

THE MOUNTAINS ARE CALLING

Written by

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MUSIC STARTS.

FADE IN-

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

WIND CHIMES softly blow as opening credits appear.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

DALE (70s), gray hair but classically handsome, and EDITH (70s), long gray hair, fit for her age, bustling around the house, getting ready to leave. Dale gives Edith a knowing look.

DALE
Let's get him.

INT. RED OAK REHAB CENTER - DAY

MASON (early 50s), brunette with gray mixed in, looks older than his age but still handsome, puts on clothes, going through out-processing at the rehab center. Mason signs and dates papers (early June) marked with Virginia state seal. He collects things from NURSE.

MASON
See you next time?

NURSE
(laughs)
I certainly hope not.

Mason laughs and walks towards the exit.

EXT. RED OAK REHAB CENTER - DAY

Mason walks out the front door as Dale and Edith pull up. Mason hugs Edith and she kisses his cheek.

MASON
Hey, Ma.

EDITH
It's so good to see you, sweetie.

Mason looks to Dale. Dale half smiles.

DALE
All sorted out?

MASON
I guess we'll see.

Mason tosses his things in the backseat and gets in the car.

EXT/INT. DALE'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

The car drives down the highway, past the Blue Ridge mountain skyline. Dale and Edith look silently pleasant as MUSIC continues to play. Mason looks out the window as they pass "WELCOME TO STATHFORD" sign.

EXT. SUMMERS HOME - DAY

The car pulls into the driveway of a large, stately house with wrap around porch and rolling green lawn in front.

INT. MASON'S ROOM - DAY

Mason enters his room and drops his duffel bag on the bed. He looks around, taking note of some old belongings and frowning. Items are from Mason's childhood - old photos, including of him and HEATHER (late 20s, lighter brown hair, healthy and joyful), and a camera.

INT. SUMMERS DINING ROOM - DUSK

Dale and Edith set the table. Edith approaches the stairs.

EDITH
Dinner!

Mason comes downstairs. Dale, Edith, and Mason prepare plates and sit down to the table. The window is open, and MUSIC fades to the sound of children playing outside.

INT. SUMMERS DINING ROOM - DUSK

Mason stares absentmindedly at his food, picking at it but not eating much.

DALE
Mason.

Mason jolts, looking up.

MASON
What?

DALE
Snap out of your daydreams, will
you? I'm speaking to you.

Mason glares down at his food, seething.

MASON
Sorry.

DALE
Anyway, as I was saying, I've got
the Main Street restoration going
on until fall. I told the office
you'd report bright and early
tomorrow morning to start work
before your meeting.

MASON
Wow, Dad. You don't waste a minute,
do you?

DALE
If you're going to stay here,
you're going to contribute. Do
something productive with your
time.

MASON
Make you some money, you mean.

DALE
Well, it's about time. Lord knows
you've cost me enough. Rehab isn't
cheap, Mason.

Mason opens his mouth to argue, but Edith cuts him off.

EDITH
We just want you to be happy,
Mason, that's all. We want it to
last this time.

Mason smirks, looking back down at his food. Edith and Dale
share an uncomfortable look. Mason finally digs into his
meal, making a noise of approval.

MASON
Nice to have food that doesn't
taste medicinal.

EDITH
I'm glad you like it. I know it's
one of your favorites.

Mason's demeanor softens a little.

MASON
Thanks, Ma.

EDITH
You're welcome.

INT. MASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mason lays in bed, unable to sleep. He rolls over, clicking the light on and opening the nightstand drawer. He pulls out his wallet, then a photo. Heather sits on a couch, smiling at the camera.

Mason stares at it for a moment, gently tracing the photo. Mason sighs deeply, puts the photo back in the wallet and the wallet in the drawer, turns off the light, and rolls over to sleep.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Quaint buildings line the bustling street. Mason works on the roof as the sun beats down.

WORKER (O.S.)
You want?

Mason looks up to a worker offering him a cigarette. Mason takes it.

MASON
Thanks. You got a light?

The worker hands him a lighter. Mason lights it, handing the lighter back pulling a drag. He watches as a bus drives by underneath him.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Passengers slowly get off the bus, including ABIGAIL (18), dressed in worn out clothes, strongly resembling Heather. She looks around, taking in her surroundings with a "STATHFORD BUS STATION" sign behind her.

Abigail pulls out her phone and opens it.

ON ABIGAIL'S PHONE SCREEN

A low battery notification pops up. Abigail clicks away and types an address into the GPS. A map pops up, with a distance of six miles.

Abigail hoists her beaten up backpack on her shoulders and walks away from the bus.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - DAY

Abigail walks down the sidewalk, heat rippling off the street. She passes a street parking spot, where PARKER (early 20s) an attractive frat type college student, is walking to his truck. Abigail looks down at her phone.

ON ABIGAIL'S PHONE SCREEN

The display reads "2.3 miles to go." The phone dies. Abigail stops in her tracks.

ABIGAIL
Seriously?

PARKER
You okay?

Abigail snaps her head up to look at him, startled.

ABIGAIL
Oh, yeah. Phone died.

PARKER
You want me to help you out? I've got a charger in here.

Abigail hesitates. Parker chuckles.

PARKER (CONT'D)
It's okay, I don't bite.

Abigail sighs, reluctant.

ABIGAIL
Uh, okay, sure.

Parker comes to the passenger side, opening the door. Abigail walks up, and Parker hands her a charging cord.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Thanks.

Parker leans against the truck, close to Abigail.

PARKER
I don't think I've seen you around
before, have I?

ABIGAIL
No, definitely not.

PARKER
New here? Or just visiting?

ABIGAIL
Not sure yet.

Parker looks intrigued.

PARKER
Mysterious. I'm Parker Hadley. And
you are?

ABIGAIL
Abigail.

PARKER
You walking anywhere in particular,
Abigail?

ABIGAIL
You sure do ask a lot of questions,
Parker.

Parker chuckles, shooting her a winning smile.

PARKER
Well, I was gonna offer you a lift.

ABIGAIL
You think I'm gonna get in the car
with a perfect stranger? You could
murder me.

PARKER
(laughs)
Nah, town's too small for me to
murder you. That guy and that guy
would narc on me.

Abigail laughs, glancing at the people Parker pointed to.
Parker watches, never taking his eyes off her.

PARKER (CONT'D)
I mean, if you want to walk in 100
degree heat, that's up to you.
(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)

But I can't leave the truck on too long before the battery burns down.

Abigail hesitates, looking down at her phone.

ABIGAIL

Fine. Could you take me to Foxhall Lane?

Parker grins.

PARKER

It would be my pleasure.

EXT/INT. PARKER'S TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Parker's truck drives down the street against a mountain skyline. Parker makes a turn onto Foxhall Lane.

PARKER

Which number are you going to?

ABIGAIL

One-eleven.

PARKER

The Summers house?

ABIGAIL

You know them?

PARKER

Whole town does. My dad used to work for Dale Summers. I had dinner there once.

Abigail watches the houses outside the window, nervous.

ABIGAIL

Are they nice?

Parker looks over at Abigail curiously.

PARKER

Shouldn't you know that?

Abigail glances over, but doesn't answer. Parker pulls over in front of the Summers home. Abigail looks wide-eyed out the window.

PARKER (CONT'D)

You getting out?

Abigail tears her eyes from the house, grabbing her backpack and phone.

ABIGAIL
Yeah. Thanks for the ride.

PARKER
Hand me your phone. I'll give you
my number.

Abigail unlocks it and hands it to him. Parker puts in his number, and hands it back.

PARKER (CONT'D)
In case you need another ride while
you're here.

Abigail smiles, and then gets out of the truck. She shuts the door, and the truck drives away. Abigail looks up at the house, taking a shaky breath.

ABIGAIL
Here we go.

Abigail begins to walk up the driveway towards the house.

EXT. SUMMERS FRONT PORCH - DAY

Abigail steps onto the front porch. TELEVISION AND AMBIENT TALKING come from inside. Abigail takes a deep breath, raises a shaking hand, and KNOCKS on the front door.

There's a RUSTLE of someone getting up. The door opens to Dale, who looks puzzled.

DALE
Hello.

INT. CHURCH GYMNASIUM - DAY

A sign reading "Narcotics Anonymous Meeting" hangs on a podium. A circle of chairs surrounds the podium, with attendees listening attentively to TOBY MITCHELL, mid 60s, well dressed and kind faced, speaking.

TOBY
You know, sometimes when we're in a
harder chapter of life, we feel
pain that almost traps us in the
present moment. In the idea that
it'll always feel just like it does
now.

Mason enters quietly, looking annoyed. He takes an empty chair, crossing his arms. Toby notices Mason, but continues on.

TOBY (CONT'D)
But I'm here to tell you, it passes. Now, I know it doesn't feel like it's going to pass. And maybe you won't notice right away when it does. But there will be a morning where you breathe a little easier, I promise you.

The group claps. Toby looks over at Mason.

TOBY (CONT'D)
I see we have a latecomer. You wanna introduce yourself to the group, Mason?

Mason looks reluctant, but slowly stands.

MASON
I'm Mason. I'm an addict.

VARIOUS ATTENDEES
Hi, Mason.

Mason shifts his weight, looking down.

MASON
I, uh, just got out of rehab. Again.

The group nods in support.

MASON (CONT'D)
So... just trying to keep it going, I guess.

Mason sits down, crossing his arms again. The group claps.

EXT. CHURCH GYMNASIUM - DAY

The members of the meeting mill about, talking to each other. Mason exits the church, looking at his phone.

ON MASON'S PHONE

The lock display reads "Three missed calls: Dad."

Mason GROANS, putting the phone in his pocket. He heads towards his truck. Toby, talking with other members, sees him, and catches up to Mason.

TOBY
Hey, Mason! Where you running off to?

Mason glances over at Toby, slowing his pace.

MASON
Just wanna get home, Toby.

Toby smiles, shaking his head.

TOBY
Same old Mason. How ya doing?

Mason shrugs.

MASON
Oh, you know, just livin' the dream.

Toby chuckles.

TOBY
I'm glad you came out today. Your dad said you were coming by.

Mason rolls his eyes.

MASON
Of course he did.

They arrive at Mason's truck. Toby turns towards Mason.

TOBY
Let's get lunch soon, yeah? I'll call you.

Mason nods, half smiling.

MASON
Sounds good, man.

Toby claps Mason on the shoulder, then turns to walk back towards the church.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DUSK

Mason drives towards home, silhouetted against the mountains.

INT. SUMMERS KITCHEN - EVENING

Mason walks in and puts his bag down, brushing himself off. From the living room, he can hear TALKING.

DALE (O.S.)
Mason? Is that you?

Mason takes a deep breath.

MASON
Yeah.

DALE (O.S.)
Come in here.

Mason sighs, annoyed.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mason enters the living room, seeing Dale standing by the fireplace.

MASON
I was at my meeting when you
called...

Mason trails off as he comes around the couch, seeing Edith sitting on the couch with Abigail. She looks up at him. Mason stops dead in his tracks. Dale gestures to a chair.

DALE
Sit down.

Mason slowly takes a seat opposite the couch. His hands grip the chair tightly.

Edith hands him a piece of paper. Mason takes it, paper trembling in his hands. A birth certificate - close on the name of child, ABIGAIL MARIE SUMMERS, name of mother, HEATHER MARIE COLEMAN, and name of father, MASON COOPER SUMMERS.

Dale watches Mason read the certificate, arms crossed.

DALE (CONT'D)
Anything you want to tell us,
Mason?

Mason can't speak. Edith leans forward.

EDITH
Did you know about this?

Mason looks up at Abigail, who's watching his reaction. He swallows hard, looking down at the paper again.

MASON

I...

He trails off, breathing quickening. Dale looks agitated.

DALE

You what, Mason? Did you know or not?

Mason barely gets the word out.

MASON

Yeah.

DALE

What?!

EDITH

And you never told us?

Mason stands up abruptly.

MASON

I need a minute.

Mason walks out the front door, screen closing with a loud BANG. His silhouette can be seen through the window.

EXT. SUMMERS FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Mason fumbles to light a cigarette, the birth certificate still in his shaking hands. The porch door opens. Mason snaps his head up to see Dale.

DALE

You mean to tell me that all this time, you had a daughter you didn't even tell us about?

Mason GROANS, exhaling smoke. He leans on the porch railing.

MASON

Dad-

DALE

We had a granddaughter, and you didn't think we deserved to know-

MASON

Jesus, Dad, do you think everything is about you?!

DALE

You know, you do a lot of shit I don't understand, but I never thought you could do something like this-

MASON

I didn't have a choice, okay?! Look at me! You think she needs to grow up with someone like this?!

DALE

Well you are right about that.

Mason scoffs, looking away from Dale. He takes another drag, cigarette trembling. Dale watches him.

MASON

What is she even doing here?

DALE

She wanted to meet you.

Mason scoffs.

MASON

What for?

DALE

I don't know, Mason. But she came all this way, and she seems like a nice girl. So you are gonna go inside, and ask her to stay for dinner.

Mason looks over at Dale.

MASON

Are you serious?

DALE

Oh, I'm serious.

Dale walks towards the front door, looking over at Mason.

DALE (CONT'D)

And don't think this conversation is done, because it is not.

Mason sighs, looking back at the certificate again. He takes a deep drag, then puts out the cigarette and walks towards the door Dale is holding open.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edith and Abigail sit, looking anxious. After a beat, Abigail stands, moving to grab her backpack.

ABIGAIL
I'm gonna go. This was a terrible idea.

Edith stands immediately to comfort her.

EDITH
No, honey! We're thrilled to meet you, we are. It's just... Mason's had a rough time lately, and this is a shock-

ABIGAIL
I get it. It's fine.

Abigail freezes as Mason and Dale walk back in the living room.

DALE
Leaving so soon?

Abigail doesn't take her eyes from Mason.

ABIGAIL
I was thinking about it, yeah.

Mason shifts uncomfortably, avoiding her gaze. Dale gently elbows him.

MASON
Uh... you can stay, for dinner. If you want.

Abigail hesitates.

ABIGAIL
I don't know...

Edith smiles brightly, coming over to Abigail.

EDITH
Dinner is a wonderful idea! I'm sure we'd all love to get to know you better.

Slowly, Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL
Uh, okay. I'll stay for dinner
then.

Dale grins.

DALE
Excellent! Mason, why don't you get
the grill started.

Mason moves immediately, passing in front of Abigail to the back porch. Abigail looks after him, silhouetted in the back window.

INT. SUMMERS DINING ROOM - DUSK

Mason, Dale, Edith, and Abigail sit at the table, passing food around. Abigail and Mason sit across from each other.

EDITH
Help yourself, sweetie.

Edith passes Abigail a plate of food. Abigail takes some, smiling warmly at Edith. Mason stares down at his plate.

ABIGAIL
Thank you.

DALE
So, Abigail-

ABIGAIL
Oh, you can call me Abby. Uh, if
you want.

DALE
All right, Abby. You said you
graduated?

ABIGAIL
Yeah, a couple weeks ago.

DALE
Oh, that's excellent. Did you do
well? Good grades?

ABIGAIL
Yeah, pretty well. Made the Honor
Roll.

DALE
Better than your father then.

Abigail glances at Mason, who clenches his jaw, glaring down.

DALE (CONT'D)
And how about college, do you plan
to attend?

Mason snaps up to look at Dale, annoyed.

MASON
You don't have to grill her, Dad.

DALE
I'm not grilling her. There's a lot
to catch up on.

Dale and Mason glare at each other, tense. Abigail shifts uncomfortably. Dale turns his attention back to Abigail.

DALE (CONT'D)
So, college?

ABIGAIL
Yeah, I actually got a teaching
scholarship to UVA, so I'm gonna
start in August.

EDITH
Oh, that's wonderful!

Mason looks up at Abigail, his face more gentle.

DALE
I see you inherited the family
smarts, then. They must've skipped
a generation.

Edith jumps in quickly.

EDITH
And what about outside of school,
what do you like to do?

ABIGAIL
I like art - painting especially.
It's what I wanna teach.

Edith sits back, in awe.

EDITH
You really are just like Heather.

Mason tenses at the mention of her name. Abigail looks to him.

ABIGAIL
Did Mom paint?

Mason hesitates, then nods once.

MASON
Yeah, Heather did.

EDITH
She did the painting above the fireplace, actually. There's a great art store in town. We'll have to take you.

DALE
How long are you in town? Did you come with your family? We'd love to meet them.

Abigail is immediately uncomfortable. Mason studies her.

ABIGAIL
Uh, no, I came on my own. I wasn't really sure how this would go.

Dale sits back in his seat.

DALE
They let you come here alone?

Abigail shrugs, looking down at her food.

ABIGAIL
They-they're fine. I mean, I'm eighteen, so...

Edith smiles at her warmly.

EDITH
Well, we love having you here.

ABIGAIL
Thank you.

DALE
Well, just cause you're eighteen doesn't mean your parents suddenly stop worrying. I'm happy to talk to anyone if you need.

ABIGAIL
Thank you, really, but it's all
good.

Abigail shares an uncomfortable look with Mason before looking down at her dinner. He studies her curiously.

INT. SUMMERS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mason stands in front of the mirror, leaning on the counter. The sounds of DINNER CLEARING filter in. Mason turns the water on, splashing his face.

MASON
(whispered)
Fuck.

Mason rubs his face in his hands, then looks in the mirror.

EDITH (O.S.)
Hey, Mason!

Mason closes his eyes, sighing.

MASON
Coming!

Mason dries his face and turns out the light, opening the door.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edith stands in front of the bookshelf, studying the albums. Abigail stands in front of the mantle, lined with pictures of younger Mason, gazing at Heather's painting on the wall above.

Mason walks into the living room, causing Abigail to turn around. They make awkward eye contact.

EDITH
Which of these albums has pictures
from the camping trip? I wanted to
show Abby.

Mason swallows hard. He pulls his eyes away from Abigail, slowly moving to the bookshelf and choosing an album.

MASON
This one.

Edith takes the album and walks over to the couch. She sits, gesturing to Abigail, who sits next to her. Mason leans on the wall, watching from a distance.

EDITH

Now, let's see here...

Edith points to a picture of Heather on a dock smiling and holding up a fish.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I think she said this was the first time she'd ever been fishing. Is that right, Mason?

Mason crosses his arms.

MASON

Yeah.

Abigail scoots closer, studying in the picture.

ABIGAIL

She's taller than I imagined.

Edith looks over at her.

EDITH

You've never seen her?

Abigail shakes her head, glancing up at Mason.

ABIGAIL

I could only find pictures of you.

Mason looks down at the floor. Dale walks in from the kitchen.

DALE

You're Heather's spitting image, Abby.

Mason shifts uncomfortably, looking up.

MASON

Y'know, it's getting kinda late.

Abigail looks up at Mason. He looks away immediately.

EDITH

Mason-

ABIGAIL
It's fine. He's right, I should
probably get going.

Abigail stands, handing the album back to Edith. Edith stands
as well.

EDITH
Where are you staying?

ABIGAIL
Uh, I'll get a hotel.

Dale shakes his head.

DALE
No, no, no. You don't need to do
that, you can stay in the guest
room here.

Mason looks sharply over at Dale.

MASON
Dad-

DALE
There's no sense in you spending
money on a hotel room and staying
by yourself when we've got a
perfectly good bed here.

Mason looks at the floor, tense. Abigail hesitates.

EDITH
Dale's right, honey. Being at a
hotel by yourself isn't safe.

DALE
If you want me to talk to your
parents and let them know you're
okay, I'm happy to do that.

Abigail looks over at Mason, who won't look at her.

ABIGAIL
I... I don't know.

Edith puts a hand on her shoulder.

EDITH
Honey, it's all right. We have the
room, and we'd love to have you
here. Wouldn't we, Mason?

Mason reluctantly looks up at Abigail. He shrugs.

MASON
Stay if you want.

Mason meets Abigail's eyes, then looks away quickly. He turns to the front door and walks out onto the porch, the door shutting behind him. Dale moves forward, putting a hand on Abigail's shoulder.

DALE
Don't mind him. Come on, I'll show
you upstairs.

Dale leads Abigail towards the stairwell, gesturing for her to go up first.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dale opens the door to a plain guest room, clicking the light on. Abigail hesitantly follows him in.

DALE
Here you go. There's clean sheets
on the bed, and towels in the
closet.

ABIGAIL
Thank you.

Dale studies Abigail for a moment.

DALE
You were really brave coming here.
You should know that.

Abigail nods, looking at the floor. Dale moves towards the door.

DALE (CONT'D)
I'll let you get settled. We're
right down the hall if you need
anything, okay?

Dale leaves, shutting the door behind him. Abigail looks around the empty room. Her eyes begin to water with tears.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Mason leans on the porch railing, putting his head in his hands. He's shaking. Edith opens the door, coming onto the porch. Mason looks up.

MASON
Not right now, Ma, please.

EDITH
I'm not here to yell at you.
Although, believe me, I could.

Mason sighs, leaning back over the railing. He takes out a cigarette, lighting it. Edith comes up beside him, silent. Mason looks over at her.

MASON
I know I fucked up-

EDITH
I didn't say that.

MASON
But you're thinking it.

Edith shakes her head.

EDITH
I'm thinking a lot of things,
Mason, but not that.

Mason sighs, looking over at her. Edith looks hurt.

MASON
Ma... I'm sorry. I didn't mean...

Edith nods.

EDITH
I know.

Mason and Edith both look up at the sound of the door opening. Dale walks onto the porch.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Is Abby okay?

DALE
She's fine. I got her set up.
(to Mason)
You need to start explaining.

MASON
Not right now, Dad, Jesus.

DALE
I'm sorry, is there a better time
to address your secret child-

MASON

Would you give me a break?!

DALE

You don't call housing you, paying for your treatment a break? Now housing your daughter upstairs, the daughter you never said a fucking word about! How could you do this?!

Edith moves to stop the argument.

EDITH

Dale, enough!

MASON

Fuck this.

Mason flicks his cigarette out and moves past his father angrily, down the stairs of the porch. The SLAM of Mason's truck door echoes. Edith looks to Dale.

EDITH

Can you ever just give him a rest?

DALE

Giving him a rest is exactly how we got into this mess in the first place.

Mason's truck drives away. Edith shakes her head, and Dale sighs. He rubs his face in his hands.

EXT. MOUNTAIN OVERLOOK - NIGHT

Mason sits in the open bed of his truck, looking down at the lit up mountain valley below.

MASON

(quietly to himself)

This too shall pass, this too shall pass, this too shall pass.

Mason reaches into his pocket for his wallet. He pulls out the picture of Heather, and traces a finger along the photo. The photo seems to calm him.

MASON (CONT'D)

God, if you were here, you'd kick my ass.

Mason leans his head back against the truck with a soft THUD.

MASON (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Mason sits, staring up at the cloudless sky filled with stars.

INT. SUMMERS KITCHEN - DAY

Dale and Edith sit in the kitchen, eating breakfast and reading the newspaper. Abigail enters, lingering in the doorway. Edith looks up.

EDITH

Oh, good morning sweetie!

ABIGAIL

Morning.

Dale gestures her over.

DALE

Come, sit down. Have something to eat.

Abigail walks in closer, but stands at the counter. Edith smiles warmly at her.

EDITH

You want some cereal? Coffee?

ABIGAIL

Uh, coffee would be good. I can get it.

EDITH

Don't worry, I got it.

Edith goes to get it for her. Dale stands.

DALE

All right. I'm gonna head out, meet some of the gents. I'll see you two later.

Dale goes to give Edith a kiss, and smiles at Abigail before leaving the kitchen. Edith sets a mug down in front of Abigail.

EDITH

Here you go. Milk and sugar on the table.

ABIGAIL

Thank you.

Abigail pours in a little milk. She takes a sip.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Where's Mason?

EDITH

Oh, he set out for work early today.

Abigail nods, taking another sip. Edith studies her.

EDITH (CONT'D)

So, you said you painted? What do you like to paint?

Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL

People and figures, mostly.

Edith smiles at her.

EDITH

Do you have any pictures?

Abigail hesitates, then nods. She pulls out her phone, pulling up the pictures and handing it to Edith.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Let's see here.

ON ABIGAIL'S PHONE

Edith scrolls through the album. Many of the paintings are of young women, some filled with color while others are gray.

Edith looks up from the phone, surprised.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Those are amazing! You're really talented.

ABIGAIL

Thanks.

Abigail puts her phone away and goes back to her coffee.

EDITH

Do you paint often?

ABIGAIL

When I can. Just depends on what supplies I have.

Edith smiles at her.

EDITH

How about I take you to the art store this afternoon? Browse around?

Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

Edith smiles warmly at her. Abigail relaxes a little, smiling back.

EXT. MAIN STREET ROOF - DAY

Mason works on the roof, SLAMMING his hammer with frustration.

DALE (O.S.)

Don't put a hole in it.

Mason looks up to see his father. He grimaces.

MASON

Would you look who it is. What are you doing here?

DALE

Stopped by to see progress.

Mason gestures to the roof. The other workers are slyly watching.

MASON

Well, there it is.

Dale sighs.

DALE

Have you called Toby yet?

Mason sighs.

MASON

Ah, yes. The real reason.

DALE

I'm serious. You need to do that.
Being in contact with your sponsor
is part of you staying with us.

MASON

I'm well aware of the drill by now,
Dad. I saw him yesterday.

DALE

Well, you sure have had practice. I
want you meeting with him
regularly.

Mason rolls his eyes, looking back to his work.

DALE (CONT'D)

I'm serious, Mason.

MASON

Really? I was beginning to think
this was your sense of humor.

Dale clenches his jaw.

DALE

I'm really not in the mood for your
attitude, Mason. You've been home
two days, and already you've added
a whole member to the family-

Mason jerks his head towards the workers.

MASON

Would you shut up? Jesus. She's not-

Dale rolls his eyes, glancing at the others.

DALE

She's not what?

Mason hesitates.

MASON

She's not family. I gave her up,
remember? She's got her own life
now.

DALE

Giving up the responsibility of
being a father doesn't mean you
aren't one, Mason. It's just one
more plate you didn't step up to.

Dale turns to leave, but looks over his shoulder.

DALE (CONT'D)
Call. Today.

Mason watches as his father leaves. He throws the hammer with a THUD, GROANING in frustration.

EXT. SUMMERS HOME - DAY

Edith and Abigail pull into the driveway. A strange car is sitting there. Edith furrows her brow.

EDITH
I wonder who that could be.

They get out of the car. MONIQUE SAMUELS sits on the front porch. She stands when she sees them. Abigail freezes.

MONIQUE
Do you know how long I've been
looking for you?

Edith looks over at Abigail.

EDITH
Abby, who is this?

Monique approaches, smiling at Edith.

MONIQUE
Monique Samuels, Virginia Social
Services.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abigail sits between Edith and Dale. Monique Samuels sits across from them. Edith looks at her, concerned.

EDITH
Why didn't you tell us you ran
away?

ABIGAIL
I didn't run away, I'm eighteen-

MONIQUE
There's still a process you have to
go through, Abby.

Abigail glares at her.

ABIGAIL

Oh, I see, now you care about processes. But when Mrs. Beckman kicked me out on my birthday because she didn't want to care for an adult, that was fine?!

Edith and Dale looked shocked.

DALE

I'm sorry, what?

Abigail doesn't take her glare from Monique. Monique sighs.

MONIQUE

Of course it wasn't okay, Abigail. But you should've called me-

ABIGAIL

I'm not going to another home. I'd rather stay in a shelter than do that shit again-

EDITH

A shelter?

ABIGAIL

Look, you don't need to worry about it, okay? I can take care of myself.

Edith shoots a worried look to Dale. Monique shakes her head.

MONIQUE

Abigail... honey, I know it's been rough for you-

DALE

What do you mean, rough? What is the full picture here?

Monique glances at Abigail. Abigail shrugs.

ABIGAIL

I'm fine, okay?

Dale leans forward.

DALE

Rough doesn't sound fine to me, and I, for one, would like to know what happened to my granddaughter.

Abigail snaps over to look at him, surprised. Edith puts a hand on her shoulder.

EDITH

Honey, why didn't you tell us the truth when you got here?

ABIGAIL

Because I didn't come here to be some charity case! I came to meet my Dad, that's it.

Monique looks up at the door. Abigail turns her head, seeing Mason in the doorway. She freezes. Mason looks around at the room.

MASON

What's going on here?

MONIQUE

You're Mason Summers?

Mason nods, confused.

MASON

Yeah.

Monique looks to Abigail.

MONIQUE

I see the resemblance.

Dale looks at Monique.

DALE

Well, if Abigail needs a home, she can live here. We're more than happy to have her.

Mason looks sharply at Abigail. Monique hesitates.

MONIQUE

We'd have to sort out some paperwork.

EDITH

Of course, we'd be happy to.

Monique looks to Mason.

MONIQUE

And we'd have to make sure you were staying on track, too. Abigail needs a safe environment.

Abigail scoffs.

ABIGAIL
Since when?

Monique shoots her a look.

DALE
Don't worry. He'll stay on track.
I'll make sure of it.

Monique nods, then stands. Edith and Dale follow suit.

MONIQUE
All right. I'll get it settled.

EDITH
We'll walk you out.

Edith and Dale walk Monique to the door, going on the front porch. Mason stares at Abigail. She glances over at him, then gets up, crossing in front of him to run up the stairs. He swallows hard, realization setting in his face.

INT. MASON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mason clicks the light on, shutting the door. He sits on the edge of his bed, leg bouncing rapidly. Mason hastily pulls out his phone, dialing and putting the phone to his ear. The phone RINGS.

TOBY (V.O.)
Mason! Good to hear from you, man.
How have you been?

Mason takes a deep breath.

MASON
Don't even know how to answer that.

TOBY (V.O.)
You okay? What's going on?

Mason shakes his head, putting it in his free hand.

MASON
I don't know if I can do this.

TOBY (V.O.)
Is it an emergency? Do you need to
meet?

Mason shakes his head.

MASON

No, no, not tonight. Just... fuck, dude.

TOBY (V.O.)

This part of recovery is always a tough time for you. But you can get through this. This too shall pass, you know that.

Mason takes a shaky breath.

MASON

Yeah. Yeah, I know.

TOBY (V.O.)

Listen, why don't we have lunch soon? We can talk about whatever you need.

Mason nods.

MASON

Yeah. Sounds great.

Mason hangs up the phone, then throws it on the bed.

EXT. SUMMERS HOUSE - DAY (ESTABLISHING)

A newspaper is thrown at the front door. Mason, smoking on the front porch, grabs the paper, and goes in the house.

INT. SUMMERS KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mason sits at the kitchen island, opening the newspaper (dated in early June), drinking coffee. Abigail enters. They freeze at the sight of each other. Abigail moves first, going to the cabinets.

ABIGAIL

You made coffee?

MASON

Uh, yeah. Take what you want.

ABIGAIL

Thanks.

Abigail gets a mug, pouring herself some. Mason watches as she grabs milk from the fridge. She leans against the counter rather than sit next to him. There's an awkward pause.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Where are Dale and Edith?

MASON
Mom's not up, and Dad's probably at
the office.

Abigail nods. There's an awkward pause.

ABIGAIL
So- I- MASON (CONT'D)

They both cut off. Mason abruptly gets up.

MASON (CONT'D)
I gotta go to work.

ABIGAIL
Right.

Mason pauses again, looking at Abigail. After a moment, he
turns to get his bag.

MASON
I'll, uh, see you later.

Without waiting, Mason walks out the door, almost running
into Edith. He breezes past her, exiting the house. Edith
sees Abigail looking upset.

EDITH
Don't worry about him, honey. He'll
come around.

Abigail doesn't speak. Edith moves to comfort her.

EDITH (CONT'D)
I know all of this must be very
overwhelming for you. But I know my
son. He's got a good heart. You
just have to give him some time.

Abigail hesitates before speaking.

ABIGAIL
How did Mason keep me a secret from
you guys? I had figured he didn't
know.

Edith sighs.

EDITH
Things have always been rough with
Mason.

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

He used to disappear for months at a time, and we'd never know where he was or what he was doing. And when your mother died... Mason was never the same. I always thought it was losing her, I never thought...

Abigail watches her for a moment.

ABIGAIL

How did you find out?

EDITH

Uh... well, he called us, and he could barely get the words out. He told us where he was, and... he told us that your mother was dead.

ABIGAIL

Did she overdose?

Edith nods.

EDITH

Heroin. And after that, Mason... he's never been the same. I wasn't sure if we were ever going to truly get him back. That's why I'm so glad you're here.

Abigail stares at her, shocked.

ABIGAIL

Why?

EDITH

I think Mason needs this, whether or not he realizes it. I think he needs you.

Abigail shakes her head.

ABIGAIL

He doesn't.

EDITH

He does. Or he will. You'll see.

EXT. MAIN STREET ROOF - DAY

Mason hammers on the roof. A few of the workers look over at him. WORKER #1 speaks up.

WORKER #1

Summers!

Mason pauses, looking over.

MASON

What?

WORKER #1

How's the work treatin' ya? Helpin'
keep your mind off things?

Mason is confused, but chuckles at the irony of it.

MASON

You have no idea.

WORKER #1

We might, actually. We heard your
dad talkin' this morning on the new
family addition.

Mason looks over sharply. WORKER #2 smirks.

WORKER #2

Never thought I'd see Mason Summers
be a family man.

Mason rolls his eyes.

MASON

Oh, fuck off.

Mason turns back to his work as the other workers snicker to
themselves. Mason glares down, pulling out his cigarettes.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Abigail and Edith walk through the store, Edith pushing a
cart of groceries.

EDITH

What's left on the list?

ABIGAIL

Just eggs and flour.

EDITH

Why don't you go grab the eggs and
I'll get the flour? I'll come find
you.

ABIGAIL

Okay.

Abigail walks towards the refrigerated section, finding the eggs. She picks up a carton and examines it. Parker stands a few feet away. He notices Abigail and grins, walking over.

PARKER

Well hello there, Abigail Summers.

Abigail is startled. She smirks when she sees who it is.

ABIGAIL

This is a small town, isn't it?

PARKER

You have no idea. So, the word on the street is that Mason Summers is your dad.

ABIGAIL

Word must travel fast.

PARKER

Small town. You shoulda said so on our ride.

ABIGAIL

I figured I should probably tell him first.

Parker laughs.

PARKER

Fair enough. Though speaking of our ride, how long are you in town?

ABIGAIL

For the summer, until I start school.

PARKER

Mm. Long enough for us to get to know each other.

Edith approaches, pushing the cart. She gives Abigail a sly glance.

EDITH

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Abigail blushes, embarrassed.

ABIGAIL
You didn't.

PARKER
I won't keep you. Besides, I'm sure
I'll see you again. Small town.

Parker smiles at Edith.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Mrs. Summers.

Abigail and Edith walk away. Edith grins at Abigail.

EDITH
That's Hadley's boy, right? What
was that about?

ABIGAIL
Oh, it was nothing.

EDITH
It didn't look like nothing.

Edith smiles, lighting elbowing Abigail.

EDITH (CONT'D)
He's cute!

Abigail laughs nervously.

ABIGAIL
Yeah, kinda.

EDITH
Not just kinda. So are you gonna
see him again?

ABIGAIL
Oh, I don't know.

Edith and Abigail reach the checkout and begin putting items
on the conveyor belt.

EDITH
I think you should. You're a
beautiful girl, Abby. The boys here
are gonna fall all over you.

Abigail laughs. Edith greets the cashier. Abigail notices a
"Help Wanted" sign on the window.

ABIGAIL
Do you have applications?

CASHIER

Sure! Let me grab you one.

Cashier hands it to Abigail with a smile.

ABIGAIL

Thank you.

Edith glances over at her.

EDITH

Thinking of getting a job?

Abigail shrugs.

ABIGAIL

Always good to have some cash.

Edith smiles at the cashier, then looks at Abigail.

EDITH

I think that's a wonderful idea.
It'll be a good way to meet people
in town. Now, why don't we get
these groceries home?

Abigail and Edith push the cart towards the door.

EXT. SUMMERS FRONT PORCH - DUSK

Mason's truck pulls into the driveway. Dale sits on the front porch, reading. Mason SLAMS the door of his truck. Dale looks up as Mason ascends the stairs.

DALE

Rough day?

MASON

You couldn't waste a minute, could you?

Dale sighs, annoyed.

DALE

What are you talking about, Mason?

MASON

Did you tell the whole damn town
about your son's latest fuck up?

DALE

Oh, for Christ's sake, Mason.

MASON

Did you give one thought to whether
or not I wanted everyone to know?

DALE

It might surprise you to find that
not everything is about you, Mason.
I wanted to talk about Abigail, so
I did.

MASON

Yeah, and now I've got the guys at
work mouthing off about me being a
family man!

DALE

Well, that's great-

MASON

No, it's not! I don't need you
airing my mistakes to the whole
damn world!

DALE

I'm not airing your mistakes. You
do enough of that on your own. And
that girl isn't a mistake, Mason.
In fact, she might be the only good
damn thing you've done with your
life.

Mason fumes, but doesn't have a response. Dale enters the
house, leaving Mason on the front porch. Mason breathes out
hard, expressing his anger.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Dale is sitting down in a chair. Edith walks into the living
room from the kitchen as Mason enters from the porch. Edith
smiles at Mason.

EDITH

Hey honey!

Mason stalks up the stairs, SLAMMING the door shut. Edith
looks over at Dale.

EDITH (CONT'D)

What's gotten into him?

INT. MASON'S ROOM - DUSK

Mason throws his bag onto his bed, pacing his room. He pulls out his phone.

ON MASON'S PHONE SCREEN

Mason looks through his contacts for NICK. He opens a text, typing "Hey, man. You got a cut?"

Mason looks up from his phone, at the track marks on his arm. He traces them with his thumb. Mason looks up at the sound of his mother's voice.

EDITH (O.S.)
Abigail, can you come help set the
table?

ABIGAIL (O.S.)
Coming!

Mason can hear ABIGAIL'S FOOTSTEPS as she passes in front of his door. He looks back down at his phone, then clicks it off and throws it on the bed with a GROAN.

INT. DINER - DAY

Mason sits in a booth with Toby. Toby looks almost dumbfounded.

TOBY
You have a kid?

MASON
Yep.

TOBY
And you never mentioned that before
because...?

Mason shrugs.

MASON
Wasn't a reason to.

Toby scoffs.

TOBY
I could think of a few, Mason.

Mason sits back in the booth with an annoyed sigh.

MASON

It's just... I haven't seen this kid in 18 years, and now suddenly she's in my house. She's eating dinner with my parents, she's watching tv on my couch, she's there every damn time I turn around. And I'm supposed to do this shit sober?

Toby sighs.

TOBY

I know it can't be helping.

Mason scoffs.

MASON

Meanwhile, my dad's up my ass because she's got no family, and of course that's my fault, too. It's not like I knew that would happen! I left her at the hospital, not the side of the road! They're supposed to take care of her.

Toby nods, sitting forward.

TOBY

Look, Mason. I know this can't be easy. But this isn't all bad.

MASON

How's it not?

TOBY

You have an opportunity here. One you've never had before. To find a purpose.

Mason pauses, studying him.

MASON

What do you mean?

TOBY

If Abigail came to you, there's a reason she did that. And as her father, I think you owe it to yourself, and her, to find out what that reason is.

Mason sits in silence, processing. Toby sits back.

TOBY (CONT'D)
Who knows? It might even help you
stay sober this time. To have
someone need you.

Mason shakes his head.

MASON
She doesn't need me.

TOBY
Oh? Then why is she here?

Mason pauses, thinking. Toby looks at him with a smirk.

TOBY (CONT'D)
It's worth finding out.

Toby takes a sip of his coffee. Mason looks out of the window
in thought.

INT. GROCERY STORE- DAY

Abigail stands at the cash register, ringing up a customer.

ABIGAIL
That'll be \$24.86.

The customer hands Abigail cash, which she puts in the
register. She collects the change, handing it back to the
customer.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
There you go. Have a great day!

Abigail turns to greet the next customer. To her surprise,
Parker is smiling at her.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
You again.

PARKER
Small town.

ABIGAIL
I don't know that it's this small.

Abigail smirks at him and begins to ring up his items. Parker
watches her, amused.

PARKER
You've been here, what, two weeks
now? And you've already got a job?
(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)
You really are a Summers, aren't you?

ABIGAIL
I'll take that as a compliment.

PARKER
It was one.

Abigail smiles at him, continuing to ring up his items.
Parker leans on the check out counter.

PARKER (CONT'D)
So, you got any plans this Friday night?

ABIGAIL
Not really. I don't know anyone to have plans with.

PARKER
You know me.

ABIGAIL
Is that a question?

PARKER
Do you want to have plans this Friday?

ABIGAIL
What kind of plans?

PARKER
The movie theater is showing a double feature. Some kind of scary movie.

ABIGAIL
Really, a scary movie? You're gonna be that cliché?

PARKER
Well, you don't really strike me as the kind of girl who gets scared.

ABIGAIL
That's cause I'm not.

PARKER
Then it's not really cliché, is it?

Abigail rings up his last item, studying him.

ABIGAIL
Total is \$18.57.

Parker goes to get his money out of the wallet.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
What time is the movie?

Parker hands her a bill with a smirk.

PARKER
Starts at 7:00. 6:00, if you want
dinner before.

ABIGAIL
Oh, come on, we all know movies are
for gorging yourself on popcorn.
Dinner just ruins that.

PARKER
All right, 7:00 then. Pick you up
at 6:30.

Abigail hands him his change back, contemplating.

ABIGAIL
All right. 6:30 then.

PARKER
I'll be looking forward to it.

Parker grabs his groceries and leaves. Abigail watches after
him, a smile she can't stop spreading across her face.

INT. SUMMERS DINING ROOM - DUSK

Dale, Edith, Mason, and Abigail sit around the dinner table.

MASON
A date?

Mason's brow is furrowed. He stops eating.

ABIGAIL
Yeah. This Friday.

DALE
Who's the lucky man?

EDITH
Is it that boy from the store?

Mason leans forward.

MASON

What boy from the store?

Abigail glances at Mason, then looks to Edith.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, that's him.

EDITH

Dale, it's Parker Hadley.

Mason sits back in his seat, shaking his head. Dale nods.

DALE

Oh, Hadley's boy. His father used to work for me.

Mason leans forward.

MASON

Yeah, and hung out with me in his free time, which should tell you something.

EDITH

I'm sure it'll be fine, Mason.

Mason looks incredulous.

MASON

Wait, hold on. How did you even meet this guy?

Abigail stares at him, confused.

ABIGAIL

He gave me a ride here when I got off the bus.

MASON

You took a ride from a stranger to get here?

Abigail is tense, eyes narrow.

ABIGAIL

As opposed to walking? Yes.

EDITH

He seemed like a very nice boy.

Mason shakes his head.

MASON
Doesn't mean he is one.

DALE
Oh, come on now, Mason. I'm sure
it'll be a good time.

Mason looks over at Dale.

MASON
Are you serious?

Edith waves her hand absently at Mason.

EDITH
What are you two going to do, Abby?

ABIGAIL
We were just gonna go see a movie.

MASON
Aren't you a little young to be
dating?

Abigail stares at him.

ABIGAIL
I'm eighteen. Why do you even care?

Mason sits back, caught off guard.

MASON
Not all the boys in town are safe.
I would know.

EDITH
Oh, Mason, let the girl have some
fun. I think it'll be good for you
to meet some of the kids from town.
Make some friends.

Mason rolls his eyes.

MASON
Yeah, cause I'm sure friendship is
what he has in mind.

DALE
All right, now. Abby, do you need
some money for your date?

MASON
Jesus, Dad.

ABIGAIL

No, thank you. I got paid for work,
so I'm good.

DALE

Now that's what I like to hear. A
girl who's prepared for her future.
After all, a man on top of a
mountain didn't fall there. Isn't
that right, Mason?

MASON

So I've been told.

They go back to eating dinner, Mason and Abigail both visibly
tense. Dale clears his throat.

DALE

Well, Abby, since your social life
is taking off, I think a surprise
is in order.

Abigail's brow furrows.

ABIGAIL

A surprise?

Dale wipes his mouth and stands up.

DALE

I picked you up something while I
was in town today. Come on, I'll
show you.

INT. SUMMERS GARAGE - DUSK

Dale and Abigail step into the garage, Mason and Edith not
far behind. Dale walks over to a tarp-covered object. He
pulls it off to reveal a vintage-looking bicycle, complete
with a basket and bell on the front.

DALE

When your Grandmother said you got
a job, I figured you'd need a way
to get yourself there.

Abigail stands, stunned.

ABIGAIL

Wait... this is for me?

Dale nods, smiling at her.

DALE

Of course.

Dale gently moves her towards it. Abigail comes closer, examining the bike. Mason watches, arms crossed.

DALE (CONT'D)

It'll get you into town pretty easily. You can take it to work, to meet up with your friends.

Abigail looks up at the bike, trying to hide her emotions. Dale checks the tires.

DALE (CONT'D)

I'll make sure the tires are pumped up with air before you leave in the morning. You... you know how to ride, right?

Abigail looks up.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, my foster brother taught me. But you didn't have to do this, walking isn't too bad-

DALE

Nonsense! It'll be a good way for you to get around as you settle in here. Plus, that summer heat is no joke.

Abigail hesitantly meets his eyes.

ABIGAIL

Are you sure?

Dale smiles at her.

DALE

Positive, honey.

Abigail pauses, then quickly leans forward and hugs Dale tightly. Dale stumbles just a little, caught off guard. He smiles, hugging Abigail back. Edith smile warmly. Mason watches them, face appearing almost jealous.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Friday. Mason sits in the living room with his parents, watching TV. Abigail descends the stairs, dressed for her date. Edith smiles

EDITH
Oh, you look wonderful, sweetie!

DALE
Yeah, you're really gonna knock 'em
dead.

Abigail glances towards Mason. He hesitates.

MASON
You look nice.

ABIGAIL
Thanks.

Abigail goes to grab her bag.

DALE
You got your keys?

ABIGAIL
Yep.

EDITH
What time do you think you'll be
home?

ABIGAIL
Um, I'm not sure. Do you have a
preference?

DALE
You're an adult, you'll be fine.

Mason bristles, glancing at Dale.

MASON
Not too late.

EDITH
Is Parker picking you up?

ABIGAIL
Yeah. He should be here in-

The DOORBELL RINGS. Abigail grabs her bag and hugs Dale and Edith. She doesn't reach for Mason.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I'll see you guys later?

MASON
Wait a second. Let's at least meet
the guy.

Abigail stares at him, confused. Edith chuckles.

EDITH

Oh, Mason.

MASON

What? You're fine with her going out with a total stranger?

DALE

All right, invite him in for a minute.

Abigail goes to the door, opening it and greeting Parker. She moves out of the way for him to come inside. Edith smiles warmly at him. Mason crosses his arms in front of his chest.

EDITH

Hey, Parker!

PARKER

Nice to see you again, Mrs. Summers.

EDITH

Oh, please, call me Edith.

Dale goes to shake Parker's hand.

DALE

Dale Summers, we've met before.

PARKER

Parker Hadley. Nice to see you again.

Parker doesn't move to greet Mason, nodding instead.

PARKER (CONT'D)

Mr. Summers.

EDITH

So, you guys are gonna go see a movie?

PARKER

Yes ma'am.

MASON

What movie?

PARKER

They're doing a double throwback. I believe it's Paranormal Activity 1 and 2.

DALE

Well, that sounds like it'll be a lot of fun.

Mason eyes Parker suspiciously.

MASON

You driving?

Abigail snaps her head over to glare at Mason.

PARKER

Yes sir.

MASON

What kind of car you have?

EDITH

Mason.

Parker doesn't look bothered.

PARKER

It's a Ford F-150.

MASON

Is it safe?

PARKER

I wouldn't let Abby near it if it wasn't.

MASON

Ever gotten a speeding ticket?

EDITH

Okay, I think that's enough.

Mason shrugs.

MASON

What? I wanna know.

DALE

I'm sure you two will be fine.

MASON

Could be a reckless driver. Guess we'll never know.

Edith shakes her head, smiling at Abigail.

EDITH

Call us if you need anything, okay
sweetie?

ABIGAIL

Will do. Bye guys.

Abigail breaks her glare at Mason, ushering Parker out of the house. Mason watches them leave, not pleased.

INT. MOVIE THEATER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Parker and Abigail stand in the concessions line as people move around them, getting snacks and going to their movies.

PARKER

You really hadn't met them ever
when I dropped you off?

Abigail shakes her head with a smile.

ABIGAIL

Nope.

Parker chuckles, looking her up and down.

PARKER

Brave girl. And you said you were
going to school in the fall? Where
at?

ABIGAIL

UVA, for teaching. It's my first
year.

PARKER

(surprised)

You're young. Eighteen though?

ABIGAIL

Yeah, how old are you?

PARKER

Twenty-two.

ABIGAIL

Oh. You go to school?

PARKER

Yeah, Virginia Military Institute.
Senior, this year.

ABIGAIL
That's cool, what do you study?

PARKER
Engineering.

ABIGAIL
Wow. You must be smart.

PARKER
Well, you know. It's definitely not
something everyone could handle.
But I find it challenging.

Parker and Abigail step up to the counter.

CONCESSIONS CLERK
What can I getcha?

PARKER
One large popcorn, and...
(to Abigail)
Diet Coke good?

ABIGAIL
Oh, yeah. Sure.

PARKER
A large Diet Coke, please.

CONCESSIONS CLERK
Coming right up.

The clerk goes to grab the drink and popcorn. Parker looks to Abigail.

PARKER
You don't mind sharing, do you?

ABIGAIL
No, that's fine.

PARKER
So, your dad seemed a little weird
earlier.

ABIGAIL
I wouldn't worry about him. He's
been weird since I got here.

PARKER
Yeah, I bet. He never struck me as
a family man. More of partier, from
what I've heard.

Abigail looks uncomfortable. Parker grabs the popcorn, handing it to Abigail.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Not that there's anything wrong
with a good party.

Parker looks at her slyly, taking the drink.

PARKER (CONT'D)
You party much? I bet foster kids
know how to throw down.

Abigail shrugs, shaking her head.

ABIGAIL
Uh... not really, no.

Parker smirks.

PARKER
Well, we'll have to fix that.
C'mon.

Parker puts his free arm around Abigail's shoulders, leading her through the open door of their theater.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Night has fallen around the town, and only a few late night places have any business. Parker and Abigail exit the theater.

PARKER
You really don't get scared during
horror movies, do you?

ABIGAIL
Nah. Real life will scare you way
more than any movie can.

PARKER
That's kinda hot.

Parker looks around the street.

PARKER (CONT'D)
You wanna do something else? See
what's open around here?

Abigail checks her phone, realizing it's quite late.

ABIGAIL
I should probably call it a night.

PARKER
Oh, come on. It's a Friday night.

ABIGAIL
Well, I can't go to a bar or anything.

PARKER
You could. I know the ones that don't card.

Abigail hesitates. Parker bumps her gently.

PARKER (CONT'D)
C'mon. Take a walk on the wild side. It's fun over here.

Abigail pauses to consider it, then shakes her head.

ABIGAIL
They're gonna expect me back.
Sorry...

Parker appears unhappy with that answer, but nods.

PARKER
If you insist. Back to your place then.

Parker moves to the door, opening it for Abigail. She climbs in, and he shuts it for her, just a tad too hard.

EXT/INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - NIGHT

Parker pulls into the driveway, shutting off his truck. He and Abigail get out. Parker begins to walk her to the door.

PARKER
I had a good time tonight.

ABIGAIL
I did, too. Thanks for the movie.
Sorry I couldn't stay out.

INTERCUT MASON/ABIGAIL

They stop on the porch. Mason, sitting in the living room, notices the light come on. Parker turns to Abigail, gently putting his arm around her waist to bring her to him.

PARKER
I'll accept your apology - if I can
see you again?

ABIGAIL
Yeah. Yeah, I'd like that.

Mason watches through the window as Parker leans in to kiss Abigail. Mason stands, hiding from their view. Parker and Abigail break apart from the kiss.

PARKER
Until next time, then.

Parker leaves. Abigail turns, going inside the house.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Abigail enters the house, surprised to find Mason standing in the living room. Mason stands from the couch, looking annoyed.

ABIGAIL
Oh, hey. Didn't expect you to be
up.

She walks past him with little regard. Mason crosses his arms, taking a step towards her.

MASON
You were out late.

Abigail looks over at him, confused.

ABIGAIL
It's not like I had a curfew.

MASON
Did you do anything after?

ABIGAIL
No.

Mason raises an eyebrow.

MASON
Nothing? No joy rides, no stop-offs
on the way home?

Abigail's brow furrows.

ABIGAIL
No?

MASON

He's older, isn't he? 21, 22? No trips to the liquor store with him and his buddies?

Abigail is agitated at this point, turning to face him.

ABIGAIL

What is your problem?

MASON

Just asking. It's a small town, not a lot to do. Kids can get creative.

ABIGAIL

What, like you did?

Mason recognizes the jab. He steps closer to her.

MASON

I know what I would've been doing out with a girl on a Friday night-

ABIGAIL

Yeah, well, I'm not like you. Not that you would know that.

Mason is a bit taken aback.

MASON

What is that supposed to mean?

Edith creeps down the stairs, dressed in a nightgown. She watches as Abigail and Mason fight.

ABIGAIL

Just cause you make bad decisions doesn't mean I will. And you don't have the right to accuse me of that when you don't know anything about me, and you've made it clear you don't want to!

Mason struggles to find a response. Abigail takes the opportunity to continue.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Do you realize you asked Parker more questions this evening than you've asked me since I got here? The only time you haven't straight up ignored me is when you're criticizing me for something.

Mason looks almost hurt by her words.

MASON

That's not-

ABIGAIL

I get it, you don't want me to be here. Story of my life. But don't sit there suddenly trying to play Dad when we both know you don't wanna be one.

Mason stammers, mouth open. Abigail glares, then brushes past Mason, running up the stairs past Edith without a word. Mason watches her go, then glances at his mother, who looks at him sympathetically.

INT. SUMMERS KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mason walks into the kitchen, GROWLING with anger. He leans against the counter, resting his head in his arms. Edith comes in, putting a comforting hand on his shoulder.

EDITH

Oh, honey.

Mason stays hunched in his arms.

MASON

I can't do this.

EDITH

Yes, you can-

Mason quickly stands up straight.

MASON

No, I can't! I'm just fucking it up, and she's gonna end up hating me. She probably does already.

EDITH

She doesn't hate you.

MASON

Sure sounded like it.

EDITH

Well of course she did, you came at her out of nowhere. It was very your father of you.

Mason shakes his head.

MASON

Do not say that to me.

EDITH

It's true, though. You hate it when he does that.

Mason struggles for words.

MASON

I wasn't trying to... come at her. I was just... worried, I guess.

EDITH

Well, she doesn't know that. But it doesn't mean she hates you. Abigail came here for you, Mason. She didn't come to find me, or your father. She came for you.

Mason stays quiet. Edith leans against the kitchen counter.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You need to remember, she's gone from home to home, never had anything stable to count on. You need to show her that stability, Mason.

MASON

I can't even give myself that, Mom. How am I gonna do it for someone else?

EDITH

You'll find a way. You just have to let yourself try. Stop sabotaging your relationship with her before you even build one.

Mason looks away from his mother.

EDITH (CONT'D)

She's a smart girl. Responsible, hard working.

Mason scoffs.

MASON

Nothing like me, then.

EDITH

Exactly like you. But you can't assume she'll make your mistakes.

(MORE)

EDITH (CONT'D)

You need to create trust with her
if you want things to get better.
Get to know her. Help her see that
you're here now.

Mason looks up at Edith.

MASON

And what if I can't be there?

Edith takes a deep breath.

EDITH

That's up to you, Mason. You're
gonna have to decide what's more
important to you.

Edith thinks for a moment.

EDITH (CONT'D)

You know, hon, it's the sins of our
family that shape who we are. You
were certainly shaped by mine and
your father's. And Abigail is
shaped by yours.

MASON

What do you mean?

EDITH

Abigail knows how to give love to
others, but she doesn't know how to
let herself be loved in return.
Just like you. And the second she
feels rejected, or she feels you
choosing heroin over her, she'll
run, just like you used to. So if
you want this, you have to show her
that you choose her, every day. But
I know you, Mason. I know you can
do it.

Mason stares at her for a moment. He goes to kiss her on top
of her head.

MASON

Goodnight, Ma.

EDITH

Night, sweetie.

INT. SUMMERS KITCHEN - DAY

Abigail sits at the kitchen counter eating cereal. Mason enters, hesitating when he sees her. Abigail glances at him briefly, but then goes back to eating breakfast.

MASON

Cheerios?

Abigail pauses, looking up at him oddly.

ABIGAIL

What?

Mason shifts awkwardly.

MASON

You... you like Cheerios?

ABIGAIL

Uh... I guess.

MASON

They were always my favorite, as a kid. All my friends loved those sugary cereals - Captain Crunch, Frosted Flakes. But I always just wanted Cheerios. The regular kind though, not the... honey nut.

He drops off awkwardly, with Abigail staring. She nods, confused. Mason panics.

MASON (CONT'D)

Can I sit down?

Abigail hesitates.

ABIGAIL

Okay...

Mason hesitantly sits down next to her.

MASON

H-how were the movies?

ABIGAIL

What?

MASON

The movies you went to see yesterday?

ABIGAIL

Oh. They were fine, not really my thing.

MASON

Oh... why?

Abigail shrugs.

ABIGAIL

I don't really like scary movies.

MASON

Oh... what do you like?

ABIGAIL

Uh... I dunno. I never really watched a lot of movies.

MASON

Oh.

They fall silent. Abigail finishes her cereal, getting up to put her bowl in the sink. She glances at Mason, then leaves without a word, passing Edith on her way out. Mason looks defeated.

EDITH

It'll get easier.

Mason puts his head in his hands.

MASON

I told you I'm not cut out for this.

EDITH

It's one conversation, Mason. You're not going to bridge the gap over breakfast.

MASON

How am I supposed to do that when I can't even talk to her about fucking cereal?

EDITH

That's what you tried to talk about? Oh, honey.

Edith chuckles, Mason gets irritated. He stands up, going to put his mug in the sink. Edith senses his annoyance.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Mason, let it go. You have to be patient.

MASON
I'm gonna go be patient in the garage.

Mason walks out of the room, leaving Edith dismayed.

INT. SUMMERS DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mason is tinkering with his truck. He pulls his wrench, SLAMMING his elbow by mistake.

MASON
FUCK!

DALE (O.S.)
Careful.

Mason turns, massaging his elbow as he sees his father.

MASON
Little late for that.

DALE
I can see. Whatcha doing there?

MASON
Just some maintenance.

Mason turns back to the truck, leaning over the hood.

MASON (CONT'D)
Mom send you to check on me?

DALE
Your mother's worried about you.

MASON
Isn't she always?

Dale wanders closer to where Mason is working, leaning against the truck.

DALE
You know, you're making this much harder for yourself than it has to be.

MASON
That's kind of my strong suit.

DALE
She's a special girl.

Mason looks annoyed but doesn't reply.

DALE (CONT'D)
Hard-working, bright future.
Everything a parent could hope for.

MASON
Guess the apple fell far from the
tree then, huh?

DALE
Luckily for you.

Mason angrily straightens up to look at his father.

MASON
Did you just come out here to
insult me or does this have a
point?

DALE
You know, Mason, my dad wasn't
around much when I was a kid, and I
never forgot it. And she won't
either. You're her father. And this
is the moment to act like one.

MASON
What, like you?

DALE
This isn't about me. This is about
you, and the legacy you want to
leave as a father.

MASON
Oh, it's a legacy now, is it? You
must think pretty highly of
yourself.

DALE
For Christ's sake, Mason.

Dale moves to leave, frustrated.

MASON
No, no, tell me more about this
legacy.

DALE

You know, for someone who seems to hate his father so much, you're on the fast track to making your daughter feel the same way. Maybe that'll be the legacy you leave.

Dale goes back into the house. With a GROWL, Mason throws his wrench, which CLATTERS on the ground. He pulls out a pack of cigarettes, taking a few steps forward in the driveway. Mason lights one and looks over, seeing Edith and Abigail painting on the front porch.

EXT. SUMMERS FRONT PORCH - DAY

Abigail sits in front of a canvas. She concentrates on the line she's making, defining the jaw of her figure. Edith looks over, seeing the figure Abigail is tracing.

EDITH

Who are you painting?

ABIGAIL

Mom.

Edith watches her sadly.

EDITH

I can see her already.

Abigail glances over but doesn't reply. Edith turns to her own landscape painting.

EDITH (CONT'D)

So, Parker seems like a nice boy.

ABIGAIL

He is, so far.

EDITH

Are you gonna see him again?

ABIGAIL

I think so, yeah.

EDITH

Good. It'll be good for you to make some friends here. Make it start to feel like home.

Abigail awkwardly hesitates.

ABIGAIL
I'm not really good at making
friends.

EDITH
I'm sure you are. Parker sure fell
for you.

ABIGAIL
Well, that's different.

EDITH
How so?

ABIGAIL
He's a boy. It's not the same as
friends.

EDITH
Well, you've had friends before,
right?

ABIGAIL
Yeah, foster kids. So, unless you
know any of those...

Abigail trails off. Edith studies her.

EDITH
Monique mentioned things had been
rough.

ABIGAIL
(scoffs)
Yeah, you could say that.

EDITH
Well... is that something you would
wanna talk about?

ABIGAIL
Not really. It doesn't matter.

EDITH
Honey, if something happened to you
that matters-

Abigail scoffs.

ABIGAIL
Not historically.

Abigail sighs, turning to Edith.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Look, I know you think you wanna
know that stuff, but trust me, you
don't. I'm fine, okay? So don't
worry about it.

Edith nods. Abigail stands.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go get more water for the
brushes.

Abigail grabs the water container and walks inside. Edith
looks over at Abigail's painting of her mother, becoming
emotional.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Mason walks to his truck, wrapping up work for the day. A
group of workers crowd around the truck near him, drinking
out of a brown paper bag.

WORKER #1
Mason! Come join us.

Mason hesitates, then shakes his head.

MASON
Can't. I gotta head home.

WORKER #2
Look at you! You get a kid and
suddenly you're all responsible.

WORKER #1
Come on, man. We're gonna get some
goods from Nick.

Mason pauses, contemplating.

MASON
Nah, man. Thanks for the invite.

WORKER #2
What I tell you, he's straight
laced now.

WORKER #1
Shame. You were always the life of
the party, man.

Mason walks around to the driver's side of his truck, pausing
before yanking open the door and getting inside.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Abigail descends the stairs, the house empty. She looks over at the painting above the mantle, then wanders to the bookcase. Different photo albums are lined up on a shelf. She selects one labeled "Mason's Photography", taking it to the couch.

Abigail opens the album. There are many pictures - pictures of Heather, sitting at an easel. Heather in the kitchen with Edith, laughing. Abigail takes them in, emotional. She turns the page. There's a photo of Heather in front of a gorgeous mountain view - the same as the painting above the mantle.

Abigail is startled by the SOUND of the DOOR OPENING. Mason walks in, pausing at the sight of her. Abigail looks guilty, holding the album.

ABIGAIL

Uh... hi.

Mason studies her.

MASON

Brought out the album?

Abigail stumbles over her words.

ABIGAIL

I... I was just looking.

Mason hesitates, then walks over to her.

MASON

Here, scoot over.

Abigail slowly does, and Mason sits down next to her, looking at the pictures. He smiles softly.

MASON (CONT'D)

I remember that. That was her birthday.

Abigail glances up at the mantle.

ABIGAIL

It's the same place as the painting.

Mason chuckles softly, his face and voice gentle as he studies the picture.

MASON

Yeah, it was her favorite spot on the parkway. She'd always wanna drive it together and stop at every overlook, every single time.

ABIGAIL

Where is it?

MASON

Not too far, about a 30 minute drive from here.

Mason glances over at Abigail. An idea forms.

MASON (CONT'D)

Do you wanna go see it?

Abigail looks up at him, surprised.

ABIGAIL

With you? Like when?

Mason smiles.

MASON

Like now.

Abigail smiles at him, then nods.

EXT/INT. MASON'S TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Mason's truck drives up a winding mountain road. Abigail sits in the passenger seat, looking out the open window. Mason pulls out a cigarette.

MASON

You mind?

Abigail shakes her head. Mason lights it and takes a drag. He glances over at Abigail.

MASON (CONT'D)

Put on some music. Whatever you want.

Abigail reaches over to the radio, dialing through the channels. MUSIC plays as Abigail sits back happily. Mason looks over at her, smiling. The trees are lush green as they wind around the road further up the mountain.

EXT. MOUNTAIN OVERLOOK - DAY

Mason shuts the door of his truck, walking around to meet Abigail.

MASON
Here, there should be a little
trail this way.

Mason walks in front, leading Abigail down a trail towards the overlook.

MASON (CONT'D)
Careful, watch your step.

Mason and Abigail emerge at the overlook. The valley is laid out below them, Blue Ridge Mountains stretching towards the horizon. Abigail gasps, wide eyed.

ABIGAIL
That's amazing.

MASON
Just like I remember it.

Mason and Abigail stand side by side, looking at the view in awe. Abigail looks over at Mason.

ABIGAIL
When's the last time you came here?

Mason clears his throat.

MASON
Not since I took that photo.

Abigail nods, looking back out at the view. Mason looks over at her, studying her, before turning to walk back towards the trail.

MASON (CONT'D)
Stay there.

Abigail turns towards him as Mason pulls out his phone.

MASON (CONT'D)
Smile!

Abigail smiles as Mason takes a picture with his phone. He looks at it on the screen - it mirrors the one of Heather from before. He looks up at Abigail.

MASON (CONT'D)
Beautiful.

Abigail grins at him.

EXT. MOUNTAIN OVERLOOK - DAY

The sun is golden, slowing sinking behind a mountain. Abigail and Mason sit beside each other on a rock, taking in the view.

ABIGAIL
So, you took all those pictures?

Mason nods.

MASON
Yeah. I used to be really into photography.

ABIGAIL
What'd you like about it?

Mason pauses.

MASON
I think I liked how you could keep a memory. Like a little frozen piece of time.

Abigail glances over at him.

ABIGAIL
So why'd you stop?

Mason shifts uncomfortably.

MASON
Um... after Heather died, there just wasn't anything I wanted to remember anymore.

Abigail nods, looking back to the horizon. She pauses for a moment.

ABIGAIL
How did you meet Mom?

Mason sits back, thinking.

MASON
It was at a Memorial Day party. It was cold that night, and she sat by me at the fire to warm up. We ended up talking the whole night.

ABIGAIL
How long did you know her?

MASON
Five years.

Abigail nods, hesitating.

ABIGAIL
What was she like?

Mason hesitates before answering.

MASON
Heather was... like sunlight. She was warm, radiating. You couldn't help but be drawn in. She was always laughing, always happy. At first.

Abigail glances over at Mason, staring at the sunset.

ABIGAIL
What happened?

MASON
About a year and or so in, I was working for Dad, but it wasn't going well, and... Heather's mom died. Her dad wasn't around, so that was she all she had. After that, shit just... kept going downhill.

Abigail nods, looking down.

ABIGAIL
Guess I won't be meeting them, then.

Mason looks over at Abigail. She looks sad. His face falls, and he swallows hard.

MASON
Hey. About the other night...

Abigail looks over at him.

MASON (CONT'D)
I'm sorry I came at you. I shouldn't have done that.

Mason sighs, leaning back.

MASON (CONT'D)

I- I used to run in some of the same circles as Hadley's dad, and I... I was just... worried, I guess.

Abigail's eyebrows shoot up.

ABIGAIL

Worried?

MASON

What? Is that so hard to believe?

Abigail scoffs.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, a little.

Abigail pauses, looking at the mountain skyline.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

But, y'know, I grew up in the system, it's not like I haven't had the option before.

Mason looks up, concerned.

MASON

But you never...

Abigail shakes her head.

ABIGAIL

No.

Mason relaxes.

MASON

Good. You don't wanna get into that shit.

There's a pause. Mason studies Abigail for a moment.

MASON (CONT'D)

Mom said you were pretty good at painting. Can I see some?

Abigail hands Mason her phone. He clicks through the pictures, impressed and a little emotional.

MASON (CONT'D)

Shit. You're just as good as Heather was.

Abigail smiles.

ABIGAIL

Thanks.

Abigail takes her phone back. They both look back towards horizon as the sun slips behind the mountains. A moment passes.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Hey, Mason?

Mason looks over at Abigail, caught off guard. Abigail glances over at him.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Thanks for taking me here.

Mason softens. He leans over to lightly bump Abigail with his shoulder.

MASON

Sure, kid.

Mason smiles at Abigail, who smiles back. They both look back out at the horizon to see the last colors of sunset.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Main Street is decked out with Fourth of July flags, grocery store windows with holiday ad displays. Parker is waiting in front of his truck. Abigail walks up wheeling her bike. Parker kisses her, a little too deep, and Abigail breaks apart.

ABIGAIL

Someone's excited.

PARKER

Can't help that I can't control myself around you. Your fault.

ABIGAIL

Funny.

Parker leans back against the truck, hands on Abigail's waist. Abigail balances her bike.

PARKER

You excited for the fourth this weekend?

ABIGAIL

Well, I have to work in the day,
but I get off at 7. I can meet you
then?

Parker nods.

PARKER

The boys and I usually have a
bonfire, cookout, have some drinks.
You can join the party after work.
And then...

Parker pulls Abigail closer to him.

PARKER (CONT'D)

We can have a little party of our
own.

Parker leans in, kissing Abigail again. After a moment,
Abigail breaks them apart.

ABIGAIL

Come on, we're in public.

PARKER

You're no fun.

Parker rolls his eyes and goes to help Abigail load her bike
into the truck bed.

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Mason sits with Toby in a booth in the diner across the
street, watching as Abigail climbs in the truck and they
drive away. Toby looks over at Mason.

TOBY

That's your daughter?

Mason jolts, looking over at him.

MASON

What? Oh, uh, yeah, that's her.

Toby smiles at him.

TOBY

She looks like a sweet girl.

Mason nods.

MASON

She is. Sweet, smart, talented.

Toby chuckles.

TOBY

Sounds like things are going well.
Who was she with?

MASON

Hadley's kid, Parker.

Toby pauses.

TOBY

Interesting.

Mason studies him.

MASON

Why is it interesting?

TOBY

You and Hadley used to be buddies,
too, yeah?

Mason shrugs.

MASON

I wouldn't say buddies. Hung out at
Nick's sometimes.

Mason looks back over to where Parker's truck was turning a corner. Toby watches Mason.

MASON (CONT'D)

You don't think he does that, do
you?

TOBY

It might be something to keep an
eye on. But I'm sure it's fine. She
seems like a smart girl.

Mason watches them drive away. He looks worried. Toby watches him.

TOBY (CONT'D)

I gotta tell you, Mason, I never
thought I'd see the day where you
were a dad.

MASON
(laughs)
Yeah, me either.

TOBY
It suits you.

Mason smiles to himself.

EXT. SUMMERS FRONT PORCH - EVENING

Abigail sits in front of her easel on the front porch. The outline of Heather is there, but only partially painted in.

Abigail looks up as Mason's truck pulls into the driveway. He gets out, walking up the sidewalk and onto the porch.

MASON
Hey!

ABIGAIL
Hey!

Mason stops off the porch, leaning on the railing.

MASON
How was your day?

ABIGAIL
It was good! Worked, hung out with Parker. Working on this now.

Mason nods, looking over at the easel.

MASON
How's it coming along?

ABIGAIL
It's good. I really like it so far.

Mason nods again. There's a pause, and Mason crosses his arms.

MASON
So... how are you liking him - Parker? Is he... is he nice to you?

Abigail nods.

ABIGAIL
Yeah. Very nice.

MASON

Good. And he treats you well?

ABIGAIL

Yeah.

MASON

Good. That's good.

Abigail looks at him suspiciously.

ABIGAIL

Are you okay?

Mason nods, uncrossing his arms.

MASON

Yeah, yeah. I just want to make sure he's being good to you, that's all.

Abigail nods, smiling at him.

ABIGAIL

Well, thank you.

Mason nods, then steps towards the door.

MASON

Well, I'll let you keep working.

Abigail watches as Mason goes inside. She turns back to the easel, filling in some of Heather's hair.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mason pauses in the living room, looking out the window. He can see Abigail working on the painting. Mason watches, eyes beginning to water. After a moment, he looks away, heading upstairs.

EXT. BONFIRE GROUNDS - DUSK

A bonfire ROARS against the dimming skyline. People, including Parker, are crowded around it, drinking and laughing.

Abigail rides up on her bike. She get off, taking in the party around her. She looks nervous. Parker walks up to her, greeting her with a sloppy kiss. Abigail gently breaks apart.

ABIGAIL
I can see you've been celebrating.

PARKER
Well, it is a holiday.

Abigail smiles uncomfortably, and Parker rolls his eyes.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Don't be such a stick in the mud.
Come to the fire, have a drink.

Parker takes Abigail's hand, pulling her over to the bonfire. His friends (early 20s, college students) greet them enthusiastically. COREY, early 20s, fratty with a red Solo cup in hand, leans forward.

COREY
This the girl you were telling us
about, Parker?

Parker nods.

PARKER
Yeah, this is Abby. Abby, these are
my friends.

Abigail half smiles.

ABIGAIL
Nice to meet you.

Corey smiles, offering his hand. They shake.

COREY
Pleasure's all mine. Name's Corey.

Parker hands Abigail a red cup.

PARKER
Here, babe. Have a drink.

Abigail shakes her head.

ABIGAIL
Uh, no thanks, I'm good.

Parker rolls his eyes.

PARKER
It's a party, Abigail-

COREY
Lighten up, bro. Anyways, just
means more for me.

Corey takes the cup, drinking a long swig. Parker seems irritated but holds on to Abigail, lightly rubbing her skin. Abigail looks around, tense.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Mason walks into the bar, looking around. A band PLAYS MUSIC on a small stage in the corner. Mason walks over to the bar, sitting at the counter. A BARTENDER walks up.

BARTENDER
What'll it be?

MASON
Jack and... actually, just a coke,
please.

BARTENDER
Coming right up.

Mason looks around as the bartender makes his drink. A group of men, including NICK (mid 50s), a rough looking dealer, notices him. Mason turns away quickly. The bartender puts his drink in front of him.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Here you go.

MASON
Thanks.

Mason takes a long sip of the drink, ignoring Nick staring at him.

EXT. BONFIRE GROUNDS - NIGHT

The party is raging. Abigail and Parker are pressed up against the side of his truck, making out. His hands roam her body, and Abigail moves them away. Parker pulls back, irritated.

PARKER
Come on, baby, don't be like that.

Abigail looks around.

ABIGAIL
It's crowded.

PARKER
No one's gonna care.

Parker leans in, kissing her again. He pins Abigail to the side of his truck with his body, hands wandering. Abigail moves them again. Parker's voice is angrier this time.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Don't be such a tease, Abby. You've got me all worked up.

Abigail shakes her head.

ABIGAIL
I think maybe we should get you home.

PARKER
I think I've got a better idea.

Parker kisses her again, making his way down her neck. His hand slips under the hem of her shirt. Abigail pushes him back.

ABIGAIL
Parker, stop. I'm serious.

In the distance, SIRENS can be heard, coming closer. Parker scowls at her.

PARKER
You've made me wait all summer, now. I'm not waiting anymore.

Parker tries to touch her waist. Abigail begins to panic.

ABIGAIL
I said STOP.

Abigail pushes Parker off of her. He stumbles back, enraged. Blue and red lights of police cars illuminate the bonfire. In a swift motion, Parker SLAPS Abigail forcefully. She stumbles from the impact, SMACKING into the mirror of Parker's truck.

POLICE OFFICER
HEY!

A POLICE OFFICER runs over to them. Parker stands, wide eyed and open mouthed.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Mason sits at the bar, watching a TV, when Nick approaches him, leaning beside him against the bar.

NICK
Mason Summers. Been a while since
I've seen you.

Mason doesn't look over at Nick.

MASON
Yeah. I was hoping to keep it that
way.

NICK
Oh, don't be like that. I didn't
know it was a bad batch.

Mason looks over at Nick.

MASON
Shit landed me in the hospital.

Nick shrugs.

NICK
Risk of the game.

Mason takes a sip of his drink. Nick sighs.

NICK (CONT'D)
How about I give you a fresh cut,
to make amends?

Mason shakes his head.

MASON
Not in the market.

Nick furrows his brow.

NICK
I've never known you not to be in
the market.

MASON
Yeah, well, things change.

Nick smirks.

NICK
So I've heard. Being a dad make you
soft?

Mason clenches his jaw.

MASON
Don't talk about her.

Nick chuckles at him.

NICK
Come on, no need to get all worked
up. Just one cut, for old times
sake. Call it an apology.

Mason drains his glass. He's about to respond when his phone
RINGS. Mason pulls it out, answering. Nick waits.

MASON
(into phone)
Hello?... Yeah, this is he...
(more urgent)
Is she okay, is she in trouble?...
Yeah, I'll come right now.

Mason puts the phone away, pulling out his wallet and
throwing a bill on the counter. He stands.

NICK
Hey. Where you runnin' off to?

Mason ignores Nick, leaving the bar in a rush.

EXT. BONFIRE GROUNDS - NIGHT

The bonfire grounds are now lit up with police lights.
Multiple people sit handcuffed, as officers walk around and
talk.

Mason pulls up in his truck, getting out immediately. He
looks around frantically until he spots Abigail leaning
against the hood of a police car. A POLICE OFFICER is tending
to her face. Mason runs over.

MASON
Hey! Hey, are you okay?

Abigail doesn't meet his eyes, her face stoic. Her lip is
split, her face showing the beginnings of a bruise.

ABIGAIL
I'm fine.

Mason comes closer, gently touching the skin of her face to
examine it. Abigail doesn't meet his eyes.

Mason looks around, spotting Parker sitting on a log, hands cuffed behind his back. Mason approaches him.

MASON

If you ever, EVER touch my kid again, or even so much as LOOK in her direction, I will fucking end you! Do you hear me?! Don't you EVER touch her again!

Parker looks up, his face upset. He looks from Mason to Abigail.

PARKER

Abby, I'm sorry-

MASON

No one gives a shit if you're sorry.

Mason turns away, back to Abigail. He gently takes her jaw in his hand to look at her face better. The officer watches.

POLICE OFFICER

It'll be a bad bruise, but it should be okay in a week or two. However, that slap is a definite qualifier for simple assault, if you'd like to press charges?

ABIGAIL

No.

Yes.

MASON

Mason looks over at Abigail sharply.

MASON (CONT'D)

What do you mean, no?

Abigail stares at the ground.

ABIGAIL

I said no. I'm not pressing any charges, I don't care.

PARKER

Thank you, Abby-

MASON

(to Parker)

Shut up.

(to Abigail)

What do you mean you don't care?

Abigail's eyes water, her jaw tense. She doesn't take her eyes from the ground.

ABIGAIL
I just don't.

Mason shakes his head.

MASON
You can't just let him get away with this.

ABIGAIL
Well, it's not your decision to make.

MASON
Abigail, he *hit* you-

Abigail explodes.

ABIGAIL
So what?! No one ever gave a shit before when it happened, and no one is gonna give a shit now! So will you just drop it?!

Abigail looks down to wipe her eyes. Mason is stunned.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Can I just go home?

The police officer nods gently.

POLICE OFFICER
You're free to go.

Abigail pushes herself off the hood of the car and walks towards Mason's truck. Mason slowly follows behind her. When they get to the truck, Abigail stops.

ABIGAIL
I forgot my bike.

Mason shakes his head, gently stopping her from turning around.

MASON
Hey, hey. It's okay, I'll get your bike. You just get in the car.

Abigail climbs in the truck and Mason shuts the door behind her. He gets the bike, putting it in the bed of the truck.

INT. MASON'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Abigail is staring straight ahead, tears rolling silently over the bruise. Mason gets in the truck, pausing to look over at Abigail. He sees her condition, and his eyes begin to water too. He turns the truck on.

INT. SUMMERS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Edith and Dale sit in the lit living room. The front door opens, and Abigail enters, rushing upstairs to her room immediately. Mason enters after, shutting the door. Edith and Dale look at him questioningly.

DALE

What happened?

MASON

That little Hadley fuck slapped her.

EDITH

What?!

DALE

What?!

EDITH (CONT'D)

Is she all right?

MASON

She's pretty banged up. And obviously upset.

DALE

Did you file a report?

MASON

She wouldn't let me. She said she didn't want to make a big deal out of it. She said... no one ever gave a shit before when that happened.

Mason walks over to a chair, slumping into it. He puts his head in his hands.

DALE

Before?

EDITH

Oh, honey... I was suspecting there was something.

MASON

I don't know what to do.

DALE
Someone should go talk to her.

EDITH
Do you want me to go?

Mason shakes his head, getting to his feet.

MASON
No, I'll go.

INT. SUMMERS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mason stands outside the door to Abigail's room, holding an bottle of peroxide and a washcloth. He KNOCKS quietly a few times.

MASON
Abby? It's me.

Mason waits for a response.

ABIGAIL (O.S.)
Come in.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Abigail sits on the bed, staring at the floor. The room is plain; the only personalization is Abigail's half-finished painting of Heather. Mason opens the door to Abigail's room and approaches hesitantly.

MASON
I brought this.

ABIGAIL
Thanks.

Abigail moves to take it. Mason hesitates.

MASON
Here, let me help you.

Abigail shakes her head.

ABIGAIL
I can do it, I know how.

Mason sighs.

MASON

I know you can. I just want to help
you, if you'll let me.

Abigail hesitates.

MASON (CONT'D)

Please?

Abigail pauses, then nods. Mason comes over to the edge of
the bed. He pours peroxide on the cloth, then kneels down so
he can press it gently to Abigail's lip.

MASON (CONT'D)

How does that feel?

ABIGAIL

Hurts.

Mason grimaces, working as gently as he can.

MASON

I'll get Mom to get you some pain
meds.

Abigail stares at the floor. Mason's face falls.

MASON (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I know you liked Parker.

Abigail shrugs, not answering. Mason hesitates for a moment,
taking the cloth away from her cut.

MASON (CONT'D)

What you said earlier, that no one
gave a shit before when this
happened-

ABIGAIL

I shouldn't have said that.

MASON

But you did.

Abigail shakes her head.

MASON (CONT'D)

Abby-

ABIGAIL

I don't wanna talk about it.

MASON

But we need to-

ABIGAIL
Why? You gonna go back in time and
change it?

Mason struggles to find his words.

MASON
No, but-

ABIGAIL
Then forget it. Shit happens in the
system. You get over it.

Mason sighs.

MASON
That doesn't mean it should have
happened to you. You don't deserve
to be treated like that.

ABIGAIL
Yeah, well.

Abigail shrugs.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
I don't know why I thought this
would be different.

Abigail's eyes water as she struggles to control her
emotions. Mason puts down the cloth, moving to sit next to
her on the bed.

MASON
Hey. Come here.

Mason opens his arms for a hug. Abigail hesitates, but then
gives in, allowing him to wrap his arms around her. Mason
pulls her tight, careful not to hurt her face. Abigail begins
to sob.

MASON (CONT'D)
Shh, baby, it's okay. It's okay. I
got you.

Mason continues to hold Abigail as she cries. He gets
emotional himself, tears slipping out of his eyes.

EXT. SUMMERS FRONT PORCH - DAY

The day is rainy and overcast. Abigail sits on the front
porch, painting Heather's face. Her bruises are beginning to
turn yellow.

INT. SUMMERS HOUSE - DAY

Edith spots Abigail painting through the window. She smiles as she carries a laundry basket up the stairs.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Edith opens the door, and drops the laundry basket on the floor in front of the closet. As she puts away clothes, a folder falls from a shelf to the floor, pictures splaying onto the floor.

Edith stares down at the pictures, slowly kneeling to see them better. She picks one up, studying it. Edith covers her mouth and her eyes begin to fill with tears.

INT. SUMMERS KITCHEN - DAY

Mason enters the kitchen, seeing Edith sitting at the counter, file in front of her. She looks distressed. Mason walks over to her.

MASON

Ma? You all right?

Edith shakes her head, pushing the file towards him. Mason looks down, confused.

MASON (CONT'D)

What is this?

EDITH

Abigail's case file. I found it in her closet, putting away laundry.

MASON

Case file?

EDITH

Records of her foster homes.

Mason tenses, looking at Edith's face.

MASON

Why do you look like that?

Edith looks up at him.

EDITH

You're gonna want to look at that alone.

INT. SUMMERS GARAGE - DAY

Mason sits in his truck. He opens the file with shaking hands. There's a picture of Abigail (age 5), smiling brightly, along with a drawing of a tree and a rainbow. Mason holds the drawing and photo, eyes watering.

He flips to the next document - a medical report with a photo attached. In the first picture, Abigail (age 14) lies in a hospital bed, her arm in a cast. The next picture documents her face and body covered in bruises and cuts.

Mason drops the pictures on the seat, staring in horror. Abigail (age 5) and Abigail (age 14) lie next to each other in stark contrast. Mason is overwhelmed. He frantically shoves his keys in the ignition.

EXT/INT. MASON'S TRUCK MOVING - DAY

Mason's truck drives through the rain down the road against a mountain skyline. Mason is on the verge of a full break down. He pulls off the road, sending up a cloud of dust and mud as he parks.

INT. MASON'S TRUCK - DAY

Mason full-on breaks down. RAIN BEATS on the window as he SCREAMS in anger, scratching at his track marks. Mason pulls out the picture of Heather from his wallet.

MASON

Is this what you wanted?! Huh?! I
told you I couldn't do this, I told
I'd fuck it up! And look what
happened!

Mason drops Heather's picture, leaning against the steering wheel, head in his arms. His shoulders shake as he sobs.

MASON (CONT'D)

How could you leave me?

The picture of Heather lays with the pictures of Abigail on the seat next to him. Mason begins to settle down, breathing hard. He leans against the back of the seat and looks out at the mountains, wiping his eyes.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The truck lights turn on, pulling a U-turn back into the rainy road.

UPBEAT MUSIC starts.

INT. SUMMERS HALLWAY - DAY

Mason gets together camping supplies - tents, bags, coolers.

EXT. SUMMERS HOUSE - DAY

Edith and Dale pack the trunk of their car with supplies.

INT. SUMMERS GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Abigail gets the last cooler from the garage, the split in her lip almost healed. Mason's truck is parked inside.

MASON (O.S.)
Can you grab my charger from the
truck?

ABIGAIL
Sure thing!

Abigail opens the door, grabbing the charger. She spots her case file, slowly pulling it out. Abigail stands in the garage, looking at the photos of herself. Mason pokes around the corner.

MASON
You coming?

Abigail jumps at his voice, quickly shoving the file on the workbench nearby.

ABIGAIL
Yeah, I'm coming.

Abigail shuts the truck door and walks out of the garage, leaving the file on the workbench.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The car rounds a bend as it drives into the mountains.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

Mason, Abigail, Dale, and Edith set up camp.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE - DAY

Mason chops firewood. Dale shows Abigail how to cast a fishing line out into the water. Mason smiles, watching as Abigail and Dale reel in a fish, Abigail overwhelmed with excitement.

ABIGAIL

Dad, look!

Mason realizes that she's just called him "Dad." The fact seems to surprise Abigail as well. His face splits into a grin, and he grabs his camera and runs over.

MASON

Look at you, you did it!

Mason gives her a big bear hug, then holds up the camera.

MASON (CONT'D)

Give us a smile!

Abigail poses with her fish and smiles as Mason takes the picture.

MUSIC fades.

EXT. MOUNTAIN LAKE CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

The fish SIZZLE in a frying pan on top of their campfire. Mason and Abigail sit on one log, Dale and Edith sit opposite them. Dale pulls the fish off of the fire, handing plates to each person. They dig in.

EDITH

Good on you, Abby, this is delicious.

Abigail shrugs.

ABIGAIL

Beginner's luck, I guess.

DALE

You've a natural. You know, we used to take Mason here all the time when he was growing up.

Mason nods.

MASON

Family tradition, every summer.

DALE

Well, I think it was an excellent idea to revisit, Mason. Good thinking.

Mason half smiles at his father's praise. Abigail looks over him.

ABIGAIL

Yeah. Thanks... Mason.

Abigail hesitates before saying his name. Mason notices this, giving her a small smile.

MASON

Sure, kid.

Dale stands, putting away his plate.

DALE

Well, I think I'm gonna take a little walk by the water. You coming, honey?

EDITH

Sounds like a splendid idea.

Dale and Edith go hand in hand to the water's edge. Mason and Abigail watch them for a moment. Finally, Mason breaks the gaze.

MASON

You done?

ABIGAIL

Oh, yeah. Thank you.

Mason collects the trash. Abigail slides off the log, sitting on the ground and leaning back against it. Mason comes and sits on the ground next to her. Abigail's gaze drifts down to the track marks scarred on his arms.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I know you read my case file.

Mason looks over at her just in time for her to look up. He realizes he's been caught.

MASON

Abby...

ABIGAIL

How did you even get that?

Mason looks down, not able to meet her gaze.

MASON

Mom found it in your closet. I
should've told you, I just...

Mason trails off, his voice choking up. Abigail sighs.

ABIGAIL

So, is that why we came out here?
Because now you know what happened
and you feel guilty?

MASON

No. I wanted to do something nice
with you.

Abigail nods, pausing for a moment. She studies Mason.

ABIGAIL

Don't feel bad. It's not your
fault.

MASON

Yeah, it is.

ABIGAIL

No. It's not.

The light of the fire dances on their faces. Abigail watches
Mason, and she can see the mix of emotions.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Look... I know you did what you did
because you thought it was best.
But the foster system is a chance
at a better life, not a guarantee.
You didn't know what was gonna
happen. And blaming yourself now
isn't gonna change anything. So
don't. Because I don't.

Mason looks over at her, and his eyes are shining.

MASON

What made you come here this
summer?

Abigail scoffs.

ABIGAIL

It's not like I had anywhere else
to go.

Abigail says this jokingly, but her tone is tinged with sadness. Mason gently elbows her.

MASON
Seriously though.

Abigail pauses, taking a deep breath.

ABIGAIL
I've been in and out of places my whole life. Foster homes, group homes, facilities, you name it. I'd see all these families, kids getting adopted, even when they hadn't been in the system very long. But not me. No matter where I went, no one ever wanted me. And then... I got older, and all that shit happened, and I realized things weren't gonna work out for me. I didn't belong anywhere, or to anyone. I didn't get why, you know? I made good grades, I never got in trouble. So, when my last foster mom kicked me out, I looked you up.

MASON
To come yell at me?

Mason's tone is joking. Abigail smiles but shakes her head.

ABIGAIL
No. I didn't really have much of a plan. I just... I wanted to know if the reason I never belonged anywhere was because you didn't want me, or... I dunno... if maybe it was because you did.

Mason swallows hard, trying to keep himself under control. The fire reflects his watering eyes.

MASON
Well, I do.

Abigail looks over at him.

ABIGAIL
You do?

Mason nods, smiling.

MASON
Of course I do. You're like the
coolest kid ever.

Abigail laughs softly. Her eyes are watering too. Mason lifts his arm, gesturing her over.

MASON (CONT'D)
C'mere.

Abigail slides over until she's nestled under Mason's shoulder. He puts his arm around her, pulling her close to him. They sit in silence for a moment.

MASON (CONT'D)
You called me Dad, earlier.

Abigail looks up at him.

ABIGAIL
Is that okay?

Mason smiles.

MASON
It's very okay.

Abigail grins.

ABIGAIL
Okay, Dad.

Abigail rests her head against Mason's shoulder, and they sit there, staring into the fire.

INT. CHURCH GYMNASIUM - DAY

Mason stands in front of the Narcotics Anonymous group. Abigail sits beside Toby in the chairs among the other members.

MASON
Mason Summers. Uh, was addicted to
heroin, among a mess of other
things. This is my daughter,
Abigail.

Mason turns, gesturing to her. Abigail smiles, watching Mason as he shares.

MASON (CONT'D)
I... I never thought I could be a
father.

(MORE)

MASON (CONT'D)

I didn't think I was gonna be anything other than a junkie. And I guess that was a self-fulfilling thing. I didn't think I could, so I didn't try. And because I didn't try, I stayed how I was. But she changed it all, coming to find me.

Abigail's eyes begin to water. Toby looks over at her, patting her on the knee.

MASON (CONT'D)

It was the damndest thing, honestly. Here comes this kid, out of nowhere, who has every reason to hate me. To hate the world. And she doesn't. She sees the beauty in it. The... the value of it all. And if she can see that, through all the shit she's been through, then what's my excuse?

Mason glances over at Abigail.

MASON (CONT'D)

I've never wanted to stay sober for myself. But for you, kid? I'll move mountains.

Mason sits down next to Abigail. She reaches over, giving him a hug. Toby smiles at them.

EXT. MAIN STREET CHURCH - DAY

Toby, Mason, and Abigail exit the church. Abigail, wheeling her bike, turns to Mason.

ABIGAIL

I gotta head to work. Thank you, though, for bringing me. It meant a lot.

Abigail gives Mason a hug.

MASON

I'll see you later?

Abigail nods, then looks to Toby.

ABIGAIL

It was nice meeting you!

Toby smiles, giving her a hug.

TOBY
You, too, sweetie.

ABIGAIL
Bye, Dad!

Abigail walks away, with Toby and Mason watching. Toby looks over at Mason.

TOBY
She's a sweet kid. You did good.

Mason smiles to himself, then rolls his eyes.

MASON
Yeah, yeah. You hungry?

Toby nods, and they start walking towards the diner.

INT. SUMMERS GARAGE - DAY

Dale searches for something on the workbench before noticing a stack of papers covered up. He pulls it out and sees that it's Abigail's case file. Dale flips it open, his face turning dark.

EXT. SUMMERS DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mason's truck pulls into the driveway. Dale is waiting and looks enraged. Mason gets out of his truck as Dale walks over, pausing when he sees Dale's face.

MASON
What's wrong with you?

DALE
You really fucked up, didn't you?

Mason rolls his eyes with a deep sigh.

MASON
You're gonna have to be a bit more specific.

Dale SLAPS the pictures from the file down on Mason's truck. Mason recoils.

DALE
It just wasn't enough for you, was it?

(MORE)

DALE (CONT'D)

Not enough to fuck up your own
life, not enough to fuck up
Heather. You just had to ruin her
life, too!

MASON

You know what? This isn't any of
your fucking business-

DALE

This happened to her because of
you!

Mason looks livid.

MASON

Don't you DARE say that to me-

DALE

You couldn't have done the right
fucking thing, taken responsibility
for your actions, for once in your
goddamn life-

MASON

And done what, exactly? Given her
to you?! Your attempt at child-
raising didn't exactly pan out-

DALE

And how is that? Did you ever go
hungry? Did you ever not have
clothes on your back? You had
everything you ever wanted-

Mason rolls his eyes.

MASON

As long as I met your every
expectation, right?! As long as I
did, and thought, and said exactly
what you wanted-

DALE

I was teaching you to be a man! To
learn some goddamn respect and
responsibility!

Mason turns away, incredulous.

DALE (CONT'D)

But instead, you became a doped up
bum!

Mason whirls around to face Dale.

MASON

I am NOT a doped up bum, I have an addiction, and you have ALWAYS treated me like shit for it! Do you think this is a choice, that this is something I want?!

Dale shakes his head, rolling his eyes.

MASON (CONT'D)

Did you ever think about why I needed drugs so much, Dad? That ever cross your fucking mind?!

DALE

What, because you were so unhappy with your privileged life-

MASON

Because I NEEDED you! Not to yell at me, not to treat me like a fucking idiot! Not to call me names and make me feel like I was never enough! I needed you to be my DAD-

Dale throws his hands up, shaking his head.

DALE

Oh, grow the fuck up, Mason!

MASON

There it is! That is EXACTLY what I'm talking about! Every fucking time I speak to you, you make me regret it! At least the drugs were there when I needed them!

Mason is breathing hard and ragged. Dale pauses, expression unreadable. His voice is calmer.

DALE

And that was worth all of it, was it? All the running away, the stealing, picking your ass up from jail? All the nights your mother spent crying, wondering if you were dead in a ditch somewhere-

Mason turns away, shaking his head.

MASON

Oh, don't try to fucking guilt me-

DALE

It's not guilt, it's the truth! You think we didn't worry about you?! Every time I had to drive around town, wondering what state you'd be in when I got there, or if I was about to find the dead body of my son?! Was that my punishment for being such a shitty dad?!

Mason doesn't have words. Dale shakes his head and looks down at the pictures again.

DALE (CONT'D)

Well, it looks like you became one, too.

MASON

I didn't know that was going to happen-

Dale looks sharply back at Mason.

DALE

Because you never think things through! You never consider a fucking thing, you just do whatever stupid shit seems easiest at the time-

Edith comes out of the garage.

EDITH

Would you two give it a rest, please-

DALE

He needs to take some fucking responsibility-

Mason steps forward, squaring up to Dale.

MASON

And what would you have had me do, huh?!

DALE

You should've come to us! You should've told us about her! You should've trusted us!

MASON

I don't trust you! Why the fuck would I?!-

EDITH
(interrupts)
Mason!

MASON
-You berate me about how much of a fuck up I am at every opportunity! Every single fucking time I reached out, you threw it in my face! Yeah, right, I'm gonna come to you!

DALE
So you were just gonna keep her a secret for the rest of your life, huh?!

MASON
YES! Heather was already dead, and I would've rather never seen my kid again than come to you-

EDITH
Mason!

Edith looks past Mason. Mason turns, seeing Abigail on her bike behind him. Her face is a mixture of shock and pain. Mason recoils.

MASON
Abby-

Abigail looks like she's about to cry.

ABIGAIL
Is that true?

Mason opens his mouth, stammering as he steps forward.

MASON
No, Abby, I didn't mean-

Abigail shakes her head, backing away from him.

ABIGAIL
Was this always your plan?! What, did you figure you'd be nice to me until I left, and then you could go back to pretending I don't exist? Was that it?

Mason begins to panic, stepping towards her.

MASON
No! I-

Abigail backs away again.

ABIGAIL

You know, I believed you today! You said you'd move mountains, and I believed you! Fucking stupid-

MASON

Abby, listen to me!

ABIGAIL

When the truth is, you're only being nice to try and get rid of me-

MASON

That is NOT true!

ABIGAIL

You JUST SAID you would've rather never seen me again!

Mason shakes his head.

MASON

I didn't mean it like that, Abby! Please believe me-

ABIGAIL

You gave me up, Dad! What else am I supposed to think?!

Mason is stunned. His voice is small.

MASON

I was just trying to look out for you-

ABIGAIL

BULLSHIT! That is bullshit, and we both know it! You didn't give a fuck what happened to me, you got rid of me so you could forget a mistake you wish you never made!

Mason is becoming more emotional, and can't form a response. Abigail is getting angrier and angrier.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

You know, you're supposed to be my Dad! You're supposed to protect me, you're supposed to LOVE me! But you threw me away, made me someone else's problem!

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

And now here I am, showing up
uninvited to your life, and you
can't LIE anymore! You have to face
the truth that You. Don't. Want.
Me!

Mason recoils like a slap. His eyes are full of tears.

MASON

Abby, I-

ABIGAIL

Just stop.

Abigail is calmer now. She's trying to hold back her crying.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

You don't have to pretend anymore,
okay? I've lived my entire life
without a Dad, I'll be fine without
one now. You're free.

Abigail turns around, walking towards the house.

MASON

(desperate)

Abby, wait!

Abigail doesn't turn around.

MASON (CONT'D)

ABIGAIL!

Abigail enters the house, never looking back. Mason starts to go after her, but Edith puts a hand on his shoulder. Mason whips around, looking at Dale.

MASON (CONT'D)

Are you fucking happy now?!

Mason walks over to his truck, getting in and SLAMMING the door shut. He drives away, leaving Dale and Edith in the driveway.

EXT. MOUNTAIN OVERLOOK - DUSK

The sun is setting over the mountain valley. Mason sits in his truck, smoking a cigarette. There are tear tracks on his face. He hits the steering wheel a few times, then leans his head against the headrest, eyes closed.

MASON

This too shall pass, this too shall
pass, this too shall pass.

Mason fidgets, unable to stay still. He bounces his leg,
taking another drag off his cigarette. Mason sighs out
deeply.

MASON (CONT'D)

Fuck it.

Mason reaches into his pocket, pulling out his phone. He
dials a number, putting the phone to his ear and waiting.

NICK (O.S.)

Mason Summers. What could you want?

Mason takes another drag of the cigarette.

MASON

Tell me about that apology offer.

INT. SUMMERS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Edith stands outside of Abigail's door. The light is off.
Edith knocks softly.

EDITH

Honey?

No answer. Edith sighs.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Honey, I know you're upset. Can we
talk?

Silence. Edith shifts her weight, then puts a hand on the
knob.

EDITH (CONT'D)

I'm going to come in.

INT. ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Edith opens the door, flipping the light on.

EDITH

Abby?

The bed is made, the room is empty. Edith looks around,
concerned. She goes to the closet, opening the door. Empty.

EDITH (CONT'D)

DALE!

EXT. MASON'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Mason leans against his truck, still smoking. Mason's cell phone RINGS, lighting up in his hand. He looks at Toby's name on the display, then presses ignore.

Lights pull into the parking lot, and Mason stands up straight. The car engine turns off, lights fading. Nick steps out.

NICK

There's my favorite customer.

Mason drops his cigarette and puts it out with his heel, then walks towards Nick.

NICK (CONT'D)

You look like shit, dude.

Mason rolls his eyes.

MASON

Just give me what you got.

Mason and Nick are startled by his CELL PHONE RINGTONE. Mason fumbles for his phone.

MASON (CONT'D)

Hang on.

Mason takes a few steps away, answering.

MASON (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Not now, Toby.

TOBY (V.O.)

Mason, I know you're having a rough night-

MASON

(into phone)

I said not now-

TOBY (V.O.)

I need you to listen to me.

Mason sighs, jaw tight.

MASON
(into phone)
I'm really not in the mood for this-

TOBY (V.O.)
Mason, Abigail is missing.

Mason freezes.

MASON
(into phone)
What do you mean she's missing?

TOBY (V.O.)
Your mom went to talk to her, and
she was gone. Took her stuff.

MASON
(into phone)
How do you know?

TOBY (V.O.)
I'm at your house now, your dad is
organizing a search party.

Mason's eyes are wide, face full of fear.

MASON
(into phone)
I'm on my way.

Mason hangs up the phone. He turns to Nick.

NICK
You're running out on me again?

MASON
Keep it.

Mason walks towards his truck. Nick looks annoyed.

NICK
The offer won't be on the table
again.

Mason yanks open the truck door.

MASON
I won't need it.

Mason gets into the truck, SLAMMING the door and starting it.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mason bursts in the front door. Toby is talking to a couple of NEIGHBORS while Dale is talking to a POLICE OFFICER. Dale glances at Mason, but doesn't stop talking. Toby walks over to Mason.

TOBY
I'm glad to see you.

Mason glances around the room, looking scared.

MASON
Have they found her?

TOBY
Not yet, but your Dad is working on it. He knows what he's doing.

Edith enters from the kitchen.

EDITH
Monique says she hasn't heard anything, but she'll make some calls.

Dale nods. Edith sees Mason with Toby.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Oh, Mason.

Edith gives him a hug. She pulls back, face hesitant.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Abigail left you something. In your room.

Mason looks almost scared.

INT. MASON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mason slowly, hesitantly opens the door. He flips on the light switch. An easel stands in Mason's room, and his face immediately falls, eyes tearing up.

Abigail's completed portrait of Heather sits on the easel. Mason approaches it, lip quivering. There's a note attached to the top. Mason takes it.

ON THE NOTE

"For Dad. Thank you for the summer."

Tears slip from Mason's eyes. He looks up, then turns, hurrying out of the room.

INT. SUMMMERS LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mason bounds down the staircase as Dale, Edith, and Toby talk in the living room.

DALE

I'm gonna go drive around and check the bus station. She couldn't have gotten too far on the bike-

Mason stops on the bottom of the stairs.

MASON

I'm coming with you.

All eyes turn to Mason. Dale pauses.

DALE

Mason, maybe you should just wait here-

MASON

No, I'm not waiting! That's my kid, Dad, and she's out there God knows where thinking I hate her! I'm not just gonna sit here!

Dale pauses, studying Mason for a long moment. He nods.

DALE

You're right. Let's go.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

Dale and Mason drive by the closed paint store in Mason's truck. Mason looks through the window, close to crying.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mason's truck pulls into the parking lot. Mason notices something and looks closer.

MASON

Look!

Mason points and Dale follows his direction. Abigail's bike is in the bike rack. Dale barely stops the truck before Mason gets out, running towards the door.

INT. GREYHOUND STATION LOBBY - NIGHT

Mason bursts into the lobby, searching for Abigail. His face falls when he realizes she isn't there. Mason goes over to the ticket counter, speaking urgently.

MASON

Did a girl named Abigail Summers
buy a bus ticket? She's about 5'4,
light brown hair, carrying a blue
backpack?

CLERK

Sir, I'm afraid I can't give out
that information-

MASON

(desperate)

I'm her father, please, I need to
know where she went!

The clerk hesitates, then nods.

CLERK

Can I see an ID, sir?

Mason gets out his wallet and hands her his license. His hands are shaking. The clerk examines his ID, then checks the computer.

CLERK (CONT'D)

Abigail Summers purchased a bus
ticket to Charlottesville,
Virginia. It left two hours ago.

MASON

Thank you.

Mason grabs his ID and rushes back out into the parking lot.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mason approaches Dale holding out his hand.

DALE

Anything?

MASON

Abby got on a bus to
Charlottesville, two hours ago.

Dale sighs.

DALE

We need to tell your Mom, start making some calls-

MASON

I'm gonna go find her.

Dale looks up at him.

DALE

Look, I know you're worried, but you have no idea where she is. Charlottesville is big, it'll be like looking for a needle in a haystack. We need to narrow down some places-

MASON

Then you go make the calls with Mom, and I'll go. You can call me on the road if you find out anything.

DALE

Mason-

MASON

That my daughter, Dad! She's my kid, my legacy, and I can't lose her! Not again! I have to find her! I have to-

DALE

Hey, hey! Mason-

Dale puts a hand on his shoulder.

DALE (CONT'D)

You're right. I'll call your mother to pick me up. You go ahead.

Dale reaches into his pocket, getting the keys and handing them to Mason. Mason nods quietly, and the two share a silent moment.

DALE (CONT'D)

You're gonna find her, okay? I believe in you. But call us when you do.

Mason nods.

MASON

I will, Dad.

EXT/INT. HIGHWAY (MOVING) - NIGHT

Mason's truck drives down the highway, with mountains in the background. Mason looks in the rearview mirror. His eyes are teary, and he bites his nails as he drives.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS (MOVING) - NIGHT

Abigail leans her head against the bus window, looking out. Her face is blank, but she's been crying.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Mason's truck passes a highway sign that reads
"CHARLOTTESVILLE - 48 MILES"

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE BUS STATION - NIGHT

Abigail descends the bus stairs, looking around. She wipes her eyes, hoists her bag over her shoulder and walks away.

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE SHELTER #1 - NIGHT

Mason is inside, silhouetted through the window, talking to the desk person. He nods, then leaves the shelter.

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE BUILDING - NIGHT

Abigail sits in a doorway, using her backpack as a cushion and a jacket as a blanket. She wipes away tears, wrapping her arms around her knees.

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE SHELTER #2 - DAWN

Mason leaves another homeless shelter, unsuccessful. He runs his hands through his hair in frustration.

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE BUILDING - DAWN

A NOISE startles Abigail awake. She quickly puts her jacket in her backpack, grabbing it and leaving.

INT. MASON'S TRUCK - DAWN

Mason sits in his truck. It's clear he's been out all night. He puts his head in his hands, letting out a GROWL of frustration.

After a moment, he looks up. Mason spots Abigail walking down the other side of the street, blue backpack on. He sits up in his seat, rubbing his eyes to make sure.

EXT. CHARLOTTESVILLE STREET - DAWN

Mason gets out of the truck.

MASON
ABIGAIL!

Abigail whips around, startled. She spots Mason and quickly turns away, walking faster.

MASON (CONT'D)
ABBY, WAIT!

Mason sprints across the street, narrowly dodging a car.

MASON (CONT'D)
ABIGAIL! WOULD YOU JUST WAIT,
PLEASE-

Abigail whirls around on the sidewalk, stopping Mason abruptly.

ABIGAIL
WHAT?! What are you even doing
here?!

MASON
I came to get you-

ABIGAIL
No! I'm not falling for that shit
anymore, okay? Just leave me alone.

Abigail turns to walk away. Mason goes after her, gently grabbing her arm to stop her.

MASON
(desperate)
I'm not lying, Abby, please-

Abigail turns and rips away her arm.

ABIGAIL
DON'T TOUCH ME! You don't fucking
want me! You just feel guilty, or
your parents made you come-

MASON
No! That's not true. I'm here
because I want you. Okay? I want to
be your dad.

Abigail shakes her head.

ABIGAIL
Bullshit. You're just trying to
cover your ass, now that everyone
knows and you can't hide me anymore-

MASON
I don't give a damn what anyone
knows, Abby. Right now, I don't
give a damn about anyone but you.

Abigail rolls her eyes silently.

ABIGAIL
Yeah, right.

MASON
Will you just let me explain?
Please?

ABIGAIL
I don't care what you have to say.

Abigail turns to walk away, but Mason follows her.

MASON
Well, I'm not leaving you here,
Abby. I'll follow you all day if
that's what it takes.

Abigail turns back around, exasperated.

ABIGAIL
Jesus Christ, fine.

Abigail crosses her arms impatiently. Mason looks nervous.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
Well?

MASON

I didn't mean what I said. I didn't want to get rid of you, I was scared shitless. You are the best damn thing I've ever done with my life, and giving you up is the worst.

Abigail scoffs and shakes her head, looking down.

MASON (CONT'D)

I thought it'd be easier to just forget, then try and fix everything. But now, there's nothing I want more-

Abigail whips her head up.

ABIGAIL

Yeah, that's easy to say.

MASON

It's the truth. Look, I know I messed up. I'll do anything it takes to fix this. I want us to be a family. I want you to come home, Abby, I need you.

Abigail's gaze is still hard, and she shakes her head.

ABIGAIL

Why would you need me?

Mason hesitates.

MASON

Because you coming saved me. You saved me.

Abigail looks confused. Mason takes a deep breath.

MASON (CONT'D)

I loved your mother more than anything in the world. More than life itself. But not more than I loved getting high. I never stopped using, not even when she was pregnant with you, no matter how much she begged or how many promises I made. I couldn't stop. I wouldn't.

Mason's voice begins to choke, but he pushes on.

MASON (CONT'D)

She OD'ed on my heroin. I was high when I came home that night, and you were... *screaming*. I went in the kitchen, and she was on the floor, and she...

Mason chokes up, unable to speak. Both he and Abigail are starting to cry.

MASON (CONT'D)

I knew I couldn't take care of you. I thought I could just erase all of it, pretend it never happened. But it haunted me, every damn day of those 18 years. And then you showed up at the house, and you looked just like her. You had her smile. You radiated just like she did. And when you showed me your paintings, I could see how you saw the world. And I wanted to see it that way, too. I wanted to see everything you did. It was the first thing I've wanted more than I wanted to get high.

Mason takes Abigail's face to wipe her tears away.

MASON (CONT'D)

I love you so much, Abby. I know I haven't been there, I know I fucked up. I haven't been a good dad, but I want to be. I know I can't fix what we lost, but I'll do anything I can to make it up to you. I promise. But I can't lose you again. Just, please, come home-

Mason pulls Abigail into a tight hug. He's crying, smoothing her hair and kissing her head. She sobs into his chest.

ABIGAIL

I love you, Dad.

MASON

I love you, too, baby. I love you, too.

They stand there, tightly hugging each other, pouring out their feelings in the embrace.

EXT/INT. MASON'S TRUCK (MOVING) - DAY

Mason drives down the highway in his truck, as Abigail sleeps in the passenger seat. Mason pulls over into a cemetery and stops the truck.

INT. MASON'S TRUCK - DAY

Mason shakes Abigail awake gently.

MASON
Wake up, baby.

Abigail stretches, sitting up.

ABIGAIL
Are we home?

MASON
Not yet. There's something I wanted to do first, if you want to.

ABIGAIL
What?

MASON
I've never been to visit your mom since she died. I thought we could go together.

Abigail sits up, suddenly more awake. She looks at him questioningly.

ABIGAIL
Are you sure?

MASON
Yeah. You're the only one I'd wanna do this with.

ABIGAIL
Okay.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The day is cloudy and overcast, threatening rain. Mason slowly walks through the stones. When they reach Heather's stone, Mason stops a few feet away. Abigail stops beside him.

ABIGAIL
Is that her?

Mason nods, unable to speak. Abigail hesitates, then walks forward, kneeling in the grass in front of the stone. She reaches her hand out, gently tracing the letters of Heather's name.

Mason comes to kneel beside Abigail, staring at Heather's headstone. He reaches out to trace her name as well. Tears fall from his face.

MASON

She'd never forgive me if she knew.
I should've been there for you.

Abigail watches him for a moment, then slowly reaches over, taking his hand. Mason looks up at her. Both of their eyes shine with tears.

ABIGAIL

You are now. And I forgive you.

Mason smiles softly at her, then pulls her into a hug.

EXT. SUMMERS DRIVEWAY - DAY

Edith and Dale wait on the porch as Mason's truck pulls into the driveway. Mason and Abigail get out of the truck. Abigail walks around, and Mason puts his arm around her as they walk up to the porch.

Edith rushes down the steps, pulling them both into a hug. She puts an arm around Abigail, ushering her into the house. Dale slowly walks up to Mason, clasping him on the shoulder. They smile, and then go into the house. Credits begin to roll.

THE END.