

JUST SAY GOODBYE

FADE IN:

EXT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Rain pours outside an old bar like tears at a child's funeral. A MAN(early 40s), toting a cane, slams his shoulder into the heavy wooden door to escape outside. He runs...runs down the wet sidewalk peppered with small shops as fast as one can with a gimp leg. Running from or to something or someone, it's not quite clear.

Other than the occasional lamppost illuminating the rain dripping from his short beard, the darkness hides his features. His cane clacks on the surface with every heaving step. His breath is anxious and labored. It's clear that his life, or someone else's, depends on just how quickly his godforsaken legs can carry him.

After a minute, his cane slips out. He crashes to the ground and grumbles -

MAN  
Son of a bitch!

With enormous effort he rights himself and continues his mysterious journey.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

A bus bursting with elementary kids rides through a modest neighborhood of small houses on 1/2 acre lots. It's pure energy, and too much of it. The noise is clearly wearing on the driver, MRS. JOHNSON (40s).

A couple rows behind Mrs. Johnson sits JESSE PETERSON (6), wearing a plaid shirt with a pocket on his chest. He's the only kid not causing a ruckus; he'd prefer to be anywhere else on earth. A wadded up paper smacks him in the back of the head. He ignores it...and the laughter.

A moment later, the paper's twin hits Mrs. Johnson in the back of the head. A roar of laughter follows. Mrs. Johnson glares at the rear view mirror.

MRS. JOHNSON  
Who threw that? That's the kind  
of thing that'll have us rolling  
in a ditch. Now pipe down or  
you're all gonna get a bus  
ticket!

She's successful at taking down the decibel level to about half. Jess opens his backpack and pulls out a colored pencil sketch of a field of irises lined by trees. 'To Mom' is etched in the top left, and it's signed 'Jesse' in the bottom corner. The depth and shading show a talent beyond his years. He smiles.

Jesse zips his bag. He looks through the windshield to find two police cruisers and an ambulance, with its light flashing silently, perched outside a house about a quarter mile up the road: his house.

MRS. JOHNSON  
(to herself)  
Now what's going on up here?

Jesse sinks in his seat and looks sadly at the picture. He then quickly unzips the small pocket on his bag and retrieves a pencil.

MRS. JOHNSON  
I think something's going on at  
your place, Jesse.

He erases 'mom' from the drawing and inserts 'Mrs. Johnson' in its place.

Mrs. Johnson pulls in front of a cruiser and opens the door. Jesse stares at the picture. Mrs. Johnson looks at him in the mirror.

MRS. JOHNSON  
Jesse? Come on, honey. It'll be  
okay.

Jesse reluctantly stands and walks down the aisle. He hands the drawing to Mrs. Johnson. She looks at it with surprise.

MRS. JOHNSON  
You made this? For me?

He offers up a half-smile in response. She smiles back with sincere gratitude...and sympathy.

MRS. JOHNSON  
Thanks, Jesse. I hope everyone's  
okay.

JESSE  
Thanks.

Jesse walks down the bus steps as though he were walking up steps to the gallows. He moves away from the bus and toward his porch without fear or confusion, as one might think; instead there is no expression.

A young officer opens the screen door and steps outside holding his hand up with gentle concern. Jesse stops. The officer comes down a couple of the stairs and sits down in front of him. The officer locks eyes with the boy and says something indiscernible.

After a beat, Jesse sits beside the officer. The man wraps his arm around Jesse and squeezes his shoulder. Through the screen door is RICK PETERSON (early 30s). Though his features can't be made out well through the screen, he is clean cut and also donning an expressionless face as he watches the officer console his son.

EXT. PARK - DAY

SUPER: 15 YEARS LATER

In a state park parking lot, SARAH MORIN (early 20s), a slight, yet vibrant, woman throws open the driver's door of her compact car.

In a short dress she snatches her high heels from the passenger seat, swings her legs out of the car, and slides the shoes on faster than any Olympian relay runner could pass a baton. She looks at her watch and groans.

In another flash, she retrieves her purse, shoots out of the car and slams the door shut. It's not until she races over to a nearby wedding in progress that it's clear high heels aren't really her thing.

SARAH (V.O.)

If someone told me five years ago  
I would be attending this  
wedding, I would have said they  
were out of their goddamn mind.

Sarah approaches the area with about 80 chairs set up with ribbons. About 90% of the seats are already occupied: the majority taken by guests in their teens and twenties.

SARAH (V.O.)

The first time I ever spoke to  
Jesse Peterson was during Parent  
Career Week in the first grade.

Always the nosy one, I asked why  
his parents hadn't come. When he  
replied that his mother was dead  
and his father was disabled, I  
found my nosiness quickly cured.

Sarah locates an empty seat in the middle of the back row and excuses herself as she shuffles by other guests.

SARAH (V.O.)

So feeling terrible for even  
bringing up the subject, I did  
what any other overzealous six  
year-old would do: I offered to  
let him use my mom.

Sarah takes her seat.

SARAH (V.O.)

Jesse declined my generous offer,  
but that loaded conversation was  
the first of 5,000 to follow  
between us. Some conversations  
were easy, some harder, and one  
would change my life forever.

An imperceptible bride and groom stand holding hands as  
the priest speaks.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: 5 YEARS EARLIER

SERIES OF SHOTS - SOMETIMES IT'S A BITCH GETTING OUT OF  
BED

-- Sarah (now 16) sleeps on her stomach when her digital  
alarm clock first goes off at 5:50 a.m.. Her arm creeps  
from beneath the blanket and drowsily hits the snooze  
button.

-- Again the alarm goes off at 5:59. She hits the alarm a  
bit quicker and harder.

-- The alarm sets off once more at 6:08. This time her arm  
flies out like a trap door spider pouncing on its prey.  
She groans -

SARAH

Okay, okay.

She flips the switch to the lamp on her nightstand,  
rummages through her dresser for clothes. A fairly neat,  
typical teenage girl's room donning a few, mainly scenic,  
posters. A few forgotten Disney dolls lurk about from her  
younger days.

She quickly throws on minimum makeup, grabs her backpack,  
and goes over to a "beaches" calendar.

The third full week in April is marked F-L-O-R-I-D-A on  
each day of that week beginning on Sunday. On Thursday,  
above the "I" in Florida, "Jesse's B-day" is noted with a  
little cake drawing. The first full week is marked with  
X's up to Thursday. Sarah picks up a pen and marks another  
'X' on the Friday before taking her leave.

INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - DAWN

Sarah flies into the kitchen where her mom, PHYLLIS MORIN  
(early 40s), is already emptying the dishwasher in her  
bathrobe. Sarah grabs a glass from the cabinet.

SARAH  
'Morning, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS  
It's 'mom', Sarah, 'mom'. Okay?

SARAH  
Okay, Mooom.

Sarah gives her a peck on the cheek. She pours a 1/4 glass of orange juice and slugs it down like a shot.

PHYLLIS  
Grab some breakfast before you go screeching out of here.

SARAH  
Can't - running late.

PHYLLIS  
At least grab a breakfast bar.

Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH  
Okay.

She digs in the cabinet for said breakfast bar.

PHYLLIS  
You start packing yet?

SARAH  
Are you working on breaking a record?

PHYLLIS  
What do you mean?

SARAH  
How many times can you ask that question in one week?

Sarah opens the breakfast bar while her mom continues unloading the dishwasher.

PHYLLIS  
I don't want to be waiting for you to pack when we're already supposed to be on the plane.

SARAH  
I can take care of myself, Mom. We have over a week before we leave, and it only takes 20 minutes to pack.

PHYLLIS

Ah, but it takes more than 20 minutes to pack the right things. The right things take thought.

SARAH

To impress an oversize rodent?

PHYLLIS

Not just any oversize rodent, Sarah...the big MM.

SARAH

Okay, Mom. You're officially a dork.

PHYLLIS

If I'm a dork, you're half-dork.

SARAH

Thanks.

Sarah devours the nearly half the bar in one bite as she heads for the door leading to the garage.

PHYLLIS

Love you.

SARAH

(mouth full)

Uh, huh. You too.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAWN

The overhead door to a two-car garage opens to a modest mid-size vehicle on one side and a mountain of boxes and all things forgotten on the other. Sarah's bike leans against the mountain.

She grabs the bike and hits the button closing the door. She hops the bike and rolls down the short driveway before noticing her mom's newspaper laying in the street by the curb. She groans, dismounts the bike and tosses the paper up to the front door.

She remounts and finally gets on her way through the suburban dream.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

Sarah owns the streets. She curves back and forth.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah glides up to Jesse's house. Ten years have passed since the last time we saw it. The neglect is obvious; it's barely recognizable save for the multitude of irises, near blooming, guarding the perimeter.

A sad looking 12-speed rests against the porch. Jesse, now 16, wears one of his famed shirts with a pocket over his heart while he waters the plants. He could be quite good-looking if he wasn't so thin. His hair hasn't had a professional touch in some time. Sarah rides right up behind him.

SARAH

Hey.

JESSE

Hey.

SARAH

Sorry I'm a little late.

JESSE

What else is new?

SARAH

What. I'm not always late.

Jesse turns with a look that says she's crazy as he turns off the spigot to the hose.

SARAH

Okay, maybe 95% of the time, but not always.

She watches Jesse roll up the hose.

SARAH

It rained last night.

JESSE

I know.

SARAH

So why water the plants?

JESSE

Don't want them getting thirsty while I'm gone.

SARAH

You're a whack.

Jesse smiles at this and wipes his hands on his pants.



JESSE  
Opinion.

SARAH  
Not opinion - fact.

Jesse grabs his 12-speed and the light backpack sitting on the ground next to it.

JESSE  
Come on or we'll be late - again.

Sarah rolls her eyes as they mount their bikes and ride away from the house.

EXT. LEWISTON HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Along with a few other students, Jesse and Sarah lock their bikes at the one of the bike racks while a line of cars bustle into the parking lot.

SARAH  
Now she wants to add a stop to the Everglades. Really not looking forward to that.

JESSE  
Why not?

SARAH  
I don't know - guess I have this weird obsession with keeping all my limbs intact.

They make their way to the front steps of the school.

JESSE  
You talking about the alligators?  
They won't bother you.

They ascend the stairs along with the rest of the herd.

SARAH  
And why should I chance meeting up with one that just might be PMSing that day?

It's the same reason you'll never catch me doing things like skydiving. Don't want to die falling out of an airplane? Don't jump out of one.

Like all your body parts right where they are? Don't venture into areas inhabited by carnivores with larger teeth than yours.

They walk into the school.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

At his locker, Jesse pulls a notebook and a couple of pencils from his backpack. A few spaces down, Sarah slams the door to her locker.

SARAH  
See you at lunch, Jesse.

JESSE  
Yup.

Sarah walks over to a couple of girls who were waiting for her before they meander off to class.

Jesse hangs his backpack in the locker. Just as the bell rings, CHASE GIBBONS(16), well dressed and quite full of himself, walks by and slams Jesse's head against another locker door. Jesse grabs the side of his head in anguish.

CHASE  
Oh, sorry Peterson, Didn't see you there.

Jesse rubs his head with one hand and steadies himself with the other. He pulls his hand away from his head and finds it with blood.

JESSE  
You're such an asshole, Chase.

Chase laughs and just walks away.

INT. SCHOOL NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jesse walks into the typical school nurse's office, brightly lit by the sun shining in the windows. The lovely nurse, SUE ROBERTS (late 30s, early 40s), organizes medicine bottles in an overhead cabinet. Her face is as bright as the room.

She startles when she hears Jesse clear his throat and say -

JESSE  
Nurse Roberts?

SUE  
Oh, Jesse, what happened now?

JESSE  
Walked into a locker door.

SUE

Okay, let's get over to the sink  
and get this washed, so I can see  
what we're dealing with.

She turns the water on, wets a paper towel, and wipes the  
blood from the wound. She examines the cut again.

SUE

Doesn't look too bad this time.  
Here.

She rips a couple of paper towels off the roll, twice  
folds them in half, and then presses them against the cut.

SUE

Hold this. Might benefit from a  
couple of stitches.

JESSE

I'll be fine.

SUE

Well, I'm going to keep you in my  
little world here for a bit so I  
can be sure you don't have a  
concussion.

JESSE

Fair enough, I guess.

She grabs an ice pack from her first aid kit.

SUE

Once that stops bleeding we'll  
put this on.

She puts the pack on the counter. She leans back against  
it and crosses her arms.

SUE

Jesse, you are by far my most  
frequent customer. Either you're  
the most accident-prone kid to  
ever grace the halls of Lewiston  
High or you must really like me.

JESSE

(smiles)  
You're on to me.

She goes to her small desk and pulls a list from the side  
drawer.

SUE

I'll give your father a quick  
call.

As she picks up the receiver, Jesse snatches it away, startling our small town Mother Teresa.

JESSE

No!  
(quieter)  
Please.

SUE

You know I'm supposed to contact parents when their kid makes a trip in here.

JESSE

Please don't, Nurse Roberts.  
He'll be upset.

Sue chuckles, then takes the phone back.

SUE

Don't worry, Jesse. I'll let him know it's not too serious.

JESSE

What I mean is...he'll be angry.

Her expression turns perplexed.

SUE

What for? It was just an accident.

JESSE

Like you said - I'm the most accident-prone kid in Lewiston.  
Doesn't exactly make him proud.

She considers this for a moment and slowly replaces the receiver.

JESSE

Thank you.

SUE

I don't know if you know this,  
but I knew your father in high school.

Jesse stares at the floor with no reaction.

SUE

I mean, we weren't friends or anything, but he seemed like a good guy.

Again, no reaction.

She smiles at the memory, and we get the impression that she may have had a thing for Jesse's dad way back when. When she notices the boy's silence, she bends a bit and cranes her neck, locking eyes with him before saying -

SUE

You have to promise me, Jesse,  
that you'll be more careful.

After a brief pause, he responds -

JESSE

I'm trying.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Sarah and Jesse sit across from each other at a corner table. Jesse takes a bite of his food while keeping the wounded side of his head turned away from her. Sarah pauses mid-bite when she catches the bump.

SARAH

Jesus. What happened to your  
head?

Without looking at her -

JESSE

Walked into a locker.

SARAH

Walked into it?

JESSE

Uh huh.

She grabs his chin for a better look.

SARAH

You're full of shit.

JESSE

Well, what's your theory. You  
obviously have one.

Sarah looks over at Chase's table, where he's yucking it up with a bunch of his buddies.

SARAH

My guess is Chase, or one of his  
minions, had something to do with  
it.

JESSE

Nice guess, Columbo - Chase it  
was.

Jesse pulls a folded plastic freezer bag from his back pocket. Sarah can't stop gawking at the bump.

SARAH

You really need to teach that kid a lesson.

Jesse dishes the remaining half of his lunch into the bag.

SARAH

And you need to quit saving half your lunch for your dad. Think I want to weigh more than you all my life?

JESSE

Anything else? You seem to have a list for me today.

SARAH

Don't get pissy? Your dad needs to quit blowing all his money on booze and let his son eat a proper meal once in a while.

Jesse holds the baggy of food up and gives it a quick inspection.

JESSE

You call this a proper meal?

SARAH

Granted - a full meal. You haven't eaten a full meal in probably five years.

Jesse zips the food into one of the pockets in his backpack.

JESSE

(smiles)

I'm trying to maintain my figure.

SARAH

Of what? A bamboo stick?

JESSE

Actually, I'm pining that the kibbles stay out just a bit too long and he dies of food poisoning.

SARAH

Nice.

JESSE  
(stands)  
You shouldn't belittle a man's  
dreams, Sarah. See you after  
school.

SARAH  
Library?

JESSE  
As always.

Jesse walks off as the bell rings.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The final bell rings. Herds of students flood out from classrooms and make quick stops at lockers. Incessant chatter fills the halls.

EXT. SCHOOL FRONT - DAY

Jesse and Sarah walk down the steps a bit slower than the rest of the students running to catch buses. They move toward the parking lot and bike racks with their non-bus-taking cohorts.

JESSE  
Start packing yet?

Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH  
Do people really pack an entire  
week before leaving for  
vacations?

JESSE  
Just making conversation.

SARAH  
Sorry. My mom's been bugging me  
about it. Why is packing a huge  
deal to some people?

Do they really think Ralph Lauren  
is going to discover them on the  
Magic Mountain ride at Disney,  
and then forced to walk down a  
freakin' runway on national  
television at a moment's notice?

JESSE  
Never been on a real vacation, so  
I couldn't tell you.

They locate and unlock their bikes.

SARAH  
Shirts, shoes, pants, underwear -  
hairbrush, toothbrush,  
toothpaste, done.

JESSE  
(smirks)  
No bras?

SARAH  
And bras.  
(looks at her chest)  
In my case, it wouldn't be a huge  
loss if I forgot them.

They both smile at this.

SARAH  
I pride myself on being  
self-sufficient - I think I can  
handle a little packing.

Chase walks by with three friends in tow. A high  
maintenance girl, KATE, and two boys, JUSTIN and DAN,  
equally high maintenance. Kate may just be Chase's  
girlfriend given her tethered proximity to him.

Without concern for personal bubbles, Chase throws his  
head right in front of Jesse's. After quick inspection, he  
feigns concern -

CHASE  
Youch. That's some boulder you  
have there, Peterson. What  
happened?

Off to the side, Justin and Dan have a good laugh.

SARAH  
Fuck off, Chase.

CHASE  
(mimicking)  
Fuck off, Chase.

Kate joins in the laughter, but it's clear she doesn't  
really get the humor of the situation.

CHASE  
Man, Peterson - can't you speak  
up for yourself.

JESSE  
I ca-



SARAH  
 Can't you just leave us alone. I  
 think you and your spoiled  
 cheering section -  
     (waves a hand at his  
     followers)  
 have some new clothes to buy,  
 don't you?

CHASE  
 Lighten up, Sarah.

SARAH  
     (looks at Jesse)  
 Let's go.

They mount their bikes and roll through the group.

CHASE (O.S.)  
 Awww, aren't they sweet?

Jesse and Sarah bike onto the main street.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jesse and Sarah cycle their way to the library, traversing  
 the small town roads.

SARAH  
 I'm so sick of that jerk.

JESSE  
     (sarcastic)  
 Yeah. Thanks for coming to my  
 rescue.

SARAH  
 What's wrong?

JESSE  
 Think maybe I could speak for  
 myself once in a while? I do have  
 a mouth. It may not eat much, but  
 I'm pretty sure it can talk.

Sarah is floored. She slows pedaling and Jesse rolls on  
 ahead. After a few moments, she speeds up to catch him.

SARAH  
 You never speak up for yourself.

JESSE  
 Maybe you never give me a chance  
 to.

SARAH

(annoyed)

Sorry you feel that way; thought I was helping. So why don't you ever turn that creep in when he beats the shit out of you then?

JESSE

You know I did.

(mimicking)

Chase? Chase Gibbons? Oh no, Mr. Peterson, you must be mistaken. Chase wouldn't do such a thing.

Must be nice to have complete immunity when your parents are the town Rockefellers. And what cracks me up is they know he's a piece of shit. I hate this fucking place. Can't wait til I'm gone.

Jesse stands up on his pedals and speeds away. Sarah pedals in silence for a few moments before Jesse slows again, letting her catch up.

JESSE

Sorry. It's not your fault I'm a pussy.

SARAH

I should be the one apologizing. You know my mouth is bigger than the Grand Canyon.

They exchange smiles; Sarah speeds up a bit.

SARAH

Hey, let's get moving. Can't stay long today. They're predicting thunderstorms.

EXT. SMALL TOWN LIBRARY - DAY

Jesse's and Sarah's bikes sit in a bike rack near the front door.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Sarah sits at a wooden table. She scribbles in a notebook perched beside an open textbook, while Jesse sits on the floor. He leans against the wall sketching on a drawing tablet propped on his bent knees.

A few seconds pass before he looks up. He studies Sarah for a moment and returns to the sketch; a beautiful rendering of Sarah with the book stacks and picture windows behind her. His talent is obvious.

JESSE  
(continues drawing)  
So when's your flight?

Sarah scribbles her notes and replies without looking -

SARAH  
Not soon enough.

JESSE  
Wow. Guess you really are excited  
about this trip.

She gives her notebook a break and wiggles the pen between her fingers.

SARAH  
I'm finally going on a vacation  
that doesn't involve tents and  
mosquitoes. Of course, I'm  
excited.

JESSE  
Your just excited about Mickey.  
Admit it - you can't wait to get  
your grubby little hands all over  
him.

SARAH  
(smirks)  
Ha-ha. I told you, I'm determined  
to save myself for marriage. It's  
my mom Minnie has to worry about.

Jesse chuckles. Sarah leans back in her chair and stretches her arms. She watches Jesse focus on his drawing.

SARAH  
Why do you sit on the floor so  
much when you draw?

The scratching sound of the pencil ceases. He thinks for a moment then shrugs.

JESSE  
Don't know. Guess I just like  
this vantage point.

SARAH  
Why?

Jesse considers his answer.

JESSE  
I guess it's like being a little  
kid again, you know? Everything

JESSE  
seemed so mysterious when I was  
three feet tall.

Like I remember standing on my  
tiptoes at places like the bank,  
and wishing I could see what cool  
things were going on behind the  
counter.

He turns his attention back to the sketch.

JESSE  
Now that I'm taller, I found out  
there are no mysteries;  
everything's just a big bore now.

SARAH  
(chuckles)  
You're 16 - you make it sound  
like life is over already.

JESSE  
Isn't it.

SARAH  
I don't think so.

JESSE  
Trust me, it is. For me anyway.

SARAH  
(brow furrows)  
What's that supposed to mean?

Jesse says nothing.

SARAH  
Hey.

Jesse contemplates whether to answer, but a roll of  
thunder in the distance saves him from any heavy decision.

Sarah's eyes widen at the sound. She snaps her head toward  
the window and then back at Jesse, who sits unfazed. Sarah  
immediately stands and shoves her materials into her pack.

SARAH  
Let's go.

JESSE  
It's not even close yet.

SARAH  
I wanna be home before it is.

Another distant roll of thunder. Sarah urgently pulls  
Jesse to get up.

JESSE

Man, you're a serious wimp with these thunderstorms. How many times do I have to tell you it's just -

SARAH

(places hand on chin)  
Angels bowling? Oh, yeah, and the lightning is just God taking pictures of the Earth, right?

(Jabs Jesse in chest with index finger)

Well, first of all, you know I don't believe in God, and the truth is, lightning is a huge discharge of electricity measuring about 54,000 degrees Fahrenheit, which kills about 100 people and injures another 500 every year - so don't call me a wimp -

(punches his shoulder)  
- and say it's nothing to be afraid of.

Impressed, Jesse rubs his shoulder.

JESSE

Fair enough.

(packs up)

You're still the only person I know who checks the Doppler radar before showering.

Jesse is moving a bit too slowly for Sarah.

SARAH

I'm gonna take off, okay?

JESSE

Sure. Hey, you feel like going to the lake tomorrow? I want to draw a sunrise there.

Another roll of thunder - louder this time. Visibly nervous, Sarah responds -

SARAH

What time?

JESSE

Six-thirty?

SARAH

Six-thirty? It's Saturday.

JESSE

Oh, right.

(rests head on palm and taps  
his temple)

Hmmm, maybe I can call Mother  
Nature and see if we can work on  
the sun rising a bit later  
tomorrow, 'cuz my buddy Sarah  
needs her beauty sleep.

Resigned, Sarah sighs and rolls her eyes.

SARAH

Okay, six-thirty. When I become  
President, I'm lining up all you  
early risers and having you shot.

Sarah turns to leave.

JESSE

I'll meet you at your house - be  
ready.

Already half-way to the door, she blurts -

SARAH

Don't worry. I'll be ready.

Sarah flies out the door, while Jesse follows behind  
without a care in the world.

INT. RICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse opens the door to his father's room and flips the  
switch on the wall. The room is well lived in, but not  
well kept.

A dingy bedspread lies balled up on half of the bed, while  
the rest of the room is peppered with various liquor  
bottles and dirty clothes. The room is perhaps more  
uninviting to a guest than a bed of poison ivy, all save  
one dresser: meticulously kept with only an empty vase and  
a few perfume bottles lined up in perfect formation.

Jesse runs his hand behind the headboard where he collects  
a taped key. He kneels beside the bed, runs his hand  
beneath it, and pulls out a large metal lock box.

He places the box on the bed without getting up. He slips  
in the key and lifts the lid revealing a black revolver.  
He takes up the gun and weighs it thoughtfully in his hand  
before quickly turning the gun on one of the pillows and  
pretending to shoot it.

He sets the gun on the bed and takes up a photograph. He  
has seen the picture before for he is endeared by it. He  
stares at it for a second, rubs his thumb over it a couple  
of times, then brings it to his lips for a kiss.

He sets the photo back in the box and picks up the gun. He aims once again at the pillow before returning the weapon to the box.

He closes the lid, locks the box and slides it back home. He walks over to his father's bureau where he finds a roll of tape. He rips off a piece and tapes the key back to the rear of the headboard.

He walks to the door, turns and gives the room one last look before he snaps the light back off.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse sleeps. His feet hang over the side of his long outgrown twin bed. He stirs briefly when a door slams shut, but quickly tucks his feet beneath his blanket and turns over.

A few moments pass - then an enormous crash rips through the dark. Jesse tears off his blanket and leaps from the bed in his boxers.

INT. JESSE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jesse runs in to find his father, now in his early 40s, unkempt and plainly drunk, lying beside an overturned chair, a cane and a broken beer bottle.

His speech matches his physical condition -

RICK

Shhiiit.

Jesse walks over with some concern, but no surprise. He reaches to help his father.

JESSE

Come on, Dad.

RICK

I'm fine! Leave me alone.

Rick fumbles for his cane. With no small effort, he places it back on end and grabs the kitchen chair to hoist himself up again. Jesse watches on with folded arms.

JESSE

Yeah, you're fine. Just perfect.

RICK

It's this damn leg again, that's all.

Jesse scoffs at this as he sits down on one of the kitchen chairs, and again folds his arms.

JESSE  
Yeah, that's all.

Jesse jerks back as Rick snaps his cane up to his son's face with surprising velocity. With a glare, he spits -

RICK  
Don't you dare take that tone  
with me, you little punk.

At this, Rick loses his balance and quickly rights the cane back on the floor to steady himself.

RICK  
So where's my food?

Jesse scoffs and shakes his head.

JESSE  
Are you really asking me that  
question? It's where it always  
is.

RICK  
I'm not kidding, Jesse. Better  
cut the shit. When I ask you a  
goddamn question, you just answer  
it - got me?

Without acknowledging Rick's request, Jesse stews with his arms folded. At this, Rick snaps his cane up again with amazing accuracy - this time shoving the end violently against the side of Jesse's head.

RICK  
Got me?

Jesse nearly falls to the floor. He straightens himself while rubbing his neck, then locks eyes with his father.

JESSE  
Yeah, I got it.

RICK  
Good.

Rick makes his way to the fridge. He opens the nearly barren appliance and pulls out the storage bag of food Jesse had packed earlier in the day.

Rick opens a cabinet, takes out a plate, and unceremoniously dumps the food out. He then sits, eating the food cold.

Jesse gets up and pours himself a glass of milk before taking up the seat across from his father. He takes a sip, sets the glass down, and wraps his hands around it as he watches his father scarf the "leftovers".



JESSE

You're gonna kill yourself one of these days.

RICK

I'm hoping sooner than later.

(he looks up)

Since when do you care?

Jesse shrugs. Rick takes another bite. Before he's quite finished, he continues -

RICK

Well, don't worry yourself about me. I'm not worth worrying about - no one's worth worrying about: shit'll happen either way, so no sense wasting your time on worry. Don't you think?

Jesse shrugs again.

JESSE

I suppose.

RICK

You 'suppose'?

(waves his fork)

Well, why don't you go on and suppose back in your room so I can finish my meal in peace.

When Jesse doesn't move, Rick shoots him a glare to drive the point. Jesse quickly swallows the last of his cow juice and rinses the glass. He starts leaving the kitchen, but turns in the doorway.

JESSE

Did you ever bother worrying about Mom?

Rick pauses mid-chew, then slowly finishes before swallowing.

RICK

I wasted half my adult life worrying about your mother - look where it got me.

Jesse takes his leave. Rick takes up another fork-full of food, but then sets it on the plate. He pushes it away, places his elbows on the table, and cradles his forehead in his hands.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Sarah rolls over on her bed. She peels her eyes open to see the time: 6:27. She bolts upright.

SARAH

Shit!

Sarah leaps out of bed, then scrambles to her dresser in a frantic search of a bathing suit. While throwing the suit on, she peeks out the window to see the sun is just starting to make its appearance.

She throws a pair of shorts and a t-shirt over the bathing suit when the doorbell rings. She looks at the clock again: 6:30.

SARAH

Does he always have to be right  
on time?

In a sing-song voice, her mom announces -

PHYLLIS (O.S)

Sarah! Jesse's here!

SARAH

I know. Be right there.

Sarah walks over to her calendar and marks an "X" on Saturday. She runs off screen into her bathroom to grab a beach towel, then back through her room and out the door.

INT. SARAH'S KITCHEN - DAWN

Sarah jogs into the kitchen to find her mother laughing at something Jesse said. Jesse smiles and charges himself with making sandwiches.

PHYLLIS

Look at those sandwiches. You're  
a good man to have around, Jesse.

JESSE

Thanks, Miss Morin.

PHYLLIS

(to Sarah)

Don't those sandwiches look  
great, honey?

While Sarah grabs baggies from the cabinet and shoves in the sandwiches, she retorts -

SARAH

My God, Mom - they're sandwiches.  
Don't think I don't notice you're

SARAH  
little nudges to try and set me  
and Jesse up.

A look of surprised innocence crosses her mother's face.

PHYLLIS  
Who? Me?

SARAH  
I keep telling you we're just  
friends. We already agreed; I'm  
the sister he never had, and he's  
just the brother I never had.

JESSE  
Really? I don't remember that  
conversation. Explains the  
regular beatings you give me  
though.

Sarah shoves his shoulder. Jesse looks at Phyllis.

JESSE  
See?

Phyllis chuckles as she pours a coffee and sits down with  
the morning paper. Sarah loads the sandwiches in a small  
cooler.

SARAH  
Let's go before we miss this  
precious sunrise of yours.

JESSE  
It's more precious than you  
realize.

SARAH  
You know, you could paint a  
sunrise during the summer. There  
are few days I can actually sleep  
in during the school year - now  
those are precious.

Jesse smirks.

JESSE  
Another sunrise is never a  
guarantee...sis.

SARAH  
Please, I can't handle one of  
your philosophical moods this  
early.

Sarah gives her mom a peck on the cheek.

SARAH  
See you later, Mom.

Jesse grabs the small cooler.

JESSE  
Bye, Miss Morin.

PHYLLIS  
Have fun, kids.

Jesse follows Sarah out of the kitchen.

EXT. LOCAL BEACH ON LAKE - DAY

In a t-shirt and jeans, Jesse sketches the lake view while perched on an old bath towel beside Sarah's large and colorful beach towel. Her outer clothing and Jesse's button-up shirt rest across their bikes.

Sarah swims. The water glistens beneath a gorgeous sunrise. Only birdsong and the ripples from her young body moving through the water threaten perfect tranquility. Sarah stands up.

SARAH  
Come in. The water's super nice.

Jesse looks around in mock confusion, then points to himself.

JESSE  
Did you forget who you're talking to?

SARAH  
You don't have to swim. Just put your feet in.

JESSE  
No thanks.

SARAH  
Wimp.

JESSE  
It's a title I'm used to.

Sarah disappears beneath the water again. Jesse resumes his drawing when a Mercedes pulls into the parking area behind him. He turns briefly to find Chase stepping out from the driver's side.

JESSE  
Great.

Justin and Dan follow suit. The three stooges walk to the trunk and pull out towels and a cooler. Chase closes the trunk and is the first to step on the beach.

CHASE

Well, if it isn't our good friend  
Peterson.

Jesse refuses to give Chase the benefit of a reply; he continues to draw. Chase and his minions set up camp about 10 feet behind him.

JESSE

So, what do you think of my new  
wheels, Peterson?

Without looking, he replies -

JESSE

Got your mom's car today?

Dan and Justin snicker.

CHASE

No, jackass, it's mine. Passed my  
driving test yesterday. It was  
sitting in the driveway when I  
got home.

Jesse studies the sunrise for a moment and returns to his sketch.

JESSE

Congratulations. It must be nice  
having everything handed to you  
on a silver platter.

An insult, of course, but Chase takes it as a compliment.

CHASE

I have no complaints. Hey, is  
that your girlfriend in the  
water?

JESSE

It's Sarah. And she's not my  
girlfriend.

CHASE

That's 'cuz you're an idiot. Come  
on, guys.

As Chase lumbers by, he slaps Jesse hard on the back of the head. Justin and Dan follow suit, then run down the rest of the beach and dive into the water. Their hollers over the briskness of the water have sent tranquility running for cover.

Chase swims over to Sarah, and whispers conspiratorially in her ear. She tips her head with a disgusted smirk, then makes her way to shore.

CHASE

Hey, come on, Sarah. Don't leave.  
I was only kidding.

Sarah makes her way over to Jesse. The boys converse in the water - they aren't quite done with their fellow beachcombers.

SARAH

Are you done?

JESSE

Almost.

SARAH

Wanna go?

JESSE

Only if you do.

As Sarah dries off with her back to the lake, the boys step out of the water and make a beeline back toward Jesse.

SARAH

It's bad enough I have to see  
those creeps during the week.

JESSE

Agreed. I can finish this later.

CHASE

Hey, Jesse - learn to swim yet?

Sarah turns to see the encroaching testosterone. She shoots Jesse a warning glare.

SARAH

Just ignore them.

CHASE

How about a little swimming  
lesson?

The boys grab Jesse and yank him toward the water. He tries pulling away. Sarah yells -

SARAH

Leave him alone!

CHASE

We're just teaching him how to  
swim. Relax.

Jesse continues to struggle, then catches Chase in the chest with an elbow. Pissed, Chase returns the favor by pushing Jesse face-first into the sand.

CHASE  
Grab his legs.

Justin and Dan do as instructed and Jesse tries kicking them away. Chase kicks some sand in his face, which turns Jesse focus on removing the sand instead.

CHASE  
Relax, Peterson. It's just a little water.

At this, Jesse let's his body go limp and a dead stare takes over his face as though he's completely left his body. This actually makes it harder for now the boys have to drag him across the last 10' of the shoreline.

JUSTIN  
Kid's gonna break my back.

They pull him into about three feet of water. Jesse tips his head back letting himself fall beneath the surface.

Sarah runs right on their heels, punching each of the boys in the back.

SARAH  
Let him go! You're gonna drown him!

With no struggle coming from Jesse, Chase looks at Jesse's submerged face. His eyes are wide open and it almost appears as if he's smiling.

CHASE  
Let him go. Jesus, he's more of a freak than I thought.

The boys release him, but Jesse continues to sink. Sarah struggles to pull him up by the arm.

SARAH  
Get up, Jesse. Come on!

Jesse finally puts his feet under himself. He rises out of the water with barely a cough.

CHASE  
Nice friend you have there, Sarah. We weren't planning on drowning the stupid son of a bitch.  
(to Justin and Dan)  
Let's get the hell out of here.

Chase and his cronies lumber up the beach and snatch up their belongings.

SARAH  
What the hell was that?

JESSE  
You're right.

SARAH  
About what?

JESSE  
The water is nice.

Sarah is incredulous. Jesse dips his head back to his hairline to straighten out his hair.

SARAH  
I don't understand what I just saw.

Jesse walks out of the water: his t-shirt and jeans suction to his body.

JESSE  
What do you think you saw?

SARAH  
(irritated)  
You looked like you were just letting yourself get drowned. Why didn't you fight them?

JESSE  
We all have to go sometime, Sarah.

SARAH  
Ugh!

Chase puts the Mercedes and reverse and peels out of the lot. Jesse chuckles to himself.

JESSE  
It was comforting to think, since I plan on dying soon anyway, that Chase would end up in jail because of it.

Jesse strips out of the wet shirt and wrings it out.

SARAH  
Cut the shit. You had me seriously scared.



JESSE

I'm fine with it. Just forget it  
ever happened.

SARAH

(dying to protest)

But -

Jesse quickly draws his fingers over her lips and stares  
deep in her eyes.

JESSE

Just once, Sarah. Let it go.  
Okay?

Sarah nods her head. He removes his hand from her mouth  
and turns toward the water as he dries off. Sarah studies  
him as she slowly dries herself as well - quite sure he's  
not the same person she knew yesterday.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Biking down the road, Jesse's wears his button-up shirt  
again. His t-shirt is tied to the handlebar, drying in the  
breeze. His pants are still soaked.

SARAH

I was gonna buy you a new shirt  
for your birthday today. Looks  
like good timing.

JESSE

My birthday's more than a week  
out.

SARAH

Not sure if you know this, but  
normal people generally buy gifts  
a few days ahead.

JESSE

I don't want you spending your  
hard-earned, Mitchell Twins,  
babysitting dollars on me.

SARAH

Will you cut the crap? Besides, I  
won't be spending much; we're  
going to your favorite store -  
(in French accent)  
- La Boutique d'Salvation Army.

They turn a corner.

EXT. SALVATION ARMY STORE - DAY

Jesse's and Sarah's bikes lean against the side of the building.

INT. SALVATION ARMY STORE - DAY

Jesse and Sarah browse through racks of used men's shirts. Sarah pulls out a v-neck shirt with Abercrombie strewn across the chest.

SARAH  
Here's a nice one.

She holds the shirt up for Jesse's inspection.

SARAH  
Not only does it look brand new  
and in style, it costs all of...  
(does a fake drum roll -  
flashes the price tag)  
...\$4.99.

JESSE  
Okay, number one, you know I  
wouldn't be caught dead in a  
clothing brand that rapes people  
on pricing, and two, advertises  
their clothing with of all  
things, nearly nude models, and  
three -  
(leafs through the rack  
again)  
- it doesn't have a pocket.

Sarah looks at the shirt again, then shakes her head.

SARAH  
Buddy, you're killing me with  
your pockets.

She shoves the shirt back on the overfilled rack and resumes her search.

SARAH  
Why do you always have to wear  
shirts with pockets?

JESSE  
Long story.

SARAH  
A story about why you have to  
wear shirts with pockets? How  
long could it possibly be,  
really?

He stops rifling through the shirts. He pauses and sighs before locking with Sarah's eyes.

JESSE

No one knows, Sarah. And if people did, it would cement my rep as a pussy.

SARAH

You're not a pussy.

JESSE

Yeah, whatever.

Jesse considers for a moment, then pulls a wallet-sized picture from his shirt pocket. He reluctantly hands it to Sarah without looking at it. She immediately inspects it.

SARAH

Is this her? Your mom?

Jesse nods.

SARAH

I thought your dad got rid of all her photos.

JESSE

He didn't know about this one.

Sarah looks again at the picture.

SARAH

She was really beautiful, Jesse.

Jesse allows himself a slight smile. He absent-mindedly touches the pocket on his shirt.

JESSE

The week before she killed herself, she came into my room just like any other day, but this time she was different -

FLASHBACK - INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Young Jesse, in a smaller pocketed shirt, leans back against the headboard on his twin bed: the same bed he still sleeps on, but in much better, newer, shape. He draws on a tablet set on his propped knees. His mother sits beside him. With a proud, yet sad smile, she watches him work.

JESSE'S MOM

You're going to be a great artist one day, Jess.

JESSE  
I thought you said I was already  
a great artist.

JESSE'S MOM  
(chuckles)  
You are.

She gets off the bed.

JESSE'S MOM  
It's time for bed. Get your pj's  
on, okay?

JESSE  
(protests)  
Now?

JESSE'S MOM  
If I didn't say in five minutes,  
that means now, yes.

Resigned, Jesse sets down the tablet.

JESSE  
Okay.

He scooches off the bed. As he gets up, his mother takes him gently by the arm and crouches in front of him. A pained, yet determined, look fills her eyes.

JESSE'S MOM  
Jesse -

She takes out the wallet-sized photo.

JESSE'S MOM  
If anything ever happens to me, I  
want you to always remember how  
much I love you.

She slips the photo in his shirt pocket and gently presses her palm against it.

JESSE'S MOM  
Always keep me close to your  
heart, okay?

Jesse looks a bit confused, but nods in agreement. His mother hugs him and quickly leaves the room before Jesse can see she's about to cry.

Jesse watches her leave then opens a drawer to his bureau to grab his pajamas. He pulls the photo from his pocket and studies it for a moment.

JESSE - OLDER (O.S.)  
When I got ready for bed that  
night, I tossed the picture on my  
bureau.

Young Jesse places the photo on his bureau and starts  
undressing.

JESSE - OLDER (O.S.)  
By the time the next morning  
rolled around, I basically forgot  
about it. Hell, I was only six.

FLASHBACK - INT. BUS - DAY

From previous bus scene, Jesse sees the ambulance and  
starts erasing his mother's name from his drawing.

JESSE - OLDER (O.S.)  
But the moment I saw the  
ambulance at my house the  
following week, the conversation  
came back at me like a bullet - I  
knew she was gone before I even  
got off the bus.

FLASHBACK - INT. JESSE'S ROOM - DAY

Jesse sits terrified on his bed, as his father can be  
heard rampaging through the house. The sounds of crashing  
glass can be heard as he throws all framed photos into a  
box.

RICK  
She was never here, understand  
me?!

Jesse hears the back screen door open and slam shut. He  
runs out of his room to investigate.

FLASHBACK - EXT. JESSE'S YARD - DAY

A younger, cleaner-cut, completely mad, Rick is tossing  
the pictures in a fire in the backyard. Young Jesse  
watches mortified through the screen door. He runs back to  
his bedroom.

FLASHBACK - INT. JESSE'S ROOM - DAY

Jesse snaps up the photo of his mother and slips it into  
his shirt pocket. He runs back to the bed, just before  
Rick barges into the room with the small cardboard box.

He snatches two framed photos off Jesse's bureau - each  
containing an image of his mother. Fuming, he walks over  
to Jesse, and sticks his finger in his face, causing Jesse  
to flinch.

RICK

All of them, got me? You have any more photos of her hanging around?

Jesse shakes his head quickly, even though the photo was burning a hole in his chest.

RICK

It's just you and me now. She did this to us. Don't ever forget that. And don't you dare mention her name to me again - ever. Got me?

Jesse again shakes his head in compliance. Rick stands back, then nods his head.

RICK

Good. You're a good boy, Jesse. We'll be okay.

He takes one more cursory look around the room before walking toward the door. He repeats to himself -

RICK

We'll be okay.

Jesse brings his hand over his pocket to make sure his father didn't somehow slip the picture away from him. Confident it's still secure, he rolls over and begins to cry.

INT. SALVATION ARMY STORE - DAY

Jesse smiles forlornly at Sarah and flicks the picture up in his hand before returning it home to his pocket.

SARAH

Why didn't you tell me? Now I feel like a total ass for making fun of your shirts all this time.

JESSE

Don't you feel like you shouldn't have to defend everything you do in life to people, Sarah?

SARAH

But we're friends.

JESSE

Even to friends.

Sarah folds her arms.

SARAH  
I guess - sometimes.

Jesse resumes leafing through the shirts. Sarah follows and, moments later, pulls out a nice plaid shirt...with a pocket. She presents it to Jesse with a smile. He returns the smile.

JESSE  
Perfect.

He takes the shirt and they make their way to the checkout.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

SERIES OF SHOTS - ANOTHER DAMN SCHOOL DAY

-- Sarah's alarm goes off at 5:50. She hits it.

-- She dressed, zipping up her school bag.

-- She marks an 'X' on the Monday of the last school week before her vacation.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Jesse packs the remnants of his lunch in a storage bag. Sarah continues eating.

JESSE  
Library today?

SARAH  
As always.

Jesse closes the storage bag of food in his backpack.

JESSE  
See you after school then.

SARAH  
I'm almost done.

JESSE  
I'm gonna head to class now; I'm always late when I wait for you. Mrs. O'Neil is starting to get pissed about it, and art is the one class I actually enjoy.

SARAH  
You never told me I was making you late.

JESSE  
I don't like messing with your  
routine.

SARAH  
Jesus, Jesse - just tell me  
things, will you? Do you really  
think I'm that fragile?

Jesse throws his backpack over his shoulder.

JESSE  
I'll see you later.

Sarah, confused, watches Jesse leave the cafeteria.

EXT. LIBRARY - DAY

Our familiar bikes mingle outside in the bike rack.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Jesse sits in a chair with his feet propped up on another  
chair. He is, of course, sketching.

Sarah has her head stuck in her studies. She looks up at  
Jesse while she wiggles her pen between her thumb and  
forefinger.

SARAH  
Sorry I snapped at lunch today.

Jesse continues drawing.

JESSE  
No biggie.

SARAH  
I just want you to be cool with  
telling me things. Don't be  
afraid to talk to me, or tell me  
off if you need to. You're my  
friend, Jesse: my best friend.

Jesse looks up somewhat serious, but then smiles.

JESSE  
Okay.

Sarah watches Jesse as he focuses back on his sketch.

SARAH  
I haven't seen you do homework in  
over two weeks - what's up?

Jesse stops mid stroke, but gets his pencil moving again.



JESSE  
Haven't been getting any.

SARAH  
Bullshit.

JESSE  
What I mean is...I haven't been  
getting much, so I've been  
finishing it in class.

Sarah shoots him a doubtful look. Jesse feels her doubt.

JESSE  
What?

SARAH  
You're full of shit. You always  
wait to do your homework here.  
What's up?

JESSE  
Are you my mother now?

SARAH  
Guess someone has to be.

Jesse rises from his chair and starts packing.

JESSE  
I'll see you tomorrow.

Sarah grabs him by the arm.

SARAH  
Something's up, Jesse. I can  
smell it.

Jesse ignores her, and zips up his bag.

SARAH  
You just said you would talk to  
me for Christ's sake!

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Shhhhhh!

Jesse looks at Sarah with a resigned look that puts her  
immediately on guard. He sits back down in a seat across  
from her, then leans in to whisper -

JESSE  
I haven't been doing my homework  
because I won't be here to see my  
next report card anyway.

SARAH  
What do you mean? Are you moving?

JESSE  
No.

SARAH  
Oh God, you're running away.

JESSE  
In a way, I guess.

SARAH  
'In a way'?... 'You guess'?

JESSE  
Listen, I should really go.

Sarah snags his arm again and makes it clear - he's going nowhere. So Jesse sighs and falls back in his chair. He leans in again -

JESSE  
I'm checking out, Sarah.

It takes Sarah a moment before it hits her. She leans into Jesse, just inches from his face.

SARAH  
What - the - fuck are you talking about?

JESSE  
Listen, I mentioned it to you at the lake the other day - that I planned on dying soon anyway.

Sarah is speechless.

JESSE  
I'm just sick of it all: my father, the kids at school, this whole fucking existence. I'm killing myself over spring break.

Sarah slumps in her chair.

JESSE  
After the last break, I promised myself I'd never spend another one with my dad. I just can't take him anymore.

Sarah leans back in to Jesse.

SARAH

Then don't. Come with me and my mom to Florida.

Jesse shakes his head.

JESSE

I can't do that. I have no money.

SARAH

(animated)

We'll pay for it. I'll talk to my mom. You know she loves you. It'll be a hell of lot more fun with you there anyway.

JESSE

It's not just about hanging here over break. I'm tired of getting pissed on every day of my life.

SARAH

Jesse, it's just high school bullshit. Wait until you get out of there; things will be better, I promise. No more Chase, no more

-

Jesse stands up and grabs his bag.

JESSE

I'm sorry, Sarah. I shouldn't have told you. There are some things even friends shouldn't know.

Jesse leaves before Sarah can gather a response. She sinks back, deep in her seat.

SARAH

Shit.

She stares blankly at her textbook sitting on the table.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Sarah's same textbook now sits on the cafeteria table. Sarah sits across from Jesse, staring in disbelief as he swipes up the remains of spaghetti sauce with a piece of French bread.

SARAH

Didn't think I'd ever see this day come again.

JESSE  
(swallowing)  
What?

SARAH  
You...eating an entire meal.

He takes a slug from his milk carton.

JESSE  
Gonna be dead in less than two  
weeks - don't want to leave a  
scrawny corpse.

Sarah leans across the table, and whispers harshly -

SARAH  
Will you cut that out, please?

JESSE  
What?

SARAH  
This suicide bullshit.

JESSE  
It's not bullshit, Sarah. I've  
never been more serious. And you  
were right by the way.

SARAH  
About what?

JESSE  
About talking to your friends.  
Since confessing last night, I  
feel like the world's been lifted  
off my shoulders.

Sarah falls back in her chair and scoffs -

SARAH  
And thrown onto mine. Thanks.

JESSE  
Listen, you were the one pushing  
for all my inner thoughts. Well,  
now you have 'em.

You can't backtrack now and pick  
and choose which ones I throw out  
there.

Sarah engages him again.

SARAH  
I never dreamed I'd hear you  
utter anything as idiotic as  
suicide.

Chases watches Sarah with curiosity from a nearby table as  
he sits with Kate, Justin and Dan.

JESSE  
Did you know almost 5,000 teens  
commit suicide every year?  
Lindsay Stevens did a report on  
it in health class last week.

SARAH  
(rolls her eyes)  
Jesus.

JESSE  
I'm actually almost happy, you  
know? Now I can just enjoy these  
last few days with my best friend  
without the awful feeling I had  
trying to hide it from you.

Whether you knew my plan or not,  
it's going to happen. I'm just  
asking you to respect my wishes.  
Don't take it on as a burden.

And don't...don't tell anyone  
else or, I swear, I'll just take  
care of it earlier.

SARAH  
You're kidding me, right?

Jesse shakes his head. He then takes Sarah by the hand and  
rubs it tenderly.

JESSE  
Please, Sarah.

Chase glares at the two holding hands. Kate catches him  
staring and waves her hand in front of his face.

Sarah slips her hand away from Jesse. She nods toward the  
empty food tray.

SARAH  
So, what about your dad?

JESSE  
(looks at the tray)  
This? He'll probably kill me. I  
figure a potential earlier exit  
is worth having a full stomach  
for once.

Can you come over my house today?

SARAH  
I guess so.

JESSE  
Great. I wanna show you  
something.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sarah sits on the porch steps watching Jesse water the  
irises.

SARAH  
You sure have a thing for these  
plants.

JESSE  
I helped my mom plant them the  
year before she died.

SARAH  
Oh.

JESSE  
She said if I took good care of  
them they'd stay with me year  
after year. Only reason I'm still  
here is I wanted to see them  
bloom one more time.

Sarah opens her backpack, pretending not to have heard his  
comment.

SARAH  
(scoffs to herself)  
The only reason.

JESSE  
Should bloom in the next few  
days.

She whispers to herself sarcastically -

SARAH  
Wonderful.

JESSE  
What's that?

SARAH  
Nothing. So what is it you wanted  
to show me?

Jesse wipes his wet hands on his pants. He picks up his  
bag from the stairs, and walks up into the house. Sarah  
follows.

INT. RICK'S ROOM - DAY

Sarah follows Jesse into his father's room. He runs his hand along the back of the headboard to collect the taped key. Sarah looks around the disheveled room.

SARAH  
I think your dad needs a woman's touch around here.

JESSE  
In more ways than one.

Jesse pulls the lock box out from hiding, making Sarah nervous.

SARAH  
What if he shows up?

JESSE  
I told you - the guy never comes home before last call.  
(to himself)  
God forbid he might have to interact with his son.

Jesse opens the box revealing the gun. Sarah immediately crosses her arms.

SARAH  
Great. Did you want me to hold your hand for the big occasion?

JESSE  
Relax. It's not about the gun.

SARAH  
(sarcastically)  
Oh, well that's a relief.

Jesse places the weapon on the bed.

SARAH  
Do I really have to look at that?

JESSE  
Wow, I always thought you were the tough one.

While he relocates the gun under the bed, Sarah spills with disgust -

SARAH  
So, that's your plan?

JESSE  
That's the plan.

SARAH  
How can you be so goddamn  
nonchalant about this? And why a  
gun? Isn't that a bit messy?  
Can't you just use pills or  
something? Jesus! What the hell  
am I saying?

JESSE  
Pills are never a guarantee. Fuck  
it up, and you're just another  
pathetic loser stuck in the loco  
ward sucking down happy pills for  
the rest of you life. Anyway,  
this is what I wanted to show  
you.

Sarah reluctantly composes herself, as Jesse hands her the photo: a picture of his parents standing in front of his house in its younger, pre-years-of-neglect. They beam beside a "SOLD" sign perched atop a "House for Sale" sign.

Sarah studies the picture with interest.

SARAH  
He kept a photo after all? Man,  
look at your house. I almost  
didn't recognize it. It  
looks...good.

Sarah looks up at Jesse.

SARAH  
Sorry. That didn't come out  
right.

JESSE  
You kidding? I thought the same  
exact thing.

SARAH  
(quietly)  
Your parents actually look happy.

JESSE  
I know.

SARAH  
How'd you find the key?

JESSE  
Saw my dad get it one night as I  
passed by to hit the bathroom.



When he took out the photo, I saw something I never thought I'd see.

SARAH

What?

JESSE

Pain. I knew he couldn't be a total heartless bastard if my mom fell in love with him.

SARAH

What happened to them? Why do you think your mom did it?

JESSE

No idea. I tried asking him a couple years later -

(in a deep, mean voice)

- 'Cuz she was fucking crazy, that's why.

If she wasn't happy, I don't know why she didn't just get a divorce like normal people do.

SARAH

Oh, yeah, my parents were perfectly happy after divorcing.

Sarah hands the photo back to Jesse and picks up the box.

SARAH

So what else does he keep in here?

JESSE

That's it.

She holds up the box in confusion.

SARAH

You sure? Did you already check the rest of it?

JESSE

What do you mean?

SARAH

Well look - the bottom doesn't go deep enough.

(holds box up at angle)

I think there's another compartment.

Jesse sets the photo on the bed and grabs the box. He props up the newly discovered divider by pushing on one side of it.

He pries out the metal divider, revealing a yellowed envelope with "Rick" handwritten across it. Jesse looks at Sarah, then slowly picks it up.

SARAH  
Do you think it's...

Jesse shakes his head -

JESSE  
I don't know.

He quickly hands it off to Sarah like it's a ticking time bomb.

JESSE  
Open it.

Sarah throws her hands up.

SARAH  
I don't think I should, Jesse.

JESSE  
Please.

Sarah reluctantly takes the envelope. She pulls out an equally yellowed paper, unfolds it and reads.

JESSE  
So is it? The suicide note?

She slowly nods.

JESSE  
Read it - out loud.

She responds with a pained expression.

SARAH  
Maybe we should just put it back.  
This doesn't seem right.

Jesse's brows furrow.

JESSE  
Just read it.

Sarah shakes her head.

JESSE  
Why? What's wrong?

He snatches the paper and reads aloud -

JESSE

Rick, I'm so sorry. Sorry that I'm leaving you with the burden of raising a child on your own. Sorry that I'm just not strong enough to go on while that kid exists.

I should be over it, but I just can't get past it. God knows I tried, but it's been six years and every time I see him I feel like I'm being punched in the gut.

I ask that you forgive me. I know just how hard it will be, but please do it, for your sake and for Jesse's. He'll need you more than ever now.

You may not believe it, but I really do love you. That's why this decision has been more agony than you could imagine. I hope that without my mental burdens, your life will be easier to bear. Be well. Love forever, Olivia.

Jesse paces frantically as he continues examining the letter.

JESSE

It was me. She killed herself because of me.

SARAH

That's crazy. It wasn't you.

Jesse looks at her like she's the crazy one, then reads the letter -

JESSE

'Every time I see him I feel like I'm being punched in the gut.'

Jesus Christ, even my own mother couldn't stand me.

SARAH

She must have had post-partum depression or something.

JESSE

For four years?!

SARAH  
Jesse, it was nothing you did.

Jesse runs his hand through his hair. He's unable to tear his eyes from the letter.

JESSE  
(to himself)  
She's dead because I was born.

This pisses Sarah off.

SARAH  
Stop it, Jesse. Did you ask to be born?

JESSE  
No.

Sarah carefully slips the letter from Jesse's hand. She lifts his head, gazes intently into his eyes, and softly comforts -

SARAH  
Then it was nothing you did.

She wraps her arms around him. For a moment he stands like a statue before reaching around to accept her embrace. He buries his face in her neck and quietly sobs.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse sleeps, when O.S. the front door closes. Rick's cane thumps across the linoleum floor. The fridge opens - glass rattles until an irritated Rick blurts -

RICK (O.S.)  
What the fuck?

Rick's cane connects harder, quickly closing in on Jesse's room. Rick slams the door open and snaps the light on.

RICK  
Hey! Where's my food?

Without moving, Jesse offers a groggy response.

JESSE  
I ate it.

RICK  
What do you mean, you ate it?

Jesse props himself up on an elbow, eyes squinting in the ruthless glare.

JESSE

Well, first I stuck my fork in  
this juicy piece of lasagna, then  
I brought it -

(sing-song)

- up to the lips, over the gums  
and then I said, "look out tummy,  
here it comes."

Rick wavers in the doorway, completely astonished. With sudden purpose, he marches over to the bed, grabs the foot board for balance with one hand, then swings his cane, beating Jesse's legs.

RICK

That was my food - my food!  
Understand me, you little shit?

Jesse grabs the end of the cane before the next blow lands. He yanks his father off balance, and with a thud, Rick crashed to the ground. Jesse flips the cane in his hand and jabs the end of it under his father's chin.

JESSE

No. It wasn't your food, it was  
my food. And I'm sick of you  
stealing my goddamn food. Do you  
understand?

Rick is shocked, but defiant. A seasoned hard-ass, he snatches the cane back and lifts himself off the floor.

RICK

You're done here, got me? You  
have two weeks to get your shit  
out.

JESSE

I'll be long gone before then,  
don't worry.

RICK

(chuckles)

Think it's easy, don't you, kid?  
Well, you'll be in for a rude  
awakening. And don't think you  
can come running back here when  
it happens, 'cuz all the locks  
will be changed.

JESSE

Don't worry about me, Dad. No one  
is worth worrying about,  
remember?

Rick scoffs. He takes his leave, slamming the door behind him. Jesse rubs his battered legs for a few seconds before limping over to turn off the light.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock taunts her - 2:45, 3:22, 4:05, and on until finally she shuts off the alarm at 5:49 before it goes off. She slowly gets up and switches on the Weather Channel; another nice day's in store.

She picks up the pen, ready to mark an 'X' on Wednesday, but hesitates. She whips the pen across the room, then stomps off toward her bathroom. O.S. the shower is started.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

Jesse and Sarah bike to school in silence. Chase pulls alongside them in his new car.

CHASE

Awww, you two are so cute on your little bikes.

SARAH

Do we really fascinate you that much, Chase? I'm waiting for the day you can see us without making a juvenile comment.

CHASE

Fuck you, Sarah.

Chase screeches away, kicking up a cloud of dust.

SARAH

Jackass.

JESSE

He likes you.

SARAH

What? You're insane.

JESSE

Don't pretend like you don't know.

SARAH

If you're right, someone needs to pick him up a copy of 'Flirting for Dummies'.

JESSE

I would, but I've yet to hard evidence that he can read.

Sarah allows herself to laugh. They pedal to the school off in the distance.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The hall is empty. As the bell rings, throngs of students shoot into the hall like thoroughbreds from the gates at the Kentucky Derby.

INT. BOYS BATHROOM - DAY

Jesse steps up to a urinal. Another boy walks out as Chase comes in, taking up position at another urinal.

CHASE  
How's it going?

Jesse zips up and flushes.

JESSE  
Fantastic, you?

CHASE  
You're a lucky son of a bitch,  
Peterson.

JESSE  
Why's that?

Jesse moves over to the sink.

CHASE  
Because you don't deserve all the  
attention Sarah gives you.

JESSE  
I probably deserve it more than  
you.

Jesse washes his hands as Chase zips and flushes.

CHASE  
You're not even worthy of  
handling my garbage, you low-life  
piece of shit. You've been  
mouthing off quite a bit lately.

Jesse ignores him and turns off the water. He looks up in the mirror to find Chase standing right behind him.

CHASE  
You hear me?

Jesse turns around and squares up his shoulders, but says nothing. Chase shakes his head.

CHASE  
Man, it pisses me off when you  
stare at me like that. You some  
kind of faggot?

Chase shoves Jesse, hard, slamming the back of his head into the mirror. The glass shatters and Jesse howls in pain. Chase blanches when he sees all the blood. He looks around like a caged animal, then yells out -

CHASE

I said don't touch me, you fag!

A couple of students, including Justin, and a teacher, MR. LEWIS, rush in a few moments later.

MR. LEWIS

What the hell's going on in here?  
Jesus, Jesse.

Chase grabs the front of his pants.

CHASE

He tried groping me, Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Lewis walks over to Jesse. Jesse holds the back of his head while shaking it.

JESSE

No I didn't.

CHASE

I swear it.  
(looks to Justin)  
See, I told you he was queer.

Mr. Lewis grabs a handful of paper towels.

MR. LEWIS

That'll be enough of that, Mr. Gibbons. Head down to the principal's office. I'll meet you down there right after I take Jesse to the nurse.

They all head out of the bathroom.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sue Roberts, the nurse, walks up to the group. Chase breaks away from the group, heading to the principal as instructed. Sue focuses on Jesse's bloodied paper towels.

SUE

Not again. Let me see.

With a cursory examination, she already knows how bad it is.

SUE

No skirting around stitches this time, mister.



(to Mr. Lewis)  
What happened?

MR. LEWIS  
Hurricane Chase.

SUE  
Huge surprise. I'm gonna take him  
over to Memorial.

MR. LEWIS  
I'll tell the principal.  
(to Jesse)  
I'm sure he'll be speaking to you  
later.

JESSE  
I didn't touch him, Mr. Lewis.

MR. LEWIS  
We'll talk about that later. Just  
get your head taken care of.

Jesse walks off with Sue, while Mr. Lewis heads to the  
principal's office.

EXT. MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - DAY

Jesse follows Sue and his dad out of the hospital through  
its sliding glass doors. They walk over to Sue's mid-size  
sedan. They all pile in; Rick wrestles his cane into the  
passenger-side before shutting the door.

RICK  
Really appreciate the ride, Ms.  
Roberts.

SUE  
Oh, please - it's only a few  
minutes away. And Rick, please  
call me Sue. We went to the same  
high school together for crying  
out loud.

RICK  
(smiles)  
Will do...Sue.

A smile on his father's face being rarer than a Haley's  
Comet sighting, Jesse observes his father with curiosity.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Sue pulls the car in the driveway. Rick and Jesse open their doors. As Jesse gets out, he says -

JESSE  
Thanks, Ms. Roberts.

SUE  
No problem, Jesse. Can you do me a favor?

JESSE  
Sure.

SUE  
Stay away from Chase for awhile.

Jesse responds with a nod and a slight smile. Rick gets out and looks back in at Sue.

RICK  
Yeah, thanks again. You saved us a forty minute walk. It was nice talking to you, Sue.

Sue offers him a warm smile.

SUE  
My pleasure, Rick.

Jesse shuts the back door and walks toward the porch. Rick hesitates, standing with his hand on the door.

RICK  
Well, bye now.

He starts to close the door.

SUE  
Rick?

RICK  
Yeah?

SUE  
I heard what happened to your wife. I just want to say...I really give you credit for raising Jesse all on your own. He's a fine young man.

Rick looks up over the top of the car before bending back to respond.

RICK  
Thanks. I appreciate that.

SUE  
Have a good night.

RICK  
Yeah, you too.

Rick shuts the door. Sue pulls out of the driveway and leaves. Rick limps up the stairs and into the house.

INT. JESSE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jesse leans against the counter drinking a glass of milk as his father comes through the door.

JESSE  
Dad?

RICK  
What is it?

JESSE  
I didn't touch that kid.

For a moment Rick stares at his son with a blank expression before turning to walk out of the room.

RICK  
I know you didn't.

Rick walks out. Jesse stands there - quite surprised. He finishes the milk. As he washes the glass, his father comes back through the kitchen and steps out the front door without a word.

INT. JESSE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse lies on the couch watching the History Channel. A knock comes at the door.

JESSE  
(yells out)  
Who is it?

SARAH (O.S.)  
It's me.

JESSE  
It's open.

Jesse sits up as Sarah walks in and leans on the doorjamb.

SARAH  
How's your head?

JESSE  
Lovely. And yours?

Sarah takes up a spot beside him.

SARAH  
Ha-ha. I'm being serious.

JESSE  
As good as 13 stitches in your  
head can feel, I guess.

He turns his head so she can see the handiwork.

SARAH  
13?

JESSE  
My lucky number.

SARAH  
Speaking of numbers...

Sarah pulls a small sheet of paper from her pocket and grabs the phone on the side table. She hands them both to Jesse.

SARAH  
...I want you to call this one.

Jesse takes the phone and inspects the paper. He quickly places them both in Sarah's lap.

JESSE  
I'm not calling the Suicide  
Hotline.

He turns his attention back to the TV. Motionless, Sarah watches him, then drops both items in his lap.

SARAH  
(angrily)  
Call.

JESSE  
I told you...  
(returning the hot potatoes)  
...I'm not calling.

She grabs the remote, turns off the TV, and shoves the phone back in his chest.

SARAH  
I said call, goddamn it!

JESSE  
(sighs)  
If I call once, will you quit  
bugging me about it?

SARAH  
Yes.

JESSE  
Swear?

SARAH  
(irritated)  
Yes, I swear.

Jesse takes in a deep breath, looks at the paper, and starts dialing the number. The phone rings softly as he whispers -

JESSE  
You swore, right?

Sarah rolls her eyes, then nods her head. WOMAN 2 answers the line.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)  
Hello?

Jesse feigns desperation -

JESSE  
Uh, hello? Is this the Suicide  
Hotline?

Sarah allows herself a smile. Her Jesse will be back to his normal self in no time.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)  
Excuse me?

JESSE  
I said, is this the Suicide  
Hotline?

There's a slight pause.

WOMAN 2 (O.S.)  
I'm...I'm sorry, but I think you  
have the wrong number.

Jesse's exaggerated desperation flows -

JESSE  
Aww, Jesus. I can't do anything  
right!

He hangs up the phone and erupts in a fit of laughter. Sarah stared at him, wide-eyed with confusion.

SARAH  
What happened?

JESSE  
(still laughs)  
Wrong number.

Sarah punches Jesse in the arm with multiple blows.

JESSE  
Ow, ow. Easy on the injured guy,  
huh?

SARAH  
That poor lady -

Sarah nails him in the arm again for good measure.

SARAH  
- call her back - now.

JESSE  
Ow, I can't! I don't know what  
number I called.

SARAH  
Just hit the redial button.

JESSE  
Don't have one. This is a relic.

He turns the phone to her, and she grabs it for inspection.

SARAH  
How could you be such a jerk?

Jesse smiles wryly.

JESSE  
See? I don't deserve to live.

Sarah stands and paces the floor.

SARAH  
This is bullshit - you don't tell  
your best friend your going to  
kill yourself and then just sit  
back and make jokes about it.  
You're killing me here, don't you  
get that?

Jesse turns serious.

JESSE  
I'm sorry, Sarah, honestly. But  
I'm not worth getting this upset  
over - trust me.

Can't we just enjoy these last few days without the drama? I've made up my mind. Nothing you do will change that.

SARAH

Oh...my...god you're being a selfish son of a bitch. Do you really think your death only affects you?

Jesse stands up and holds her by the shoulders to stop her from pacing.

JESSE

Sarah, calm down, okay?

He wraps her in his arms and holds her there.

JESSE

Listen, of course I know it'll hurt -

Sarah jerks away from him and whispers harshly -

SARAH

Then how can you do it? How can you, Jesse?

She storms from the room.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

She slams the front door on her way out.

EXT. CHASE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah stands before an ornate door. She rings the bell of the lavish house set on a large piece of property. Lampposts illuminate a pristine front yard.

After a few moments, the door opens to a well-dressed CHRISTINE GIBBONS (early 40's), Chase's mother. With half a glass of wine in tow, she asks with an air of superiority -

CHRISTINE

May I help you?

SARAH

Mrs. Gibbons?

CHRISTINE

Yes?

SARAH

Can I speak to Chase for a minute?

CHRISTINE

May I say who's calling?

SARAH

I'm sorry. I'm Sarah Morin, ma'am. I go to school with Chase.

Christine looks at her watch as a gentle reprimand.

CHRISTINE

Kind of late, isn't it, sweetheart?

SARAH

I promise I won't be long.

CHRISTINE

Um, hmm. Okay.

Christine leans into Sarah a bit, and whispers -

CHRISTINE

He already has a girlfriend, dear. Not sure if you're aware of that.

Sarah nearly chokes at the absurdity.

SARAH

Oh, yeah, I know. It's just about a project we're working on.

CHRISTINE

(smiles wryly)

Of course.

Christine closes the door sans an invitation for Sarah to come in. Sarah rolls her eyes, sticks her middle finger down her throat, and proceeds to wave the bird in front of the door.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)

Chase! There's a girl here to see you.

CHASE (O.S.)

Who is it? I'm watching TV.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)

Sarah something-or-other.

Sarah shoves her middle finger at the door again.



Footsteps are suddenly heard flying down stairs. The door whips open revealing a very eager Chase.

CHASE  
Ho-ly shit. For a second I  
thought my hearing was going. I  
only know one Sarah.

SARAH  
Hi Chase.

CHASE  
Uh, wanna come in?

SARAH  
Actually, can I just talk to you  
out here for a minute?

Chase hesitates.

CHASE  
You're not gonna hit me, are you?

SARAH  
For what?

With a blend of confusion and suspicion, he replies -

CHASE  
Uh, for hurting your gay  
girlfriend today? Thought for  
sure we'd be suspended.  
(chuckles)  
Convinced themselves it was just  
a misunderstanding. What a joke.

SARAH  
Oh, right. Kinda forgot about  
that.  
Oh, yeah - he's real suspicious now.

SARAH  
And he's not gay, Chase.

CHASE  
He ever try kissing you. Sarah?

SARAH  
What does that have to do with  
anything?

CHASE  
I knew it - he's gay.

SARAH

Will you quit saying that? Even if he was, what difference does it make? We're not living in the dark ages, you moron.

CHASE

Ah, right.

Chase spreads his arms wide in a welcoming gesture of brotherhood.

CHASE

We live...  
(drawn out)  
...in the "Age of Tolerance".

SARAH

(rolls her eyes)

Listen, I need your help.  
He shoves his hands into his pockets.

CHASE

You just called me a moron, and now you want my help?

SARAH

Will you be serious for just one minute?

She takes a deep breath. Asking anyone for help is unheard of: asking Chase is near proof hell just froze over.

SARAH

I think Jesse's going to do something stupid. He hasn't been himself lately.

CHASE

Seems like the same pathetic loser I've always known.

SARAH

Can you please just lay off him for awhile? Even better, it would be great if you and your buddies could kind of make friends with him.

Chase stares at her in utter disbelief.

CHASE

You're kidding me.

Chase scans his property.

CHASE

Am I on Punk'd or something?

He looks at the back of Sarah's head.

CHASE

You hit your head today, too?

SARAH

Chase, I'm totally serious.

CHASE

I don't know what you see in that kid, Sarah. He talks to no one. Well, except for you, of course. He's a complete weirdo.

SARAH

He's not a weirdo, he's just shy. He has a tough life at home, that's all. Why do you hate him so much?

CHASE

You really want to know?

SARAH

Enlighten me.  
Chase leans in, serious.

CHASE

Because he stole you from me.

Sarah laughs.

SARAH

What the hell are you talking about?

CHASE

Don't laugh. Maybe you don't remember, but I do. We were best friends in grade school. Made you laugh everyday - until that day you started talking to Peterson. After that, it was like I didn't even exist anymore.

SARAH

Because you were a complete jerk.

CHASE

Hold on. I wasn't a complete jerk...until you started ignoring me.

SARAH  
Oh, my God, Chase. We were what -  
six, seven-years old?

CHASE  
Go out with me, Sarah.

SARAH  
What?

CHASE  
Go out with me and I'll make sure  
Peterson's treated like one of  
the guys.

SARAH  
I can't go out with you.

Chase crosses his arms.

CHASE  
Can't or won't?

SARAH  
Well, for one thing, as your mom  
so nicely reminded me, you  
already have a girlfriend.

CHASE  
Who? Kate? She's just a temporary  
distraction.

SARAH  
(scoffs)  
And that's why I would never,  
ever, go out with you, because I  
would never, ever, want to be  
described as someone's "temporary  
distraction". I knew this was a  
big mistake.

Sarah turns and steps down the walkway.

CHASE  
You could be making a bigger  
mistake - don't you want to save  
your buddy?

SARAH  
I'll figure it out. Good night!

Suddenly the sprinkler system spits and comes to life,  
soaking Sarah as she runs toward her bike.

SARAH  
Ugh!

Chase erupts in laughter.

CHASE

Knew I'd make you wet one way or  
another someday.

Sarah mounts her bike and rides away, while the sprinklers continue their rounds.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAWN

Jesse waters the irises with the hose. He turns off the spigot, then picks up a thin piece of sheet metal leaning against the house. He walks it over toward his garage, when he takes notice of the metal's loud vibration. He stops, gives the metal a good shake, and grins.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Sarah turns on the TV in search of the forecast - another beautiful day in paradise. As she walks to her bathroom to turn on the shower, her calendar has conspicuously disappeared from the wall.

EXT. ROAD - DAWN

Jesse balances carefully as he rides his bike while carrying the sheet metal in one hand.

INT. SARAH'S BATHROOM - DAWN

Steam fogs the mirror. Sarah hums to herself, hair completely lathered, when she hears the first roll of "thunder".

She immediately stops lathering. With a confused expression, she waits. With the second roll, she cranks off the water, without rinsing, like she's competing in an Olympic sport.

With the water off, she hears "rain" on the window and yet another roll of "thunder".

SARAH

Shit! They said no rain!

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAWN

Jesse's delighted with himself as he stands below spraying Sarah's bathroom window with a hose in one hand and shaking the sheet metal in the other.

INT. SARAH'S BATHROOM - DAWN

Sarah grabs a towel, throws it around herself and jumps out of the tub. She slips, crashing into the sink.

SARAH

Ow! They said no rain dammit!

She gets up, somewhat hurt, and limps over to the window. She wipes the steam off the pane, revealing the truth. With a smile, Jesse waves and aims the hose at her face.

SARAH

Urg!

With his plastered grin, Jesse turns off the hose, looks up at Sarah, and does a little Broadway dance shaking the sheet metal. Sarah flips him the bird. Jesse moves his hand up to his mouth in mock shock as Sarah throws the window open.

SARAH

You really do have a death wish.  
Thanks to you, I'm gonna have a  
bruise the size of a bowling ball  
on my leg.

Not quite repentant, he replies -

JESSE

You can thank paranoia for the  
bruise.

Sarah glares, so Jesse reconsiders his response.

JESSE

Sorry.

SARAH

oh, yeah...you look really sorry.  
You may not be truly sorry now,  
but you will be the second I  
finish my shower.

JESSE

Want me to wait for you?

SARAH

If you dare.

JESSE

Maybe I better go on ahead.

SARAH

Good idea.

Sarah slams the window and turns the shower back on.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Jesse walks by with his tray of food. Students stare at him - a couple heckle him as he passes.

STUDENT #1  
Cover up. Queen comin' through.

STUDENT #2  
Faggot.

Jesse takes his seat opposite Sarah.

JESSE  
I was wrong: life can get worse.

Sarah eats without acknowledging. Jesse picks up his fork before noting Sarah's silent treatment.

JESSE  
Come on, Sarah. I'm sorry. It was just a joke.

SARAH  
Not quite a bowling ball, but a baseball. Thanks.

JESSE  
Look, I said I was sorry. I didn't think you would completely freak out. I didn't even think you'd fall for it. You did check the weather, didn't you?

SARAH  
Come over my house today.

JESSE  
Plan on cutting my life even shorter?

SARAH  
This morning I was, but I'm over it now.

He digs into his lunch, then looks up at her.

JESSE  
I know you don't want to talk about it, but I need you to do something for me.

SARAH  
What's that?

Jesse pulls the photo from his pocket.

JESSE  
Promise me I'm buried with this?

SARAH  
You're right.

JESSE  
About what?

SARAH  
I don't want to talk about it.

JESSE  
Please, Sarah.

He hands the picture across the table, but she refuses to take it. Chase pops out of nowhere behind Jesse and reaches for the photo.

CHASE  
Hey, what do you have there?

Jesse evades him, thrusting the picture back in his pocket. Jesse takes a bite of his food. Chase walks to the end of the table and leans on it with his palms. He looks at Sarah intently.

CHASE  
And that, Sarah, is why I hate Peterson.

Chase swipes at Jesse's pocket. He retrieves the photo, ripping the pocket in the process. Jesse bolts from his seat.

JESSE  
Give it back, asshole.

Chase holds it up out of reach.

CHASE  
What if I don't feel like it?

Chase steals a look at the picture. Jesse lunges after it.

JESSE  
I said, give it back!

Jesse trips and falls on the floor. Chase laughs.

CHASE  
Wow, this must be pretty important.

Jesse gets up just as Chase holds the photo in front of him and rips it clean in two. This sparks Sarah to jump up.



SARAH

Chase!

CHASE

Whoops. Sorry about that.

He throws the pieces on the table, and starts walking back to his own table laughing his ass off. Jesse boils. He springs after Chase, grabs the back of his shirt, and rips him off his feet.

Jesse pounds the living crap out of him. The cafeteria goes wild for about 30 seconds before teachers can pry Jesse off the boy. Chase's face is bloody and he appears to be knocked out.

Two teachers hold Jesse as he looks over at Sarah, who is absolutely stunned.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

With his right hand bandaged, Jesse sits leaning against the head board on Sarah's bed. He sketches her window and the view beyond. Sarah sits at her desk pretending to do homework.

JESSE

You're quiet.

SARAH

Just want to finish this up.

Jesse continues to draw. He sighs and lets his hand fall to his side.

JESSE

No comments whatsoever about my performance today?

SARAH

What? Oh...yeah. Pretty impressive.

Jesse looks over at her, mouth slightly agape.

JESSE

That's it? 'Pretty impressive'? I wonder if David's best friend just said, "Oh, yeah. Pretty impressive" the day he slew Goliath.

Sarah rolls her eyes as she turns to face him. She shrugs.

SARAH

I guess I always thought of myself as the tough one, so maybe I'm just a little jealous.

JESSE

You're jealous because I beat up  
a boy and you didn't?

SARAH

Not just any boy: Chase Gibbons.

She folds her arms across her chest.

SARAH

It was a little weird seeing you  
go nuts on someone like that.

JESSE

If I'd known I'd only get a  
week's suspension, I would have  
done it years ago.

Sarah shoots him a doubtful look.

JESSE

Okay, so maybe I wouldn't have,  
but I'll tell you something,  
Sarah - it felt fucking great  
while I was doing it. I poured  
years of abuse into every punch.

(sighs)

Kinda disappointed I'm gonna miss  
my last day at Lewiston High  
though. In a weird way, I was  
actually looking forward to it.

Jesse returns to his drawing. Sarah studies him. She  
slouches over a bit, but then straightens up and runs a  
hand through her hair.

SARAH

I need to talk to you about  
something.

JESSE

(without looking up)

Uh, huh.

SARAH

You have to promise not to laugh,  
because I'm being completely  
serious.

At this, Jesse looks up.

JESSE

Okay, shoot.

Sarah slowly rises from her chair, walks over to her door  
and locks it. She sidles up to Jesse, then sits on the  
edge of the bed looking at her hands in her lap.

SARAH  
What if I sleep with you?

JESSE  
(beat)  
What?

SARAH  
If I sleep with you, will you  
change your mind? I'll sleep with  
you right now if you promise me  
you won't kill yourself.

Jesse laughs and shakes his head.

JESSE  
Sarah, that's crazy.

SARAH  
You promised you wouldn't laugh.

JESSE  
Well, yeah, but...

He shakes his head again. Sarah takes his drawing, leans over him to place it on her nightstand. She slips her hand behind his head. Jesse sits in stunned silence as she leans into him.

Their lips touch at first with trepidation, but after a few seconds they are kissing passionately. With hunger, they kiss and touch each other for about 20 seconds before Sarah whispers in his ear -

SARAH  
Promise me.

Jesse's eyes close in anguish. Sarah moves to kiss him again, but Jesse holds her back.

JESSE  
I can't. I can't promise you  
that.

He moves away and hops off the bed to cool off. He paces, running a hand through his hair. Sarah makes no effort to hide her exasperation.

SARAH  
Why not?

JESSE  
I'd do it if I knew you loved me  
that way, but you don't.

He sits back on the edge of the bed. Sarah looks back down at her hands, so he gently lifts her chin.

JESSE

I'm like your brother, remember?

SARAH

Maybe I was kidding. Maybe I never gave the thought a real chance.

JESSE

Sarah, you do love me like a brother. You're just trying to convince yourself so you can save me.

She's angry, near tears.

SARAH

Don't tell me how I feel. I know how I feel. Maybe you just need to get laid to realize life is worth living.

JESSE

(laughing)

Listen to yourself - like you know.

Sarah throws a pillow at him, then leans against the headboard with her arms crossed. Jesse picks the pillow up off the floor and places it on the bed.

He kneels beside Sarah and pulls one of her arms free. He holds her hand, and sweeps the hair from her face.

JESSE

I love you more than anything in this world -

SARAH

Right - if you did, you wouldn't be doing this to me.

JESSE

Here's the thing: I can't stand people. Every person I've ever met has a hidden agenda, and it disgusts me.

SARAH

Not everyone.

JESSE

Okay, maybe not everyone. But I've been around long enough to know that 98% of the population are fake, and look out only for themselves.

Funny thing is, I'll bet a ton of people come to my funeral, even though most of them didn't give me the time of day.

I honestly respect sharks more; at least they don't hide their true nature when they want something.

SARAH

So hang out with the other 2%.

JESSE

I don't have the energy to seek those people out even now, while I'm young. Hell, I don't even think I belong to that group.

Sarah, you're the only one I like talking to - the only one. And whether you believe it or not, you do only love me like a brother.

If I don't do this, in another year you'll be at college, then you'll get some great career as a CEO or a drill sergeant...

Sarah allows herself a smile.

JESSE

...and after that, you're gonna marry some outgoing guy...and I would still be stuck, right here.

SARAH

I would always keep in touch. We can talk every week, I promise.

JESSE

How long do you think your future husband would put up with that?

She shrugs her shoulders.

JESSE

I don't know why someone as great as you chose to hang out with me, but I'm grateful you did.

I just want to say goodbye on my own terms - before life is a complete misery. You might not understand it, but I'm asking that you accept it.

Sarah pulls her hand away, locks her arms again, and looks away. Jesse stands up.

JESSE  
I should leave.

He collects his sketchbook and heads for the door. He unlocks and opens it.

JESSE  
That kiss was a real dream come true by the way. Thanks.

Jesse leaves, shutting the door behind him. Sarah looks at the door. She grabs the pillow, curls up, puts it over her head and cries.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jesse leans his bike against the house and hears his father through an open window yelling at a ball game on the TV.

RICK (O.S.)  
Christ! What are you blind?

Jesse snakes around to the back door.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - DAY

Jesse sneaks down the hall toward his room. His father takes a pull from his beer just as he slips into his room, undetected, and shuts the door.

He opens his bag and pulls out his sketchbook. He flips through it in search of a fresh page, but it's completely filled.

He places the tablet atop a number of others in the top drawer of his bureau. He closes the dresser and lies down on the bed. He stares out the window for a moment with a slight smile before closing his eyes.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse wakes and stretches upon hearing the doorbell. He flips on the lamp on his nightstand as he listens to his father's cane move toward the front door.

RICK (O.S.)  
What do you want?

Jesse strains to hear. His father's cane move back toward the living room. The front door slams.

CHRISTINE (O.S.)  
What do I want?

Obviously someone his father knows, Jesse leaps to his door and carefully opens it to find...Chase's mother? He rubs his eyes, for surely he must be hallucinating.

INT. JESSE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rick sits back on the couch, unconcerned about his guest.

CHRISTINE  
You are sober enough to know what  
happened today, I hope?

Christine blocks his line of vision to the TV.

RICK  
Sure. School called this  
afternoon.

CHRISTINE  
And...?

RICK  
And what?

CHRISTINE  
I want to know what you're doing  
about it.

RICK  
What do you want me to do?  
They've already been suspended.

CHRISTINE  
Where is the little hoodlum  
anyway?

RICK  
Don't know, and don't really  
care.

CHRISTINE  
My son's face looks like  
hamburger. A school suspension  
doesn't quite cut it, sweetie.

RICK  
(pissed)  
Listen here, sweetie. For years  
that kid's been bullying Jesse -  
and I didn't say a goddamn thing.  
As far as I'm concerned, he got  
what he deserved.

Christine is struck dumb.

CHRISTINE

So you don't care that your own  
son got his face smashed in  
today?

Jesse looks on in confusion before he processes the bomb  
Chase's mother just unloaded on him. Rick takes a pull  
from his beer and leans to look around Christine.

RICK

That's never been proven.

CHRISTINE

(scoffs)

Come on now, Rick. Don't fool  
yourself. Hell, Chase looks more  
like you than that delinquent  
you're living with...and  
pregnancy math doesn't lie.

RICK

Get out of my house.

She smiles, knowing she's struck a nerve.

CHRISTINE

I did you a favor. I could have  
taken you to court and made you  
pay child support.

Rick laughs and surveys the room.

RICK

You want a piece of this?

(turns serious)

Don't fuck with me, Christine. If  
you ever told your husband Chase  
wasn't his, you'd be committing  
economic suicide and you know it.

Christine hangs onto her purse with both hands.

CHRISTINE

Just keep your son away from my  
son.

RICK

No problem. And let your son  
know, if he touches my son ever  
again, I'll be coming over to  
give him his next ass whipping -  
sounds like he's been shorted a  
few.

Christine crosses her arms across her chest.



CHRISTINE

Look at you. You were a fine man once, Rick. I don't know why you let her death get to you like this.

First the booze, then the accident. You should have just finished your degree and moved on. Wasn't your fault she was unbalanced.

RICK

I told you before: get out.

CHRISTINE

(chuckles)

I mean, it was just a little fling for crying out loud.

RICK

It wasn't the fling, you heartless bitch, it was your pregnancy she couldn't handle.

CHRISTINE

I guess honesty isn't always the best policy, huh, dear. I suppose it was noble of you to try and make things right, though.

Rick lunges. He balances by grabbing her by the throat with one hand. He poises for a punch with the other. He grits his teeth.

RICK

If you weren't a woman, I'd punch you in your \$30,000 face.

He pushes her away by the throat, and with a barking cough, she tries composing herself. He quickly picks up his cane.

RICK

Now get out.

Christine straightens herself.

CHRISTINE

I see your son inherited insanity from both parents.

Rick raises his fist again. Christine takes the hint and swiftly takes her leave. Rick stands immobile until he hears the door slam shut. He finishes off his beer and heads for the kitchen.

INT. JESSE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rick retrieves another beer from fridge as Jesse appears behind him.

JESSE  
That's why you drink - isn't it?  
Because what you did drove her to  
suicide.

Rick shuts the refrigerator and slowly turns to face his son.

RICK  
I drink because every day I look  
in your face, I see her. Your  
presence never let's me forget.

Rick ambles by without another word. Jesse stares off in silence.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jesse stirs from sleep upon hearing and intermittent thumping noise outside his window. He pushes his curtain aside to investigate, and discovers Sarah tearing out all his irises. He throws on a pair of pants and bolts from his room.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gaping holes remain where the bulbs have been ripped out - only a couple irises remain unscathed. She throws her latest victim as far as she can, then reaches for another with both hands, but Jesse launches off the porches and grabs her. He whispers furiously -

JESSE  
What the hell are you doing?

Sarah, feverish and out of breath, replies -

SARAH  
You'll just have to plant more  
and wait until next year to see  
them bloom.

Jesse runs his hands through his hair and pulls.

JESSE  
It was the one good thing...  
(goes into Sarah's face)  
...the one good thing I was going  
to leave behind! Do you think  
this changes anything? It changes  
nothing!

SARAH

You said you were waiting to see them bloom once more. I just want you to wait until next year. Just give me one more year, Jesse.

JESSE

I don't want another year. I was really only waiting for my birthday; they always bloom before my birthday.

SARAH

Your birthday?

JESSE

I'm sorry - that doesn't fit your schedule?

SARAH

Why would you do that?

JESSE

Figured it might save my father on the engraving cost by having only one date. Plus he won't feel guilty for not getting me a gift the tenth year in a row - not that he would anyway.

SARAH

That's crazy.

Jesse waves his hand over the ruined flower bed, outraged

-

JESSE

This is crazy.

SARAH

This is an attempt to save your pathetic life!

JESSE

Stop attempting and just let me be for Christ's sake!

The porch light blazes on and Rick throws the door open.

RICK

What the hell are you two doing out here? It's three o'clock in the morning.

Sarah whispers to Jesse -

SARAH  
I'm telling.

JESSE  
If you're my friend, don't.

RICK  
I said, what are you doing?

SARAH  
Mr. Peterson...

Jesse glares, adding slight shake of his head to drive the message. Sarah sighs.

SARAH  
Sorry we woke you, Mr. Peterson.  
Just teenage boyfriend,  
girlfriend stuff. I'll go home  
now.  
(to Jesse)  
See you after school tomorrow.

Sarah hops on her bike and shoots Jesse a murderous look as she peddles off. He inspects the breadth of the damage and mourns.

RICK  
You coming in or what?

Jesse drags himself up onto the porch and brushes past his father.

RICK  
I didn't know you had a  
girlfriend.

JESSE  
Neither did I.

Rick chuckles and disappears from the porch. The light does the same.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jesse tries salvaging some of the irises, planting them back in the ground beside the two untouched flowers. He hears the phone ring inside. He wipes his hands and runs into the house.

INT. JESSE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

He lunges for the phone. Out of breath, he answers -

JESSE  
Hello?  
(beat)

JESSE  
Oh, hi, Ms. Jansen. What's going  
on?

Jesse sits on the couch.

EXT. LEWISTON HIGH - DAY

Jesse sits on the sidewall of the front steps. His bike  
leans nearby when the bell rings.

After twenty seconds, students are already swarming out  
the doors. Conversations are peppered with talk about  
vacation plans. Sarah walks out with another GIRL.

GIRL  
Well, have a great vacation,  
Sarah.

Sarah offers a barely enthusiastic reply -

SARAH  
Yeah, you too.

GIRL  
Take lots of pictures.

SARAH  
I will.

They separate halfway down the stairs. As the crowd  
disperses, Sarah notices Jesse. A couple of students point  
him out.

Sarah pauses for a split second, then immediately changes  
course. Jesse grabs his bike. He runs alongside it and  
quickly closes the gap to Sarah.

JESSE  
Hey, don't you have to get your  
bike?

Sarah keeps walking as Jesse keeps pulling his bike along.

SARAH  
What are you doing here? I'm  
pretty sure your suspension  
applies to all school property.

She storms away more quickly. Jesse has difficulty keeping  
up with his bike in tow.

JESSE  
Thought you said to meet you  
after school today.

SARAH  
I said that only for your dad's  
benefit.

JESSE  
Sarah, will you stop for a  
minute, please?

When Sarah ignores his request, Jesse tosses his bike on the grass and jogs up to her. Her grabs her by the arm, and she tries to pull away.

JESSE  
I'm not going to do it, okay?

At this, she stops.

JESSE  
I'm sorry. I was being a selfish  
jerk, and I almost ruined your  
vacation.

SARAH  
My vacation? How about my life?

Jesse looks down at the ground, unable to meet her gaze.

SARAH  
(scoffs)  
How do I know you're not lying?

Students gawk at the exchange as they pass. Jesse pulls her away from prying eyes and ears.

JESSE  
I got a call from my art teacher,  
Ms. Jansen, today: a great call.

Sarah gives him a dubious look.

SARAH  
A call about what?

JESSE  
I guess she sent a few of my  
class assignments to an old  
professor of hers at the New York  
Art Institute.

He liked my work, so he showed  
the pieces to the board of  
admissions. They said if I send  
them a full portfolio of my work,  
and the quality is just as good,  
I could be in the running for a  
full art scholarship.

SARAH  
Again, how do I know you're not  
lying?

A bit insulted, he replies -

JESSE  
Run inside and see Ms. Jansen for  
yourself if you don't believe me.

She looks back at the school, seeming to consider it for a  
moment.

SARAH  
You're serious about this? Seems  
like a quick change of heart.

JESSE  
If I have a way of getting away  
from this town and my father, I  
might have something to look  
forward to after all.

Sarah slowly cracks a smile. Jesse returns the gesture.

JESSE  
I want you to have a great time  
in Florida, Sarah. You don't have  
to spend it worrying about me  
now.

SARAH  
I need you to promise me.

JESSE  
What difference does that make?

SARAH  
It makes a difference to me.

Jesse looks around and then pulls Sarah in for a hug. He  
whispers in her ear -

JESSE  
I promise.

Sarah returns the hug with tears of joy forming in her  
eyes.

SARAH  
Thank you, Jesse.

Jesse closes his eyes, allowing himself to feel the warmth  
of her embrace. Sarah breaks away with a look of victory  
shining in her eyes.

SARAH  
I'll be right back. Gotta grab my  
bike.

She jogs away as Jesse retrieves his bike from the ground.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Biking home from school, it almost seems like old times:  
the words come easy to them again.

JESSE  
Looks like you might get caught  
up in that hurricane while you're  
down there.

SARAH  
I know, I heard. My mom is kinda  
freaking out about it.

JESSE  
She's freaking about it? I  
thought that was your department.

SARAH  
Looks like we might catch just  
the edge of it. Trust me, I  
already checked it out.

Chase's car revs up behind them and screeches to a halt  
just before hitting their bikes. He then pulls around to  
their left. Justin sits in the passenger seat looking  
slightly taken aback by the close call.

SARAH  
Are you fucking crazy?

Chase points to his own battered face.

CHASE  
You're dead meat, Peterson. This  
isn't the last of it, I promise  
you.

JESSE  
Fuck off, Scarecrow. I'm not  
afraid of you anymore.

Justin laughs. Chase looks at him in confusion, then  
chuckles.

CHASE  
I get it - 'if I only had a  
brain'. That really is one  
serious death wish you're  
carrying around.

He leans over Justin toward the window.



CHASE

I'll be happy to make that dream  
come true.

Sarah flips him the bird as he peels off down the street.

SARAH

I don't think I've ever seen him  
that angry. You better watch out  
for him.

JESSE

Like I said, I'm not afraid of  
him anymore.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Further down the road, Jesse and Sarah approach a fast  
food joint. Jesse notices Chase's Mercedes sitting  
vulnerable and alone in the parking lot.

JESSE

Hey, I'm gonna run in there real  
quick - I have to hit the  
bathroom.

SARAH

We're three minutes from my  
place.

JESSE

It's an emergency - three minutes  
could be too late.

SARAH

TMI.

JESSE

Just go. I'll meet you in a few  
minutes.

SARAH

Okay.

Sarah bikes on and Jesse glides into the lot. He sees  
Chase and Justin standing in line. He hops off his bike  
and moves to the passenger side of Chases car, out of  
sight.

He checks his surroundings. With the coast clear, he pulls  
his house key from his pocket and drags it across the body  
of the vehicle, taillight to headlight. He smiles at his  
latest masterpiece, mounts his bike, and makes his  
getaway.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sarah pulls the calendar out from her desk drawer. She hangs it on her wall, picks up a pen and marks Xs on the last few days she'd been avoiding, up through the Friday before vacation.

She smiles, turns off the light, and crawls into bed: at peace for the first time in about a week.

INT. SARAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah feverishly packs. There's a knock at her door.

JESSE

You decent?

SARAH

Not sure if I'm decent. I'm fully clothed if that's what you mean.

Jesse pushes the door open.

JESSE

Didn't think I'd catch you. I thought you guys were supposed to be gone already? Your mom does not look too pleased by the way.

SARAH

Oh, shush up and grab my bathing suit. It's hanging up in the bathroom.

Jesse does as instructed. He hands it over like it's a ticking time bomb. She rolls her eyes, shoves the suit into her case on the bed and attempts to close it - and fails miserably.

Jesse comes to the rescue, giving it the extra muscle it needs for Sarah to snap the closures. Sarah is literally out of breath.

SARAH

See, twenty minutes to pack - piece of cake.

JESSE

Yeah...fruitcake.

Well, have a great trip. I hope Hurricane Ernest steers clear. We're supposed to get some heavy rain around here, too.

Jesse hugs her. It lasts suspiciously long, and Sarah pulls away.

SARAH  
What are you doing?

Insulted at her intonation, he replies sarcastically -

JESSE  
Uhhh, saying goodbye to a friend  
before she leaves for vacation.

She shoots him a doubtful look. Now annoyed -

JESSE  
What?

SARAH  
You're acting mushy.

JESSE  
What do you mean?

SARAH  
You promised, right?

JESSE  
(still annoyed)  
Yes, I promised.

SARAH  
Okay.

She gives him another hug.

PHYLLIS (O.S)  
Sarah! Let's go! If we miss this  
plane, I swear -

SARAH  
I'm coming!

Sarah snatches her bag. Jesse attempts to take it from her.

JESSE  
I'll take it down.

SARAH  
You don't think I can carry my  
own suitcase?

JESSE  
Just trying to be a gentleman.

SARAH  
Fine.

He takes the overloaded suitcase, which throws his body off-balance.

JESSE  
Never mind. You take it.

Sarah shoots him an incredulous look.

JESSE  
I'm kidding!

INT. SARAH'S HALLWAY - DAY

Sarah runs down the stairs. Jesse follows with the suitcase. They are greeted at the bottom by a clearly irritated Phyllis.

PHYLLIS  
It's about time. I told you to  
pack -

Sarah brushes past her mother.

SARAH  
Save the lecture, Mom. Don't want  
to miss our flight.

They all migrate out the door.

EXT. SARAH'S HOUSE - DAY

Jesse throws the suitcase in the trunk. As he closes the trunk -

PHYLLIS  
You're a doll, Jesse. Thanks.

JESSE  
My pleasure.

She gives him a quick hug and gets in the driver's side. Sarah heads for the passenger side.

JESSE  
Try your best not to molest  
Mickey.

SARAH  
It's my mom you should be telling  
that to.

PHYLLIS  
I heard that.

Jesse closes the door as Sarah gets in. Sarah waves her goodbye. Jesse raises his hand in a weak gesture as the car pulls away.

## MONTAGE - SARAH AND MOM ON VACATION

-- Sarah and her mom board the plane.

-- Both get checked into hotel by a smiling attendant.

-- They walk into the hotel suite featuring two nice size rooms. They walk out onto the veranda overlooking a gorgeous white sandy beach on the Gulf of Mexico.

-- Both sit on the beach. Phyllis reading Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms under an oversize umbrella, Sarah sunning her backside.

## EXT. DISNEY WORLD - DAY

Sarah laughs as she comes off one of the rides with her mom. She then goes quiet as they walk.

PHYLLIS

You okay?

SARAH

Me? Yeah, I'm fine. My stomach's feeling a bit queasy from the ride, that's all.

PHYLLIS

Let's take a break for a bit and just walk then.

They walk by some restrooms.

PHYLLIS

I have to use the ladies room.  
You have to go?

SARAH

I'm fine. I'll wait here for you.

Sarah sits on a nearby bench as her mother heads to the facilities. Sarah breaks out her phone and dials. It rings several times. Sarah looks nervous, but sighs in relief when Jesse finally answers.

JESSE

(groggy)  
Hello?

SARAH

What took you so long?

JESSE

I was taking a nap, thank you very much.

SARAH  
Oh, sorry.

JESSE  
Checking on me, huh?

SARAH  
No. Just thought I'd say hello.

JESSE  
I'm fine, Sarah. Having fun?

SARAH  
As much fun as any daughter can  
have being tethered to her mother  
24-7.

JESSE  
See Mickey yet?

SARAH  
Within 20 minutes of stepping on  
the park grounds. She was on a  
mission from God. Glad we got it  
out of the way.

Phyllis steps out of the restroom.

SARAH  
Hey, I gotta go. I'll call you  
later.

JESSE  
I'm gonna head out for a bike  
ride anyway. When you get back I  
have some interesting gossip to  
tell you.

SARAH  
What is it?

JESSE  
I'll tell you later.

SARAH  
You know I'm not a patient  
person.

JESSE  
Later.

SARAH  
Okay, bye.

Sarah turns off the phone just as her mother approaches.

PHYLLIS

It's a zoo in there. Think I'm gonna sit for a minute myself.

SARAH

Uh, huh.

Sarah tips her head back. She closes her eyes to drink in the sunshine. Her mom stretches her legs out.

PHYLLIS

You're awfully quiet.

SARAH

Just relaxing.

PHYLLIS

You've actually been pretty quiet this whole trip.

(smiles)

I think maybe you miss someone?

Sarah tips her head slightly, opens one eye and peeks over at her mom.

PHYLLIS

I'm guessing that was Jesse you just called?

SARAH

So what? We're friends, Mom. I keep telling you, he's -

PHYLLIS

Like a brother to you. I know.

Phyllis continues to grin and watches the passersby. Sarah lifts her head.

SARAH

Mom?

PHYLLIS

Um, hmm.

Sarah's eyes lock on her mom as though about to reveal something deeply important. She opens her mouth, but after a beat she reconsiders and instead says with a little smile -

SARAH

I love you.

PHYLLIS

I love you too, sweetheart.

(smiles)

Was that all you wanted to say?

SARAH

Yeah. Why?

PHYLLIS

Because I haven't seen you look me in the eye like that since the night your father moved out. I thought you were going to say you were pregnant or something for a second.

SARAH

Mom!

PHYLLIS

You're sure everything's okay? Don't think I haven't noticed you haven't been yourself lately.

Sarah covers herself by smiling.

SARAH

Just a lot of school stress. The last couple of weeks were a total drain, but everything's fine now.

Not quite convinced that that's the case, she replies -

PHYLLIS

Promise?

Slighted irritated -

SARAH

Yes, Mom, I promise.

PHYLLIS

Just remember, you can talk to me, about anything, okay?

Sarah rises from the bench and pulls her mom by the hand.

SARAH

Let's eat. I'm starved.

Her mother gets up and they join the throng of visitors.

PHYLLIS

Let's get to bed early tonight. I want to get an early start tomorrow; it's gonna be a long ride.

SARAH

Okay.

They disappear among the masses.



EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jesse returns from his bike ride. He notices his father tending to a fire around in the back of his house. Though curious about what his father's doing, he goes inside.

INT. JESSE'S ROOM - DAY

Jesse walks into his room and lies his head back on his bed and closes his eyes. After 20 seconds, his eyes shoot open: the top drawer to his dresser is wide open.

He soars off the bed to find all his drawing tablets missing. He rockets out of his room.

EXT. JESSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Rick rips a sketch out of one of the tablets, looks at it briefly and tosses it in the fire. The fire is brimming with the remnants of Jesse's other sketches.

Jesse throws the back door open and runs out. The tablet his father holds is the last one: Jesse bolts for it.

JESSE

What are you doing?!

Rick throws his hand out in front of him, catching Jesse in the chest. Jesse falls to the ground clutching his ribcage.

RICK

Teaching you a lesson.

Jesse slowly sits up and grabs at his own hair. He shoots a murderous glare at his father, and spits his words -

JESSE

This is a new low - even for you.

RICK

It's not nice when people mess  
with your shit, is it?

Jesse shakes his head and wrinkles his forehead in confusion.

RICK

When did you find the key to the  
lock box?

Jesse stops cold, then shakes his head again.

JESSE

What are you talking about?

Rick shoves a finger in his son's face.

RICK

Don't you dare play stupid with me. I never leave the picture on top of the gun.

Rick rips another page out of the last tablet - the drawing of the sunrise at the lake.

JESSE

Please, Dad, don't. I wanted to give those to someone.

Rick ignores his plea, and throws it into the fire. The non-discerning flames drink it all in. The sketch crackles, blackens and disappears.

RICK

How else are you going to learn?

Jesse watches resigned as his father throws in another couple of drawings. Jesse stands up and walks away.

RICK

I gave you two weeks to get out. Don't think I've forgotten.

JESSE

I wouldn't spend one more day with you.

Jesse walks out of sight. Rick stares at the fire as the sketches blacken and smolder.

INT. SARAH'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Sarah's mom is passed out on the sofa. An empty bottle of wine sits on the coffee table next to one wine glass.

Sarah watches TV with her feet propped up on an ottoman. She looks over at her mom. She gets up, turns off the TV, and shakes her mom.

SARAH

Mom? Mom?

Without opening her eyes, Phyllis mumbles -

PHYLLIS

Mm, hmm.

SARAH

You gonna go to bed?

PHYLLIS

I'm fine here.

SARAH

Okay.

PHYLLIS

What time is it?

Sarah looks at her watch.

SARAH

9:07.

PHYLLIS

Set the clock for five, okay?

SARAH

Five? Mom, we're on vacation.

Phyllis yawns.

PHYLLIS

Set it for five. Early bird gets the alligators.

Sarah rolls her eyes.

SARAH

Yeah...great.

PHYLLIS

You going to bed?

SARAH

Just gonna call Jesse real quick.

Her mother rolls over.

PHYLLIS

Don't talk too long.

SARAH

I won't. They said the edge of the hurricane's gonna hit us tonight. Trust me, I don't want to be awake when that happens.

Sarah goes to the closet, pulls out a

blanket and covers her mom, who's already fallen back asleep. She turns out the light and flips on the one in the bedroom area.

Sarah grabs her cell phone off the nightstand and slides the door open to the veranda. She steps out, shutting the door behind her.

She dials the phone and lets it ring about 10 times. No answer. She looks confused, hangs up and dials again. This time it's picked up on the second ring.

JESSE  
Hi, Sarah.

SARAH  
How'd you know it was me?

JESSE  
There's a reason my dad never  
paid for a phone with caller i.d.  
- you're pretty much the only one  
who ever calls.

SARAH  
Well, I just wanted to wish you a  
happy birthday tonight, 'cuz I'm  
not sure what kind of cell  
coverage I'm gonna have tomorrow.

Jesse doesn't respond.

SARAH  
Jesse?

JESSE  
Yeah, I'm here. Thanks.

SARAH  
So are you doing anything special  
tomorrow?

Again, no response.

SARAH  
(serious)  
What's wrong?

JESSE  
He burned all my drawings.

SARAH  
What?

JESSE  
I'm sorry, Sarah.

Knowing immediately what he means, she begins shaking her  
head.

SARAH  
Don't you dare - don't you dare  
do this to me, Jesse Peterson -  
you promised.

JESSE  
I can't talk about it anymore.  
Midnight comes and I'm done.

SARAH  
Jesse!

JESSE  
(chuckles)  
Did you know Chase is my half brother?

SARAH  
What?

JESSE  
Don't tell anyone though - big small town secret. Actually, it explains a lot; it was just a mean case of sibling rivalry.

SARAH  
I don't understand.

JESSE  
I have to go, Sarah. I love you. Always have. Goodbye.

SARAH  
Wait!

The phone clicks.

SARAH  
Jesse!

She quickly dials again. Busy signal. She waits a few seconds and tries again. Busy. Sarah sets into a panic. She opens the veranda door and bolts inside.

She grabs her bag, checks to find her credit card, some cash and her plane ticket. She scribbles a note on some hotel stationary.

INSERT LETTER:  
Mom,

Don't be worried. I'm okay.  
There's an emergency back home.  
Not enough time to explain.  
Sorry. Call me on cell when you get this note. Love you. Sarah.

Sarah dials the number once again. Still busy. She looks at her watch: 9:13. She leaves the room and quietly clicks the door closed.

## SEQUENCE - SARAH TRIES TO SAVE JESSE

-- Sarah gets into cab outside hotel.

-- Jesse grabs scissors from the kitchen drawer. He heads outside to cut the last remaining Iris, which is now in full bloom.

-- Rain starts while Sarah's on the phone with the airline changing her ticket as she rides in a cab to the airport.

-- Jesse pulls the vase from his mother's bureau, fills it with water in the kitchen and places the Iris inside.

-- Sarah pays the cab driver and rushes inside - rain has picked up considerably, some thunder is heard in the distance. She dials Jesse's number again. Busy.

-- The phone wire is disconnected from the wall at Jesse's.

-- Sarah looks at her watch: 10:15.

## INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Sarah runs up to the TICKET AGENT, a plump, 40ish woman.

TICKET AGENT

(smiling)

May I help you?

SARAH

Hi, yes. I need to get on the 10:30 flight to St. Louis. I called the airline and they said I should be able change my ticket here.

TICKET AGENT

I'm sorry, young lady, but you're too late for that flight. There's another flight leaving at (looks at computer screen) 6 am.

SARAH

(irritated)

I can't wait for tomorrow. I need to get on this flight - it's an emergency.

TICKET AGENT

I'm sorry, but that flight is full.

SARAH

A full flight at 10:30? You're the one who's full...of shit.

The agent raises her eyebrows. Sarah closes her eyes for a second -

TICKET AGENT

Excuse me?

SARAH

Look, I'm sorry. Like I said,  
it's an emergency. I need to be  
on that flight.

TICKET AGENT

Honey, the flight is all the way  
on the other side of the airport  
- you'd never make it.

SARAH

I don't care. I have to try.

TICKET AGENT

(sighs)

Alright.

She starts to process the ticket.

SEQUENCE

-- Jesse sits on his bed drawing. The iris is perched  
alone on his bureau.

-- Sarah runs across the airport.

-- From memory, Jesse draws the picture of his mother that  
was ripped by Chase. He incorporates the iris into the  
drawing. He looks over at his clock: 10:29.

-- Sarah leaps up the steps of a moving escalator and runs  
over to the gate. She reaches her gate - but the door is  
already closed.

SARAH

No!

She bangs on the door.

SARAH

Please, open up!

A couple of people, who were snoozing in a nearby waiting  
area, look over at her. She runs over to the window to see  
the plane already pulling away.

She runs her hand through her hair and slowly walks over  
to the end of a row of seats and sits. She dials Jesse  
again. Busy. Her hand falls limp with the phone. A look of  
shocked reality settles over her face.

## SEQUENCE

-- Jesse finishes his drawing and places it next to the Iris, leaning the pad against the wall. He opens his drawer and pulls out the shirt that Sarah bought him for his birthday.

-- Sarah is snapped out of her fog with a loud thunderclap. She looks at her watch: 11:36. In renewed panic she dials the phone for information.

OPERATOR (O.S.)  
City and state, please.

## INT. DIVE BAR - NIGHT

Small bar. Except for STU, the BARTENDER (early 30's), Rick sits as the lone patron on a bar stool. Rick watches a ball game on the TV, when the phone rings. Stu picks up.

STU  
Joey's.  
(looks over at Rick)  
Sure, he's right here.

Rick pays no attention.

STU  
Rick, it's for you.

Rick looks at him suspiciously.

RICK  
Who is it?

STU  
No idea. Some girl.

Rick takes the phone.

RICK  
Hello?

## INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SARAH  
Mr. Peterson, it's Sarah.

RICK  
Who?

Unable to hide her annoyed, yet panicked state, she blurts  
-

SARAH  
Sarah! Your son's best friend!



RICK

Listen, whatever Jesse's done, I don't want to hear about it.

SARAH

For Christ's sake, will you act like a father for once? Jesse needs you. He's gonna kill himself.

RICK

I don't know what kind of a game you're-

SARAH

This isn't a game! He's going to do it at midnight - tonight!

Rick looks at the digital clock behind the bar: 11:39.

RICK

He wouldn't have the balls to do something like that.

SARAH

Jesus - that's one of the reasons he's doing it - because that's how you think of him.

I keep calling, but he must've disconnected the phone.

Rick sits in stunned silence, but panic creeps in and he starts breathing heavily.

SARAH

Mr. Peterson?

RICK

Yes?

SARAH

What are you waiting for? Run!

Rick drops the phone on the bar.

RICK

Stu - your car fixed yet?

STU

Not yet. Pam's still giving me rides. Why?

Rick picks up his cane and slides from the bar stool.

STU  
You alright? Looks like you've  
just seen a ghost.

Rick moves slowly at first and then picks up speed limping toward the door. His cane raps against the wooden floor.

STU (O.S.)  
Hey, Rick, you need to settle up  
over here -

Rick throws his shoulder into the door, hurling it open into the rain.

#### SEQUENCE

-- A huge thunderclap jars Sarah. Lightning blazes outside the large windows of the airport. Sarah rushes inside one of the restrooms.

-- Jesse, wearing the new shirt Sarah bought him, finds the key just sitting on top of his father's bureau. He opens the lock box.

-- Rick limps as fast as he can down the road.

-- Sarah slides down against the restroom door, pulls up her knees and covers her head.

-- Jesse pulls the photo out of the lock box and rubs his thumb across his mother's face tenderly. He rips the photo in half. He throws the half showing his father to the side and places the half with his mother in his pocket.

-- Rick trips to the ground, but quickly recovers.

-- Sarah sobs on the floor of the bathroom. The thunder now muffled.

-- Jesse pulls the gun from the box, opens it and slides the bullets in. He looks at his father's clock on his nightstand: 11:59. He holds the gun to his head and closes his eyes.

-- Rick cuts across the yard, ascends the stairs to the porch and slams the door open to the kitchen.

-- A single gunshot explodes the air.

-- Rick stops dead - eyes wide. For a moment his world has frozen. He moves through the house with trepidation. He peers around the doorway to his room.

INT. RICK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Slight smoke lingers in the air. Jesse's body lies slumped on the floor, blood pooling around him. Rick gets down on his knees and bends forward with his arms covering his head. His body rocks back and forth as he begins to cry.

EXT. GRAVE SITE - DAY

The sun shines on Jesse's coffin as it's lowered into the ground. As predicted, his burial is well attended by students and faculty. Rick stands opposite Sarah and her mother. He refuses to make eye contact with his son's friend.

As the coffin reaches its final destination, people quickly disperse. Stu pats Rick on the shoulder, says a few inaudible words, and walks away. Sue walks up to Rick and takes his hand up in hers, as Phyllis says to Sarah -

PHYLLIS

I'll let you to say goodbye.

Phyllis turns to give her daughter some privacy, but stops as Sarah says -

SARAH

It's okay, Mom. I'm ready to go.

Rick shakes the priest's hand. Noticing Sarah walking away, he finds some nerve, and excuses himself from Sue. He tries to catch Sarah while he calls out to her -

RICK

Sarah.

Sarah suddenly has the hearing of a ninety-eight year old.

RICK

Sarah!

She reluctantly stops.

SARAH

I'll catch up in a minute, Mom.

PHYLLIS

Will you be okay?

Sarah nods. Her mom walks away. Seeing Sarah slowly turn to face him, Rick relaxes his pace.

RICK

Hi.

Sarah doesn't answer.

RICK  
Listen, I just wanted to  
say...well, I know you were a  
good friend to Jesse, so don't  
blame yourself for what happened.

Sarah's eyes widen with incredulity. She points to herself.

SARAH  
Blame myself?

RICK  
Well, you knew he was planning to  
-

Sarah turns to walk away, scoffing -

SARAH  
Blame myself.

RICK  
You only gave me twenty minutes  
to save him.

Sarah angrily turns back to face him.

SARAH  
Twenty minutes? You had years.  
And if you ever paid any  
attention to him, you would have  
known.

Rick is rooted in silence as Sarah turns away and moves toward her mother's car. She spots Chase's Mercedes pull up and park.

Sarah changes course and makes a beeline toward the vehicle. Chase, face still bruised, looks in her direction through the passenger window. Jesse's handiwork is still quite visible on the side. The windows are open and Chase speaks just as Sarah passes by.

CHASE  
Sarah, I'm really sorry.

She circles around in front of the car and over to the driver's side.

SARAH  
You have some nerve.

She punches him square in the face. Chase grabs his jaw, but says nothing. Her goal complete, Sarah walks over to her mother's car and gets in. Oblivious to Sarah's actions, her mother simply asks -

PHYLLIS  
All set, honey?

SARAH  
As set as I'll ever be.

Sarah rubs the back of her hand and stares out the window as her mom pulls away. She sees Sue hugging Rick as they vigil at the grave site. Sarah scowls.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Jesse was right...I did move on  
with my life.

#### SEQUENCE

-- Sarah sits at lunch table with friends. Trying to fit in like normal.

-- Sarah graduates from high school.

-- Sarah moves into her dorm room.

SARAH (V.O.)  
It took about two years until I  
was finally able make it through  
an entire day without thinking of  
him. Though the hole he left in  
my heart grew smaller, it was  
always there.

After five years, sometimes it  
shamefully stretched to 4 or 5  
days before I'd think of my best  
friend - but then one day it all  
came crashing back.

INT. SARAH'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Sarah's roommate, BRIANNA, walks into the room as Sarah sits cross-legged on her bed doing schoolwork.

BRIANNA  
Mail's here.

Brianna tosses some mail in front of Sarah on the bed.

BRIANNA  
Looks like a wedding invite in  
there.

SARAH  
Really? I don't think I know of  
anyone getting married.

She picks up her mail and flips through it. She pulls out the invitation and opens it.

BRIANNA  
Anyone good? An old boyfriend  
maybe?

Sarah reads the invitation with an increasingly furrowed brow.

SARAH  
No, on both fronts.

When Sarah doesn't volunteer the contents, Brianna takes the hint.

BRIANNA  
I'm heading to the caf. You  
coming?

Sarah points to her textbook.

SARAH  
Mike's taking me out tonight. I'm  
trying to finish this up before  
he gets here.

BRIANNA  
Lucky...I think they're serving  
that god-awful Pasta Primavera  
tonight.

SARAH  
(sticking out her tongue)  
Good luck with that.

BRIANNA  
Tell Mike I said "hi".

SARAH  
I will.

Brianna leaves and shuts the door. Sarah looks in the envelope and pulls out a letter that came along with the invitation.

RICK (V.O.)  
Dear Sarah,

I know I'm probably the last  
person you ever want to hear  
from, but I'm hoping enough time  
has passed that you don't throw  
this letter away before reading  
it. I know it may be too late,  
but you're my only real  
connection to my son - a  
connection I feel I must attempt  
to make for me to really move on.

RICK (V.O.)

I realize you must hate me, and I know this might not mean much to you, but I haven't had a drop to drink since the day I - I'm sorry - we, lost Jesse nearly five years ago. I'm inviting you to my wedding because I feel you deserve a true apology in person. Plus, I have something I want to give to you. I thought of just mailing it, but I need to know you'll accept it first.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Back at the wedding, the groom comes into view. Rick stands with his cane in hand. He and Sue Roberts exchange vows with the same priest who presided over Jesse's funeral.

RICK (V.O.)

I lost my wife because of my selfish actions, and I was devastated. I should have learned then - but I didn't, and it cost me my son. Well this time I finally got the picture.

I decided to finish getting my degree, and became a social worker two years ago. I suppose you might think it hypocritical, but I chose to specialize in helping troubled teens.

The priest announces the new couple to arousing applause.

RICK (V.O.)

Sarah, you lost your best friend, and I lost a son. I ask for your forgiveness and hope to see you next month, but I understand if I never hear from you again.

If you can't bring yourself to come, may the rest of your life be blessed.

Sincerely, Rick Peterson

Rick notices Sarah skirt around the receiving line.

RICK

Excuse me.

He pushes through the line with his cane to catch her.

RICK

Sarah!

She closes her eyes, but then turns to face him. Rick smiles.

RICK

Thank you so much for coming. It means more than you could imagine.

SARAH

Sure. Congratulations.

Sarah Turns to walk away.

RICK

Wait - you're not leaving already, are you?

SARAH

I'm not sure I belong here, Mr. Peterson.

RICK

Please - come to the reception. As I wrote, I have something for you. I'm just a bit...  
(looks back at line)  
...tied up at the moment.

Sarah hesitates.

RICK

Please.

SARAH

(sighs)  
I'll be there.

RICK

(smiles)  
Thank you...again.

He walks back to the line and Sarah walks toward the parking lot.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY

Sarah sits at a full table along with MRS. REED (60s), Sarah's old school librarian. They're finishing up the last of their desserts.

Chatter and reception music fill the air. Mrs. Reed talks, but Sarah pays little attention.



MRS. REED

There's been so many improvements to the school library since you left. You should visit before you go back to school.

SARAH

Yeah, sure.

Until she hears -

MRS. REED

And Chase Gibbons just married his high school sweetheart a couple of months ago.

SARAH

Who? Kate?

MRS. JOHNSON

Yes, I think that was her name.

SARAH

(chuckles)

A temporary distraction.

MRS. REED

What was that, dear?

SARAH

Nothing.

Sarah watches Rick at the head table. He's got his arm around his bride. He's beaming. Sarah gets antsy - Jesse will never be in that seat. Rick notices Sarah stand up and take her purse.

SARAH

I have to get going. It's been nice seeing you again, Mrs. Reed.

MRS. REED

You too. Don't forget to say hello to your mother for me.

SARAH

I won't.

Sarah strides for the front door. Rick heads her off.

RICK

Hey there, hold on. I didn't forget you.

Sarah crosses her arms.

RICK  
 Sorry. I was just working up the  
 nerve to get you.

He opens the door for Sarah.

RICK  
 We have to go out here anyway.

Sarah looks confused, but relaxes her arms and walks out.

EXT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY

Rick limps ahead of her and walks over to a limousine  
 waiting outside. He moves to the driver's side.

RICK  
 Can you open the trunk?

The LIMO DRIVER gets out while Sue waltzes out of the  
 reception hall in her wedding gown. She greets Sarah  
 warmly -

SUE  
 Hi, Sarah.

SARAH  
 (turns around)  
 Hi Ms. Rob-, Mrs. Peterson.

SUE  
 It's Sue, Sarah.

The limo driver slips the key into the lock of the trunk.  
 With a slight turn it pops open.

SUE  
 We hope you like them.

SARAH  
 What is it?

MRS. PETERSON  
 (to Rick)  
 You didn't tell her yet?

RICK  
 Thought it would be better to  
 just show her.

Rick looks over at Sarah and waves his hand toward the  
 inside. Sarah walks over to find about ten of Jesse's  
 sketches, all neatly stacked and beautifully framed. Sarah  
 looks at them in shock.

RICK  
They're all yours...if you want  
them.

Sarah's just about shaking.

SARAH  
I don't understand. I thought you  
burned them all.

Surprised, and hurt at his past crimes, Rick looks to his  
wife, and then back to Sarah.

RICK  
He told you?

SARAH  
He told me everything, Mr.  
Peterson. We were best friends.

RICK  
I'm not that man anymore, Sarah.

Sarah looks back at the framed sketches.

SARAH  
You're giving me all of Jesse's  
sketches?

SUE  
Well, we kept a couple for our  
new house, but we both felt the  
majority should go to you.

Rick nods toward his bride -

RICK  
It was her idea to get them all  
framed.

Sarah picks up the sketch of Jesse's mother with the iris  
- a sketch she's never seen. She runs her hand along the  
front of it and starts to cry.

RICK  
We knew you would appreciate it.  
Why don't you pull your car over  
and we'll put them in there. That  
is, if you want them.

Sarah can't speak. She just nods her head, tears  
streaming.

They stack the last of the sketches on the back seat of  
Sarah's car. Sarah closes the door and turns to the  
newlyweds.

SARAH  
I really don't know what to say.  
These really mean so much to me.

A FEMALE GUEST comes out of the reception.

FEMALE GUEST  
Hey! Everyone's looking for you  
two.

RICK  
We're coming.

Sue hugs Sarah warmly.

SUE  
Take care, Sarah.

Rick smiles at Sarah and takes his wife by the hand. While Sarah moves to her driver's side door, Rick and Sue walk toward the hall door. As Sarah opens her car, she says -

SARAH  
Mr. Peterson?

Rick turns.

SARAH  
I don't hate you. I thought I  
could change his mind on my own.  
I should have said something  
earlier. I know that now.

Rick smiles and nods his head. He and his wife open the door to the din of music and voices. Sarah settles into her car and pulls away.

INT. SARAH'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Jesse's artwork decorates much of the wall space in Sarah's dorm room. She's hanging his final sketch with the iris over the head of her bed.

SARAH (V.O.)  
At first, it was hard for me to  
accept Rick's transformation - it  
just seemed too good to be true.

But then I imagined...no, not  
imagined...prayed - I prayed that  
maybe, just maybe, a part of  
Jesse's soul entered his father's  
body the day he died.

FADE OUT.