anxious expression, not expecting that he would have to introduce himself.

TYLER

(Gently)

Hey, it's gonna be fine... just introduce yourself.

John looks into his eyes and nods in agreement.

The music teacher gives a small smile to both of them and says.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

Okay, let's start with... John... you can stand up and introduce yourself to us.

John looks at Tyler, who gives him a slight nod to go ahead. John stands up, his hands trembling as he clasps them together. His voice quivers, slightly stuttering, and his eyes filled with fear and anxiety say it all.

JOHN

Hi...uhm...I'm John...

While John was introducing himself, he noticed two girls whispering to each other, sneering at him, but he didn't stop.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Uhm...im 16 years old

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

Sixteen years old, amazing! Tell us, John...what's your favorite hobby?

JOHN

Uhm... I like listening to music.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

Good, very good. You can sit down now, Tyler. Shall we go?

John sits down in his chair, and Tyler stands up, a bit excited.

TYLER

My name's Tyler, I'm 16. My hobbies are playing video games and reading books... I don't read a lot, but I like it.

The music teacher was impressed with Tyler; he didn't even need to ask him any questions.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

Wow, wow, wow... take it easy, John, just breathe...

The students laugh, finding the situation funny, Tyler chuckles awkwardly, and the teacher smiles.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

Looks like we've got one who's a bit anxious, huh, Tyler? Go ahead and take a seat.

Tyler gives a slightly embarrassed smile and sits down in his chair. He glances at John and gives him a small smile. The teacher then returns to a professional, composed stance and begins explaining to the class how today's lesson will go.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

Alright class, today we won't be using any musical instruments.

STUDENTS

Ahhhh!

the students groan, disappointed they won't be using instruments.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

I know, I know, it's disappointing, but before we get to playing any instruments, we're going to talk about music and why it matters.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

Since this is your first class, and we won't be using instruments today, our session will last about 25 minutes. Future classes will be longer, alright

STUDENTS

(all talking at once,
excited)

Yes!!

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN

(calm but engaging)

Okay, class... listen up. Music isn't just about playing notes or making pretty sounds. It's a language... a way to express emotions that words sometimes can't. Understanding music is understanding the world around us.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

(walking slowly among
students)

When you feel a beat, a melody, you're feeling rhythm, history, culture... music connects people, builds empathy, and even helps the brain develop in amazing ways. That's why we're going to start by understanding it before playing any instruments.

MUSICAL TEACHER:DEAN (CONT'D)

(pausing, making eye
contact with students)

And most importantly... music is about listening. Listening to yourself, listening to others. When you learn to listen, you'll be able to create something that truly touches someone.

While the teacher is explaining, John starts having a silent anxiety attack. His breathing becomes slightly labored, and flashes from his past begin to surface in his mind.

FLASHBACKS - INT. STEPFATHER'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON - PAST

Distant, muffled voices.

The image is fragmented, like a broken memory.

John, 12-13 years old, is kneeling on the floor. The surface is rough. His body shakes with fatigue and fever. His face shows exhaustion and fear.

JOHN'S MOTHER stands in the background, frozen, caught between fear and silence. She says nothing.

The STEPFATHER's voice comes off-screen, cold and authoritarian.

STEPFATHER(O.S.)

You're staying on your knees for one hour.
You don't get up to use the bathroom.
You don't get water. You got that?
And if you try to move... you'll stay there for another hour.

Quick cut.

John, outside, under the sun. He grips a hoe almost bigger than him. His breathing is heavy. Sweat drips from his face. He pauses for a second.

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

I said do it right.

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

When I come back, I don't want to see a single spot left.

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

Not one.

(Beat)

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

And don't test me. You know what happens when you do.

John swallows hard and continues, even clearly sick.

Another cut.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

John is standing, curled slightly, while the stepfather paces around him, intimidating

STEPFATHER

You're worthless.

STEPFATHER (CONT'D)

If I wanted to, no one would protect you.

The camera slowly closes in on John's face.

His eyes are full of tears, but he doesn't cry. He's learned that crying makes it worse.

Heavy silence.

The memory begins to blur, the sound turning into a distant hum.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MUSIC CLASSROOM - PRESENT

The PROFESSOR's voice returns, distant.

Tyler's voice fades back in, distant at first

TYLER(O.S.)

John?

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

Hey...John?

John's eyes are filled with tears.

He blinks repeatedly, trying to hold them back, but it's useless.

Their eyes meet.

John looks at Tyler – embarrassed, overwhelmed.

Suddenly, he stands up.

John rushes out of the classroom.

The music teacher stops mid-sentence.

He looks toward Tyler, confused.

The classroom falls silent.

Some students exchange looks.

STUDENT #1

(Whispering)

What a weird guy

A few quiet chuckles ripple through the room.

Tyler looks at the teacher, his face pale – scared, desperate.

For a brief second, their eyes meet.

Without saying a word, **Tyler** suddenly stands up.
 He rushes out of the classroom, not asking for permission.
 The door swings shut behind him.
 The room is left in stunned silence.

EX.OUTSIDE THE MUSIC SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

John sits on a bench outside the music school, his eyes filled with tears, holding them back as best he can.

Tyler appears a few steps away, breathing a little hard, clearly panicked from searching for him. He spots **John**.

Tyler slows down as he approaches, careful not to startle him.

He sits down beside **John**, leaving a small, respectful space between them.

For a moment, neither of them speaks. The air is heavy, quiet.

Tyler lets out a soft sigh and looks at **John** with a worried, but gentle expression – concern mixed with genuine care.

TYLER

Hey, man... do you wanna tell me what happened in there?

For a few seconds, **John** doesn't respond.

His head stays down, eyes fixed on the ground, as brief flashes of memory flicker through his mind – fragmented, silent, overwhelming.

As **Tyler** is about to speak again, **John** cuts him off, his voice low and shaky.

TYLER (CONT'D)

It's okay, man, if you don't–

He stops mid-sentence as **John** interrupts.

JOHN

I... I don't know how to explain it... those old memories... they're coming back.

Tyler keeps his eyes on **John**, listening closely, not interrupting – giving him space as **John** continues to talk, his voice still unsteady.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I try to lie to myself, you know...

JOHN (CONT'D)

That everything's fine, that nothing's wrong with me...

JOHN (CONT'D)

But the truth is...

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm lying to myself.

Tyler lets out a soft sigh, understanding.

TYLER

Man... I'll never really understand what you're going through.

TYLER (CONT'D)

I may not have lived through what you lived...

TYLER (CONT'D)

But I'm here man...

TYLER (CONT'D)

I'm here if you wanna open up and tell me.

John looks at **Tyler**, his eyes filled with tears.

Despite that, he gives a small, genuine smile, relieved to know **Tyler** is there with him.

TYLER (CONT'D)

So... do you wanna go back in there?

TYLER (CONT'D)

We don't have to.

John looks at him for a moment, thinking

JOHN

No... no, no...

JOHN (CONT'D)

That's enough for today.

TYLER

Okay... but what do we do now?

John stays quiet for a moment, thinking

JOHN

There's a lake around here, right?

Tyler looks at him, confused.

TYLER

A lake?

TYLER (CONT'D)

Yeah, i guess.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Why?

JOHN

I like going to a lake and just sitting there.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Watching the ducks and stuff, it calm me down.

TYLER

Ohh, get it.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Well, if that's helps you...

TYLER (CONT'D)

Well,Im in.

Tyler gives John a small smile.

John looks back at him.

and smiles in return.

Tyler looks at him, then stands.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Hey, let's go, come on.

John stands up

The two of them start walking down the street,
side by side.

A soft music begins to play in the background.

The music keeps playing underneath.

Tyler stops at a small ice cream shop.
He returns with two ice creams,
handing one to John without saying a word.

They continue walking side by side,
the lake waiting ahead.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. LAKE - SUNSET

Tyler and **John** sit side by side,
facing the lake.

The water reflects the colors of the sunset.
Ducks glide slowly across the surface.

They eat their ice cream in silence for a moment.

John looks at **Tyler**, then speaks.

JOHN

Do you get it now?

JOHN (CONT'D)

Why I like being here?

Tyler keeps looking around the place.

He nods slowly.

TYLER

Yep.

JOHN

You know... places like this bring me
calm.

JOHN (CONT'D)

They take me away from the noisy
world

Tyler looks at him.

TYLER

Yeah, i get you bro.

Tyler looks back at the lake,

then turns to **John**.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Do you want to tell me what you saw?

John looks at Tyler,
slightly confused.

JOHN

What do you mean...

JOHN (CONT'D)

What i saw?

Tyler lets out a soft sigh.
He keeps his eyes on the lake.

TYLER

At school...

TYLER (CONT'D)

What came back to you?

JOHN

Oh... well...

JOHN (CONT'D)

(Thinking)

I just...

John takes a deep breath.
He hesitates for a moment,
then gathers the strength to speak.
John looks down, his hands trembling.
He swallows hard.

JOHN (CONT'D)

When I was younger...

JOHN (CONT'D)

My stepfather would make me do harsh work...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Long hours of chores and punishments.

JOHN (CONT'D)

He made me do hard work...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Even when I was sick, with a fever close to 102 degrees Fahrenheit.

Tyler looks at him, his expression tense, stress and concern written all over his face as he realizes what John had to endure.

TYLER

He didn't lay a hand on you, did he?

JOHN

No, he knew he couldn't..

JOHN (CONT'D)

That's why he made me do all that work.

Tyler lets out a soft sigh.

TYLER

And your mom?

TYLER (CONT'D)

Why didn't she stop him?

JOHN

I don't know, i dont know, i really dont know.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Maybe... she was obsessed with him.

TYLER

Okay, okay... but...

TYLER (CONT'D)

How did you get through it?

JOHN

I made a decision..

JOHN (CONT'D)

To go live with my grandmother.

Tyler looks at John.

JOHN (CONT'D)

It was there...

JOHN (CONT'D)
I finally had space to breathe.

JOHN (CONT'D)
To live a normal life.

Tyler lets out a soft sigh.

He looks at John calmly.

TYLER
That's good...

TYLER (CONT'D)
You're okay now, right?

John smiles, a sense of relief and joy in his expression.

JOHN
Of course I'm happy...

JOHN (CONT'D)
Of course I'm happy...

JOHN (CONT'D)
I'm happier than ever.

As John speaks, the soft strains of Billie Eilish's
"Birds Of A Feather" drift in the background,
adding a gentle, calming mood.

"birds of a feather"

*AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M CRYIN'
FOR, I DON'T THINK I COULD LOVE YOU
MORE, MIGHT NOT BE LONG BUT BABY, I,
DON'T WANNA SAY GOODBYE*

JOHN (CONT'D)
Now I don't feel like a bird in a
cage.

John and Tyler smile at each other

after John says the word.

Tyler smiles at Joh

The music swells softly,

surrounding them as they get ready to leave.

TYLER

You're hilarious, man.

TYLER (CONT'D)

But I gotta get home... it's getting dark.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Let's go.

The song is nearing its end,
and the volume swells one last time.

The camera follows Tyler and John
as they leave the lake,
playfully pushing each other.

They start running, laughing,
while the music continues to play.

The camera holds on them,
capturing the moment.

CUT TO BLACK.

END.