

Stillwater Mall

Episode 101
Time After Time (Pilot)

created and written by

Steven Kirk

323-533-7450
steve@StevenKirk.com
StillwaterMall.com

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ACT 1

INT. JAMES' KITCHEN - PRESENT DAY

WE OPEN in the well-appointed kitchen of JAMES HAMILTON (55). The kitchen is decorated for Christmas. Remnants of last night's New Year's Eve party are strewn about. James hands his best friend, BOBBY O'CONNELL (60), a draft beer pulled fresh from the Kegerator.

JAMES
(holding up his mug)
Cheers!

BOBBY
Happy New Year, buddy.

Bobby CLINKS mugs with James.

KAT HAMILTON (55), and MADDIE O'CONNELL (57) enter the kitchen, putting on their jackets.

KAT
We'll be back in about an hour.

Maddie nonchalantly takes Bobby's beer, downs about half of it, and hands it back to him.

MADDIE
(to Bobby)
I saved you some.
(to Kat)
What? You're driving.

Everyone looks to Kat for a response. She smirks, takes James' beer and drinks it all, handing him back the empty mug.

KAT
(calling off camera)
J.J.! You're driving!

J.J. (O.C.)
Okay, mom!

J.J. (20s), James and Kat's son, enters the kitchen. Kat holds up the keys. Without stopping, he takes the keys and heads out the door.

J.J. (CONT'D)
Bye dad! Bye Mr. O'Connell!

Not to be outdone, Maddie takes Bobby's beer back and finishes it. She hands the empty mug to James.

MADDIE

(to Bobby)

Sorry, babe.

(to James)

He's gonna need a refill.

JAMES

I ain't refilling these until you
two leave.

Kat gives James a quick kiss on the way out. Maddie kisses Bobby, then playfully slaps his face, and follows Kat out the door.

JAMES (CONT'D)

That ever get old?

Bobby smiles and rubs his cheek.

BOBBY

Never.

James starts walking over to get the refills. Kat sticks her head back in the door.

KAT

Honey, don't forget that Marty sent
that box of books over for you to
sign. You promised him he'd have
them for tomorrow.

JAMES

I'm on it.

KAT

Bye!

She's gone again.

BOBBY

Box of books?

JAMES

Yeah, I've got that book signing on
Friday. Marty wanted me to pre-sign
about a hundred copies. He thinks
I'll get through the line faster if
all I have to do is sign their
names.

BOBBY

You think you're gonna pull that many autograph hounds?

JAMES

Had around that many last time. If they don't go tomorrow, they'll slap an Autographed Copy sticker on 'em and put 'em on the shelf.

Bobby checks his watch.

BOBBY

Hey, it's 11:30. You better top those off so we can get started.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

James and Bobby walk past a wall of framed photos, beers in hand. This collection is like a shrine to the duo's past. Pictures of various people in various poses at various areas of Stillwater Mall in the 1980's. Photos include their store, Video Plus, wedding photos, family vacations together, wives and kids, book signings, and movie red carpets.

INT. JAMES' MEDIA ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The media room has four rows of comfy leather theater loungers, with a giant screen in the front of the room. Matching Christmas trees flank either side.

The one thing that's not in pristine condition is a cardboard standee from 1984's Police Academy. This seen-better-days display has missing characters, limbs and heads bent or ripped off. The whole thing is Scotch-taped together, keeping it barely intact.

The wall to the left is filled with framed movie posters of '80s classics, except one. There's a poster for a horror film called "Strangeworld," and Bobby is featured prominently in the artwork. The wall on the right has 8' tall shelves that run the length of the room. They're filled with Blu-rays, DVDs, VHSs, Betas and even LaserDiscs. Interspersed are a variety of movie related tchotchkes and vintage video store countertop displays. Above the shelves is a backlight sign that reads "Video Plus." Bobby plops himself into a seat as James peruses the video wall.

BOBBY

(whistles)

Fancy! You got the place fixed up real nice though, McFly.

JAMES
(looking back to Bobby)
The usual?

BOBBY
Obviously.

JAMES
(smiling)
The usual.

James climbs up the rolling library ladder and plucks a movie from the "B" section, climbs down and takes it to the projector in the back of the room. The lights dim.

"Don't You (Forget About Me)" by Simple Minds STARTS PLAYING.

Bobby refers to the framed posters.

BOBBY
Nice upgrade on the posters. From the store?

James sits next to Bobby, tossing him a box of Raisinets.

JAMES
Yup! And in pristine condition, too. And you said I'd never have a place to hang 'em all.

BOBBY
No, I just figured you'd have 'em thumbtacked to the wall in a shitty little garage in NoHo or something.

JAMES
Well, this was formerly a 3-car garage, so...

James just stops, turns to Bobby, and grins smugly.

BOBBY
Do I have to act all impressed again, or can we just watch the movie now?

They both laugh.

JAMES
You know this makes 40 years today, right?

Bobby just shakes his head. He didn't realize it had been that long.

BOBBY

Jesus fucking Christ! I had no idea! If I'd have known, I woulda baked you a cake, or bought you another car or something.

Bobby pauses. Looks at the box in his hand. Offers it to James.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Raisinets?

They laugh. James holds out his hand and lets Bobby pour some in. He throws some in his mouth, washing it down with a swig of beer.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Breakfast of Champions.

James and Bobby are watching *The Breakfast Club*. On the screen we see the CARD with the Bowie quote:

"...And these children
that you spit on
As they try to change their worlds
Are immune to your consultations.
They're quite aware
of what they're going through..."

DAVID BOWIE

We PUSH IN as the shot of the exterior of Shermer High DISSOLVES to a matching shot of...

EXT. STILLWATER MALL - DAY

SUPER: Stillwater Mall, January 1st, 1985

INT. STILLWATER MALL CENTER COURT - CONTINUOUS

The two-level mall is bustling with activity. A stage is set up in front of a covered 20' structure in Center Court. Shoppers mill about on both levels as chairs and a podium are being set up on stage. High school CHEERLEADERS and a MARCHING BAND are setting up on the floor on either side of the stage.

INT. VIDEO PLUS STOREFRONT - CONTINUOUS

MALL GOERS walk past Video Plus. 80's BOBBY (22) enters, holding two drinks from the food court.

INT. VIDEO PLUS - CONTINUOUS

80'S JAMES (17) is teetering precariously on the counter, trying to put an intricate Police Academy standee on top of a high shelf that holds the VHS stock. James' younger brother, DANNY (15), has a flat top, and dressed all in camo. He throws a football from the other end of the store.

DANNY

Incoming!

Danny WHISTLES a bomb dropping sound. James tries to catch the football, and save the standee. He fails miserably at both. The errant football takes out both James and the display. James falls off the counter, ending up flat on his back and covered in a jigsaw puzzle of cardboard pieces.

JAMES

DUDE!

DANNY (O.C.)

(laughing)

Sorry!

Bobby comes behind the counter and helps James to his feet. Danny smiles from the other side of the counter, very pleased with the mayhem he's caused.

BOBBY

You okay?

JAMES

I will be, after I kick G.I. Jerk-
Off's ass.

Danny LAUGHS, snatches his football and runs out, escaping into the mall. James struggles with the mangled standee. Bobby hands him one of the drinks.

BOBBY

Here, let me. I fix these things
all day long.

JAMES

How's things over at the theater?

Bobby is expertly rebuilding the display in lightning fast time.

BOBBY

Honestly? That's one of the reasons I stopped by. I just got fired. Tom caught me trying to sneak a couple of girls into see Breakin' 2.

JAMES

You tell anybody else about this yet?

BOBBY

Not yet. Why?

JAMES

Because you can't let Electric Boogaloo be signifier.

BOBBY

(confused)

What?

JAMES

You've got a reputation to think about. If anybody asks, tell them you were sneaking them into Terminator.

BOBBY

Good call.

Bobby stand and shows off the reconstructed standee. James nods his approval.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

So here's what I'm thinkin'. We both know your little brother is a royal fuck up, right? I know all about movies, right? Think your dad would bring me on?

A large VIDEO SECURITY CAMERA that has been hanging silently on the wall behind them WHIRS to life, tally light BLARING. The camera NOSILY PANS to the boys. There's a crackle of STATIC from a speaker next to the camera.

JIM (O.C.)

You're hired.

JAMES

That was easy.

The boys toast with their food court drinks. Another crackle of STATIC.

JIM (O.C.)
That standee gonna get put up
today?

The boys snap into action. James climbs back up on the counter, and Bobby carefully hands the standee up. James is just about where he was last time. Bobby stands by, just in case.

KAT (17) enters, carrying two pizza boxes, and has a 35mm camera around her neck.

KAT
Hey!

James looks over his shoulder at the sound of her voice and flashes a huge grin. He loses his balance, arms flailing. He and the standee come down. Bobby tries to catch everything. He never stood a chance.

Kat runs up to the counter, sets down the pizzas and hesitantly looks over. James, Bobby, and the standee are a crumpled mess on the floor. She takes the lens cap off her camera and snaps a few photos.

BOBBY
(to James)
I forgot to ask. Does the job come
with insurance?

Jim's camera swivels down to look at the boys.

JIM (O.C.)
No.

James' arm emerges from under the pile and gives his dad a thumbs up.

JAMES
All good here.

CUT TO:

INT. VIDEO PLUS - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby is now up on the counter, placing the standee on the shelf. Jim's camera WHIRS and moves, watching Bobby.

INT. JIM'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A small black and white monitor shows the store. There's a table top microphone, a joystick, and an ashtray on the desk.

We don't see Jim. Then, a curl of cigarette smoke wafts in front of the monitor as Jim's hand reaches in and keys the mic.

JIM

A little more to the left. Back a little. A little more. There.

Bobby gives the camera a thumbs up. Jim takes his hand away from the mic, stubs out his cigarette, and lights another.

INT. VIDEO PLUS - CONTINUOUS

Bobby leaps down off the counter. Kat hands him a slice of pizza.

KAT

So, you got fired from the theater again, huh? What was it this time?

BOBBY

Got caught sneaking a couple of girls into Br--

Bobby is interrupted by James, who COUGHS LOUDLY.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Terminator. I let 'em in to Terminator. Y'know, a cool movie.

James just shakes his head. Kat's sister, MADDIE (19) enters, struggling with about a dozen assorted purses, and a big stack of textbooks. She unceremoniously dumps everything on the counter, with much of it cascading onto the floor, along with a stack of video boxes. She's either oblivious to the mess she's making, or just doesn't care.

MADDIE

I can just leave these here while they perform, right?

BOBBY

Perform?

MADDIE

Yeah, I got hired last week as a new coach for the Quarrymen cheerleaders, which, right now, means hauling all their shit around.

BOBBY
 (proudly)
 I'm a performer, too.

Maddie looks at him blankly, then looks at Kat and asks,

MADDIE
 (points to the pizza)
 Can I get in on that?

Bobby and Kat reach for the same piece, they fumble it, and it ends up face down...

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 ...on my purse. Thanks.

She grabs her own slice. Bobby grabs some napkins, picks up the fallen slice, sets it on the counter, and starts wiping the sauce from her purse.

BOBBY
 (playing it cool)
 Yeah, I'm an actor, and--

MADDIE
 --Wait, you work at the theater,
 right?

JAMES
 He used to. He works here now.

MADDIE
 That sucks. I was hoping you could
 get my sister and I into Electric
 Boogaloo.

James and Bobby exchange a look.

GEORGE (O.C.)
 I figured I'd find you in here.

Everyone turns, startled, at the sound of the gruff, booming voice of GEORGE BRENNAN (60). He's followed by his vivacious wife, JEANNIE BRENNAN (Late 50s)

KAT
 (meek)
 Hi, daddy.

MADDIE
 (non-plused)
 Hi, daddy.

George nods at them but keeps eye contact with James as he strides right up to the counter. There is a tense moment of silence. James holds his ground. Barely.

JAMES
Hi Mr. Brennan.

George doesn't even blink.

GEORGE
Hamilton.

Jeannie steps in front of George to talk to James.

JEANNIE
Go talk to the girls, George.

Jeannie playfully reaches across the counter and tousles James' hair. She smiles and waves off George.

JEANNIE (CONT'D)
(quietly to James)
Papa bear.

JAMES
(relieved)
Thanks, Mrs. B.

GEORGE
(to the girls)
It's exactly 11:52. The
presentation starts at exactly
12:00.
(to Kat)
You're taking pictures from the
balcony, right?

MADDIE
(same emphasis as her dad)
Exactly.
(slightly condescending)
You two better run along.

JEANNIE
(indicating the pizza)
This for everybody?

James grabs a napkin and puts a slice on it, handing it to Jeannie.

George spies the slice of pizza that was dropped, and reaches for it. James starts to hold up his hand to say something, but Bobby smoothly grabs his arm and stops him. George picks it up and takes a big bite.

GEORGE
I probably paid for this anyway.

Jeannie takes George's arm, leading him away.

JEANNIE

C'mon, George, you don't want to miss your big moment.

George GRUNTS and walks away with Jeannie. She turns back and winks at everybody.

James and Bobby just look at each other, then back to the girls.

BOBBY

Jesus Christ, doesn't your dad ever smile?

MADDIE

You should see his face light up when Kat brings home another straight A report card.

KAT

Come on, Dad is proud of you, too.

MADDIE

(scoffs)

Not since they raised the legal drinking age to 21 and I couldn't run to the store and buy his hooch anymore.

After a moment of uncomfortable silence.

JAMES

Ooookay then. Let's go check out the big reveal.

Maddie finishes her pizza, wipes her mouth, hands the napkin to Bobby, picks up his soda from the counter, and takes a big drink. Bobby is just letting the last few minutes steamroll right over him.

BOBBY

(to Maddie, trying to be supportive)

My dad thinks it's stupid that I want to be an actor.

MADDIE

Yeah, it kinda is though, isn't it?

KAT

Maddie!

Maddie sees that her comment really stung Bobby. She softens, just a little.

MADDIE

I'm sorry. It's just my dad. He pushes me over the edge sometimes.

BOBBY

It's alright.

MADDIE

It's cool you want to act. I mean, look at me. I want to dance, but here I am babysitting a bunch of teenagers.

She turns to Kat and James.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

No offense.

KAT

None taken.

JAMES

Well, some taken.

MADDIE

You'll live.

BOBBY

You'll live.

Bobby grins at Maddie. She manages a half smile and walks away. As the four make their way to the front, James stops and calls back to Jim.

JAMES

Dad! You gonna come and watch the unveiling?

The speaker crackles to life, and Jim just let's out an "are-you-shitting-me" guffaw.

JIM (O.C.)

Ha!

James just shrugs and turns to run after his friends. Mall Cop DOUG O'MALLEY (30), in uniform, enters. As James passes him...

DOUG

I'm just returning these.

JAMES

Hey! Just set 'em on the counter.

Doug walks up to the counter and notices the pizza. He surreptitiously grabs a slice, takes a bite and waves the two video cases at Jim's camera.

DOUG
(loudly)
Hey Jim! I'm just dropping these
off!

He places the boxes firmly on the counter. The Police Academy display implodes and falls to the ground again. Doug doesn't know what just happened, but he's not sticking around to find out. He nervously looks around and scurries out.

JIM (O.C.)
DAMMIT!

ACT 2

INT. VIDEO PLUS RAILING - CONTINUOUS

Maddie, Bobby, and Kat are leaning against the railing, looking down at the stage. James steps in next to Kat, and shuffles closer so their arms are touching. Noticing this, Bobby takes a baby step closer to Maddie, and she nonchalantly slides farther away. Kat swings her camera around to catch the action on stage.

INT. MALL CENTER COURT - CONTINUOUS

The Marching Band is set up STAGE LEFT while the Cheerleaders are preparing STAGE RIGHT. The CONDUCTOR raises his baton and signals the band to begin.

The band PLAYS some appropriate John Philip Sousa MUSIC. The Cheerleaders begin a routine.

FIVE MEMBERS of the Mall Owner's Association sit off to one side of the podium. On the other side are George, Jeannie, and MISS REGINA LEE REEVES (55). Directly behind the podium is a large, framed, older black and white photo of a dark-haired George and the other Association members in the same place, doing a ribbon cutting years ago. Miss Regina stands and steps up to the microphone.

MISS REGINA
(to the Conductor)
Thank you.

The Conductor gracefully swipes his baton, and the band stops.

MISS REGINA (CONT'D)
Good afternoon everybody, and happy
1985! I'm Regina Lee Reeves, and I
own Into The Groove Records right
up there at the top of the
escalator.

There's enthusiastic APPLAUSE from the audience.

MISS REGINA (CONT'D)
As the newest member of the Mall
Owner's Association, it's with
great pleasure that I introduce our
president, Mr. George Brennan.

George stands. The Conductor raises his baton and starts the MUSIC again. George and Miss Regina meet halfway and shake hands, then George steps up to the microphone.

GEORGE
(to the Conductor)
Thank you.

The band plays on, the Conductor in his own little world.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(louder)
Thank you!

The band doesn't stop. The Cheerleaders are almost done building their human pyramid.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(bellowing)
THANK YOU!!

George's voice reverberates through the rafters. The band stops playing in a disjointed mess. The startled Cheerleaders' pyramid clumsily crumbles into a pile of humans.

George closes his eyes to shut out the chaos. He squares his shoulders, plants on a fake smile, and opens his eyes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Welcome, I'm George Brennan,
President of the Stillwater Mall
Business Owner's Association and
owner of Bicentennial Male
Clothiers.

George holds for applause. There is none. An uncomfortable moment of silence. The only sound is Kat's camera shutter clicking. His fake smile fades to a very real scowl.

INT. VIDEO PLUS STOREFRONT - CONTINUOUS

Kat and Maddie start CLAPPING. James and Bobby join in.

INT. MALL CENTER COURT - CONTINUOUS

Others join in with a smattering of GOLF CLAPS. George shoots a quick look up to his daughters and gives a slight nod.

INT. VIDEO PLUS STOREFRONT - CONTINUOUS

James brown-noses a hearty thumbs-up to George.

INT. MALL CENTER COURT - CONTINUOUS

George looks away without acknowledging James, and turns his attention to the crowd.

GEORGE

I want to thank Miss Regina for kicking things off this afternoon. For the two or three of you who weren't aware, Miss Regina Lee Reeves here was the lead singer of the group Girl Crush, and 1985 marks the 25th anniversary of their first number one hit, This Boy Loves Me.

The crowd bursts into huge applause ... much bigger than what George received. Miss Regina stands and waves, then looks to George and just shrugs.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

On March 28th, 1976, it was my great honor to stand here with these other distinguished members of the Business Owner's Association and cut the ribbon to officially open Stillwater Mall. If you'll indulge me to wax romantic on that special day, I remember--

Danny's football flies into frame, bouncing off the podium and hitting the microphone. A loud SCREECH of FEEDBACK echoes through the mall. George retrieves the football and looks at the direction that came from.

INT. MALL 2ND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Danny stands with a small group of FRIENDS. He holds out his hands.

DANNY

Sorry, dude! A little help?

INT. MALL CENTER COURT - CONTINUOUS

George looks up at Danny, cocks his arm as if he's going to throw it back, then does a no-look throw...

INSERT - GARBAGE CAN AT THE FOOT OF THE STAGE

... into the garbage can.

BACK TO GEORGE

George turns his attention back to the audience, plants on his fake smile, and takes a breath, ready to get back into his speech.

DANNY (O.C.)

DICK!

George lets a small, self-satisfied smirk flash before returning to the business at hand.

GEORGE

As some of you may remember, we had to turn the water feature off after a few cases of Legionaries Disease were traced back to the waterfall. But thanks to the efforts of a very talented local artist and businesswoman, our signature piece is back in business. Ladies and gentlemen, it's my pleasure to introduce you to the artist, owner of Now! Fashions here at Stillwater Mall, and my beautiful wife, Jeannie Brennan!

Unlike George, the APPLAUSE for Jeannie is immediate and enthusiastic. George claps, but is visibly deflated that Jeannie got a bigger response than him. Jeannie smiles at George, pats him on the cheek, and steps up to the mic.

JEANNIE

Hi everybody, and thanks so much for coming out to spend your New Year's Day with us for this special occasion. 1985 doesn't just signify a new year, there's a whole new energy in the world. The past, the present, and the future all meet right here. And as a reminder of that, giving respect to what came before, and looking ahead to what's yet to come, we're dedicating this new Stillwater landmark. This will stand in demonstration of how the past and the present can not only coexist, but create a beautiful future. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present, Lightfall.

George and the other Association members have moved behind Jeanie and hold a ceremonial golden rope that's attached to the cover. Jeannie motions to them, and they pull the rope. The cover falls away and reveals the original stone waterfall, now covered in cascading, multi-colored neon, flowing down from the top.

The crowd CHEERS and APPLAUDS. Jeannie looks up at her daughters and blows them a kiss. George walks back up to the microphone to continue speaking, but before he can say anything, the band starts PLAYING again. George just gives up and walks away.

ACT 3

INT. VIDEO PLUS RAILING - CONTINUOUS

MADDIE

I gotta run. I gotta take all the
girl's crap back down to them.

BOBBY

(enthusiastically)
You want me to help you haul some
of that stuff?

MADDIE

(shrugs)
Sure, I guess.

Maddie and Bobby head into Video Plus.

JAMES

Well, that was ... interesting.

KAT

(laughing)
Your little brother is
officially on my dad's shit list
now!

JAMES

Yeah, right after me. Mr. Number
One With a Bullet.

KAT

No, no. You're not at the top.
There's a LOT of people my dad
hates way worse than you.

They both smile, then, beat of uncomfortable silence. There is definitely something unspoken between them. Maddie and Bobby exit Video Plus. Maddie is drinking Bobby's soda, and Bobby follows along, struggling with all the purses and books.

JAMES

(to Bobby)
Dude! Where's your leash?

Bobby looks back at James with a scowl and flips him off, but his sudden arm movement causes him to lose the precarious grip he has on the books and purses, and he fumbles to keep a hold of everything.

Miss Regina walks up, shaking her head at Bobby's situation.

MISS REGINA
That boy's got it bad.
(whispering to James)
But you know all about that, don't
you, Jimmy?

Embarrassed, James' eyes widen. He didn't know he was that obvious.

MISS REGINA (CONT'D)
Come on in the store. I've got some
news to share.

INT. INTO THE GROOVE - CONTINUOUS

CARLOS (20) stands behind the counter.

CARLOS
How was it?

MISS REGINA
(smiling)
Most exciting thing to happen all
year. Go ahead and take your lunch,
baby.

Carlos leaves, and Miss Regina sits on a stool behind the counter.

MISS REGINA (CONT'D)
(to Kat)
You okay with picking up some extra
shifts?

KAT
Sure! That would be great!
(suddenly concerned)
Wait. You're not letting Carlos go,
are you?

MISS REGINA
No no no, nothing like that. Your
dad just offered me a job. He wants
me to be in charge of all the
events here in the mall. Everything
from the Battle of the Bands to the
Easter Bunny.

JAMES
What about the store?

MISS REGINA

That's where Miss Kat comes in. I need an assistant manager. I'm not going to be able to stand here all day, much as I'd like to...

(to Kat)

...so I need you and Carlos to pick up my slack. You okay with a few more hours on the weekends and another night or two after school during the week?

KAT

Absolutely!

MISS REGINA

(motioning to James)

Even if it means spending more time sharing a wall with this one?

Kat and James share a look and smile.

KAT

I'll try and make it work.

MISS REGINA

Come in about a half hour early tomorrow so we can go over your new stuff.

KAT

Great!

MISS REGINA

Alright! You two go on and get outta here. Enjoy the rest of the day!

KAT

See you tomorrow!

JAMES

Adios!

MISS REGINA

Happy New Year!

INT. VIDEO PLUS RAILING - CONTINUOUS

James and Kat assume their positions at the railing, shoulder to shoulder.

JAMES

Wow! Assistant manager! You outrank me now, and my dad owns the place! What are you gonna do with all that extra money?

KAT

I heard KISS is coming through in March. We should absolutely go!

JAMES

Oh, yeah!

KAT

Should we invite my sister and Bobby to come with us?

JAMES

On a double-date to KISS?

KAT

I don't know that my sister would consider it an official date.

JAMES

Yeah, but Bobby definitely will! Let's do it!

KAT

I just gotta make sure I can keep my grades up. You know I loaded up this semester so I could cruise through senior year.

JAMES

If you need any help with homework, all you gotta do is bang on the wall, and I'll come running!

James and Kat's eyes lock. They share a smile. After a beat.

KAT

(touched)

You would, wouldn't you?

JAMES

Yes.

James and Kat are leaning against the railing, arms folded. Their hands almost touching. James moves his little finger over, brushing it against Kat's. She smiles warmly and wraps her little finger around his.

PETE (O.C.)
Kat! C'mon! We gotta bounce!

The spell is broken. They quickly move their hands as PETE RATNER walks up and puts his arm around Kat's shoulder.

KAT
(unenthusiastic)
Yeah, okay.

PETE
(to James)
Wassup, James?

JAMES
Not much, y'know, just hangin'.

PETE
(to Kat)
Ready for the big game?

KAT
(No)
Sure.

PETE
(to James)
USC and Ohio State! It's gonna kick
ass! I'm dumping a bunch of bread
on the Bucks!

JAMES
Good luck.

PETE
(to Kat)
Mike said we could come over
whenever. We'll hang and watch MTV
until the game starts.
(to James)
Later, dude.

Pete walks off with his arm around Kat, oblivious to the fact that she really couldn't care less. She looks back to James.

KAT
Bye.

James gives Kat a half-hearted wave.

JAMES
(forlorn)
Bye.

INT. MALL CENTER COURT - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby is sitting on the corner of the stage. James sits next to him. They're both dejected. Maddie is standing a few feet away, talking to the squad. It might as well be a mile.

BOBBY

(nodding towards Maddie)
Seriously, what's the deal?

JAMES

That's just the way she is, man.
I've known her for years. She's
actually pretty cool when she's not
trying to be cool. At least she
doesn't have a boyfriend.

BOBBY

Ratner?

JAMES

Yeah. Fucker just swooped in and
snapped her up like he was picking
up his jock jacket from the dry
cleaners.

BOBBY

Douche...

JAMES

Got any beer at your place?

BOBBY

Always.

The boys stand.

JAMES

My dad said we're closing at 3:00
today. Head over to your place for
a few after?

BOBBY

(glancing back at Maddie)
Oh, yeah.

Danny sneaks up to the garbage can where George threw his football, but before he can retrieve it, a PATRON steps in and dumps wet food garbage into the can and walks off. Danny reaches in, pulls out his now-covered-in-pasta-and-sauce football, shakes it off a little, and scans the crowd for his friends. He spots one, cocks his arm, and calls out.

DANNY
NICK! Incoming!

Danny fires off the ball. There is a THUD and a sickening SQUISH, and Danny winces.

GEORGE (O.C.)
SONOFABITCH!

Danny runs for his life. George chases after him, sloppy football in hand, and pasta on his shoulder.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
HAMILTON!

Jeannie calmly walks through with a handful of napkins following after George. She stops by the boys long enough to tousle James' hair again, and smiles.

JEANNIE
Welcome to the New Age, boys.

Jeannie hurries off after George. The boys look at each other and head for the escalator, leaving the new and improved Stillwater Mall centerpiece standing vigil over Center Court.

END OF EPISODE