Orenda

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ORENDA
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by
Lauren Reeks
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Abstract

The following work is a feature length screenplay about Anna Morris, an 18-year-old girl who finds herself faced with a moral dilemma when her estranged father, Robert, contacts her on her 18th birthday. When she learns about Robert’s past involvement in an online child pornography ring Anna must decide if she can forgive him, or -- more importantly -- if he is worthy of forgiveness. However, as the story unfolds we find that it is not just Anna who needs to forgive. This story approaches issues of repentance, growth, and the journey into adulthood as Anna takes on each new challenge.

Keywords: forgiveness, adulthood, family, pedophilia, psychology, ethics.
Preface

This feature length screenplay is primarily designed to invoke in the reader questions of morality and ethics – how can we, as human beings, determine guilt and acquittal from an objective standpoint? Secondarily, the story also focusses on topics concerning adulthood, healthy and unhealthy sexual behavior, and psychological disorders. This story revolves mainly around the main character, Anna, a young woman who has just turned 18, and to whom a moral quandary arrives in the form of a phone call from her father, Robert. The subsequent revelation of Robert’s criminal past as a collector and distributor of child pornography will present Anna with the main challenge – will she be able to forgive Robert for his actions? This is complicated even further when it is revealed that Robert is dying and may not have much more time to live. However, Anna is also faced with many smaller challenges including deciding what she will do with her life, forgiving her mother, and matters of self-reflection. The story attempts not to reach a definitive solution to the problems at hand – concerning whether it is possible to forgive Robert for his crimes – but instead reaches its conclusion in overall personal growth on Anna’s part.

Child pornography and pedophilia is an uncomfortable subject, and I wanted to embrace this aspect of the work. Therefore, many scenes exist which may be disturbing to readers. For example, scenes of Anna touching herself, and of Robert possibly touching Anna inappropriately when she was only three years old. These moments are not meant to shock the reader, but instead are meant to convey the emotional experience child of abuse and the extent of the impact that it can have on the victim’s life. It is never made clear whether Anna’s “memory” of Robert’s abuse is real or a figment of her
imagination, but I feel that that unknowingness is representative of many cases of childhood abuse.

The title of the piece, “Orenda,” comes from ancient Native American mythology, which says that every living thing has a spark or a light inside of them which has the power even to overcome destiny. Anna believes deep down that it is her destiny to become a sexual deviant because her father was one. She believes that her early predisposition to touch herself and to have sexual thoughts is indicative of a disorder that will only grow stronger and stronger until she is an outcast of society, just like her father. However, Anna meets a wandering gypsy on the beach, Storm, who introduces her to the idea of “orenda” and suggests that Anna has the power to decide her own fate.

Another aspect of this story resides in the straightforward psychological approach to the subject of sexual disorders. When Anna realizes that her mother sent her to a psychiatrist when she was very young in order to determine whether Anna had been abused by Robert, Anna decides that it will be beneficial now to return to that psychiatrist to seek insights. The psychiatrist, Miss Allie, addresses Robert’s disorder from a perspective that Anna hadn’t considered before, and one which is often overlooked by society at large. Miss Allie explains to Anna that Robert’s brain is functioning incorrectly, and she cites an example of a man who had been guilty of pedophilia only to discover that he was suffering from a brain tumor and once that tumor was removed, all compulsions for pedophilia were gone.

In the end, Anna must make her own decision as to whether she can forgive Robert, but her final decision may come as a surprise. After having a disturbing dream/uncovered memory about Robert having touched Anna inappropriately when she
was a little girl, Anna decides that she can grant Robert forgiveness, but that she has no need for him in her life. She makes the decision to never see Robert again.

This emotional, uncomfortable, and personal piece is one that explores the depths of right and wrong, mature and immature, of guilt and forgiveness. It cannot provide an answer to what is the right action when faced with a dilemma such as Anna’s, but it can provide an option – a way that Anna can live a peaceful life in spite of all of the pain caused.
Orenda

By

Lauren Reeks
INT. ROBERT’S KITCHEN – MORNING

ROBERT, a 50-something ex-rocker, taps his fingers nervously on a counter top in a small, dark apartment. His appearance is gaunt and grey but his features suggest that he might have been handsome in his youth. Robert sits at his breakfast bar, hand on an out-dated phone. With a deep breath, he picks up the phone and dials.

ROBERT
Renee? ... It’s Robert. Please don’t hang up.

CUT TO BLACK

We hear several VOICES finishing a rendition of the "Happy Birthday" song.

ALL
... Happy Birthday toooo youuu.

FEMALE VOICE
Blow ‘em out!

We hear the WHOOSH of candles being blown.

INT. ANNA’S DINING ROOM – NIGHT

ANNA MORRIS sits at a worn-in dining room table facing a birthday cake topped with a wax "18." She is dressed in a mixture of vintage and secondhand clothing, a reflection of her artistic side. Surrounding Anna are her mother RENEE, best friends CLEMY and PAUL, and her aunt, LILY.

ANNA
I’m technically an adult!

RENEE
Does this mean you will start acting like one? Like maybe washing the dishes without being begged?

LILY
(To Anna)
Well, I just hope you’ll help us vote someone decent into the white house for a change.

ANNA
Oh, here we go.

(CONTINUED)
RENEE
She’s not going to be voting Democrat, if that’s what you’re suggesting. Anna’s got more sense than that.

LILY
Can you deny that some of the best economic times this nation’s had were during the Clinton years?

RENEE
Please. Need I remind you -- that pervert reaped the benefits of the policies that Bush Senior put into place.

Lily and Renee continue to argue politics in the background.

ANNA
(To Clemy and Paul)
Alright, I’m thinking adulthood sucks.

CLEMY
Can we eat the cake now?

INT. ANNA’S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT
ANNA, CLEMY, and PAUL sneak, cake in hand, into the living room where there is an assortment of comfy armchairs, poufs, and a gigantic pink sofa. LILY and RENEE follow, still arguing politics. Paul pulls Anna aside.

PAUL
I got your real present back home. Thought I could show you later. Y’know, without everyone --

CLEMY
Paul, stop hogging the birthday girl. She’s got presents to open. Mine first!

Clemy shoves a badly wrapped GIFT into Anna’s hands. Anna plops down on the pink sofa to unwrap it.

ANNA
Oh, it’s... Stickers of Japanese cats?

(CONTINUED)
CLEMY
It’s Kitty Bang Bang Deluxe Design Kit! I’ll be stealing some of those for my own purposes, heads up.

ANNA
Purposes?

CLEMY
And there’s this too!

ANNA
Hot pink kitty-shaped sunglasses?

CLEMY
For your beach trip this weekend! Brendan will be smitten, kitten.

ANNA
Thanks, Clemy. Glad to know you’ve got my new adult wardrobe under control.

PAUL

ANNA
If it’s from you then I’m sure it’s not lame, Paul. Let me see!

Anna unwraps a beautiful leather bound BOOK with unlined pages. The cover is embossed with her initials, A. I. M.

ANNA
Wow, Paul. It’s -- it’s gorgeous. I absolutely love it. Thank you.

PAUL
Glad you like it. Thought you could use it to draw stuff in. Or something.

RENEE
Alright, Anna. This one is from me.

Renee hands Anna a large, rectangular gift. Anna shakes the present.

ANNA
What could it be? Oh... "All You Need to Know About the Universities of Oregon?"
RENEE
Most colleges’ early admission deadlines are in the Fall. It might be time to start narrowing down your top choices, and I thought this could help.

ANNA
Thanks. But I’d go to the University of Neverland before I commit to another four years in Oregon. Besides, we don’t even know if I am going to college right after senior year...

Renee chokes on a piece of cake.

RENEE
Please tell me you’re joking. Clemy already knows where she is going to go to university.

CLEMY
Well, I have my heart set on Brown but I haven’t even finished my application yet.

RENEE
But you’re at least thinking about it, dear.

ANNA
So, who’s got more presents?

LILY
Here’s mine, sweetie.

ANNA
Alright, here we go... (Ripping into the paper) What! A year’s membership to Swan River Yoga? I can’t believe it! This is too much! AH!

LILY
No worries, little lady. I have my ways... I went on a couple of dates with the owner back in the 80’s. See? I used to be cool once upon a time.
ANNA
Used to? You are the coolest! Thank you thank you thank you!

RENEE
(To Lily)
Eugh, you’re not talking about Donald are you? He was a sleazeball.

LILY
You’re one to talk --

CLEMY
Okay, a year’s worth of yoga classes and a relaxing beach trip this weekend? I am officially stealing your life when you are asleep.

RENEE
Speaking of sleep, I think it’s getting to be about that time, everyone.

ANNA
Oh, but Clemy, Paul and I were going to hang out at Clemy’s house for a bit. We’re going to savor the last moments of my first day as a real live adult.

RENEE
It’s already eleven o’clock, Anna. You will have the rest of your life to savor your adulthood. And a great way to start acting like one would be to go to bed at a reasonable time.

PAUL
But -- I still have one more thing to give Anna.

CLEMY
We’ll have her back so so soon Ms. Morris, we promise.

LILY
Maybe it’s okay if she goes, Renee...
RENEE
Oh alright, but Clemy -- Why don’t you go on ahead with Paul in your car and I’ll drive Anna to meet you in a little while. I need her to help me clean up.

ANNA
But there’s hardly anything to do.

RENEE
Don’t push me Anna. If you want to be an adult so badly then help me clean up your own mess.

ANNA
FINE. Sorry guys, I’ll catch up in a minute.

CLEM
It’s alright. Just text me when you’re on your way.

PAUL
Bye, thank you Ms. Morris, Lily. Bye Anna, see you in a bit.

Lily waves goodbye as Clemy and Paul exit. She shuts the door and turns to Renee.

LILY
Do you need my help with...?

RENEE
No, I have this under control, thank you Lily.

LILY
Alright. (To Anna) Well, I am just feeling totally beat. It’s off to bed for me. I’ll leave you two to it. Happy Birthday, my love.

Lily kisses Anna on the cheek and jogs upstairs. Anna begins to help Renee put away the cake.

ANNA
What was that all about?

RENEE
Anna -- here, I got that honey -- could you sit down for a second? I have something to tell you.
ANNA
You know, I really wish you wouldn’t lecture me in front of my friends.

RENEE
I’m not lecturing you, I’m trying to help guide you -- Look, Anna, that’s beside the point. It’s important that I tell you what I have to say. Maybe you should put off going on that beach excursion this weekend.

ANNA
Ohh, here we go. This is where you tell me that Brendan might try to rape me or kidnap me or sell me to the circus right?

RENEE
Well I don’t think you should be so flippant about this boy, yes. But that’s a talk for another time. Anna, your father called me today.

ANNA
What? (Pause) I -- I thought you hadn’t spoken for years -- since the divorce?

RENEE
15 years, yes. I still don’t know how he got my number after all this time but I can assume that your Aunt Lily had something to do with it.

ANNA
Wow! That’s nuts. Well, what did he say? Did he ask about me?

RENEE
He did. Actually, he called to ask permission to see you.

ANNA
Permission? ... Why would he need permission?

RENEE
Well Anna, up until now you’ve been a minor. Now that you’re legally an

(MORE)
RENEE (cont’d)
adult, I can’t stop you from seeing... Robert. But I want to give you all the information before you make that decision.

ANNA
You mean you’ve been keeping me from him this whole time? Because I was a minor? I cried every night for months because I thought that Dad never wanted to see me again, and you never said a word. How could you?

RENEE
Anna, there are a lot of things that you still don’t understand... About your father.

Renee reaches out to touch Anna’s hand but Anna pulls back.

ANNA
I do understand. I understand that my dad wanted to see me this whole time and you haven’t been giving him PERMISSION.

RENEE
Anna, I’m not finished.

ANNA
There’s more you’ve been hiding?

RENEE
No. I mean -- just be reasonable. If you would listen to me for one minute.

ANNA
Oh right. Because you were so reasonable when Dad left. You were just a perfect emblem for strength and motherhood all those days you wouldn’t even get out of bed to acknowledge my existence. If it wasn’t for Aunt Lily I probably would have starved to death. That was all reasonable, right?

RENEE
Please, Anna. I didn’t want this to be traumatic for you. I know I made (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
RENEE (cont’d)
some mistakes, but I was in deep,
deep pain. This is really difficult
for me too. Please just listen.

ANNA
Oh, I feel so bad for you.

RENEE
Anna, your father and I divorced
because I found him looking at
child pornography.

Anna stares blankly at the table.

RENEE
It was sick. I didn’t know what he
was capable of... I had to make him
leave the house and call the
authorities.

ANNA
What? Wh-- how do you know it
wasn’t just a mistake? Maybe he
didn’t mean to--

RENEE
Sweetheart, Robert was part of a
group of men running a website to
trade these photos. It wasn’t a
mistake. After the investigation,
he went to jail for several years.

ANNA
How could you keep this from me?

RENEE
Sweetheart, I’m so sorry. There’s
really no right time to say
something like this. I’m just doing
the best that I can. I only wanted
to protect you. We took you to
Doctor Allie to see if you were
okay... To see if he might have...
hurt you --

ANNA
-- That’s why I went to Miss Allie?

RENEE
(Sniffing)
She said you were happy and
healthy, and that she didn’t think

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
RENEE (cont’d)
that he -- that Robert had -- done anything. She said that you might be too young to understand at that time so I just... I just wanted to let you have a normal childhood.

ANNA
You think my childhood was normal?

RENEE
WELL WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE? TELL ME ANNA. HOW WOULD YOU HAVE FELT IF YOU DISCOVERED YOUR HUSBAND -- If the man you loved... was a monster?

ANNA
I wouldn’t have waited so long to tell my daughter, that’s for sure.

RENEE
I’M SORRY. I’m sorry I didn’t know what to do. I’m telling you now. Robert wants to see you. Anna, however you may act, you are an adult now. You have the right to make your own choices.

Aunt Lily has snuck quietly into the room. She puts her arm around Anna.

LILY
I heard yelling...

ANNA
Did you know about this? The whole time?

LILY
Yes, my baby. I knew. But Renee wanted it this way, and she’s your mother. It wasn’t my place to interfere.

ANNA
But you wanted to tell me? All those times I asked you where he was?

LILY
I wanted to tell you sooner, yes.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
So when I asked you where Dad went and you said you didn’t know...?

LILY
He is my brother. I did keep in contact with him. I lied to you Anna, and I am so sorry. But I had to respect your mother’s wishes.

ANNA
(To Renee)
I don’t understand though -- why would you wait 15 years to tell me and then do it before the beach? I know I just turned 18 and everything, but you couldn’t have waited just a few more days until after my vacation to give me this life-altering news?

RENEE
There’s one more thing you need to know.

ANNA
Are you serious? There’s more?

RENEE
I’m terrible at this. Lily, could you please?

LILY
Anna, your father called to ask if he could see you because you are now 18. But it’s also important you know this now because... His doctors found something. I’m afraid he hasn’t got much time left. Perhaps you could put the beach trip on hold for a little while?

ANNA
He’s dying?

LILY
I’m so sorry my baby. Just know that you’re okay now. You survived and you will keep surviving. Because you are Anna. And Anna is brave, and strong. That will always be true. And that’s the only thing you need to know.
Lily tries to hug Anna but Anna gets up from her seat and bolts towards the front door.

    ANNA
    I need to process this.

    RENE
    Anna!

    LILY
    Let her go, Renee.

Anna slams the door shut behind her.

EXT. ANNA’S HOUSE - 11:20 PM

Night has fallen in full and a few streetlights are lit while others flicker or remain dark, broken. Anna is halfway down the road. She is wiping away tears. Paul and Clemy run toward her.

    PAUL
    Hey! Anna, slow down. I wanted to wait for you and then we heard yelling. What’s wrong?

    CLEMY
    What happened? Did you get into an argument with your mom?

    ANNA
    My father is a monster. My life is a lie.

Anna continues walking. Paul and Clemy follow in shocked silence.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MIDNIGHT

Anna, Clemy and Paul occupy three swings on a childrens’ swingset in the local park.

    ANNA
    They said it was my choice... Whether I wanted to see him or not. I just feel so confused knowing that this man that I thought that I loved and who I used to dream would come and rescue me from my mom for so long was actually the bad guy. But then what if he’s changed? What

(MORE)
ANNA (cont’d)
if he’s truly sorry? I’ve never even heard his side of the story.

Clemy reaches out to grab Anna’s hand.

CLEMY
At least it’s all over now. All of this... horribleness is already in the past.

Clemy climbs off of her swing and walks to Anna, pulling her into a hug.

ANNA
I just wish I had known what was going on at the time. She kept me in the dark for so long...

CLEMY
Maybe you are lucky you don’t remember. It may be a good thing finding out this way instead of sooner. Like when my parents got divorced in the 8th grade. I can remember all the nasty things they said to each other in perfect detail.

ANNA
I wish I did remember though...
Renee said they weren’t sure if he touched me or not. What if he did? What if I was just too young to know?

CLEMY
You’ll drive yourself crazy with those thoughts.

ANNA
This is kind of the worst birthday ever.

Paul touches Anna’s arm.

CLEMY
We will talk about this more. As much as you need. Call me any time you want to talk. I’ve got to go now though, it’s getting really late and my mom is probably starting to worry. I love you.
ANNA
Thanks, Clemy. ’Night.

Clemy leaves. Paul and Anna are left alone on the swings.

ANNA
Don’t leave me. Not yet.

PAUL
I won’t. Do you want to go for a walk?

Anna nods. They walk together through the darkened paths beneath the trees.

PAUL
I can’t imagine how you must be feeling right now.

ANNA
You know that split second right after you smash your toe into something really hard? You know it’s about to hurt like hell but you don’t quite feel anything yet?

PAUL
You always have an interesting way of putting things, Anna.

ANNA
Not really. I have a little kid’s way of putting things. Sometimes I feel like I’ll always be a little kid.

PAUL
That’s what’s so special about you, Anna. Lots of people try to hold on to their inner child and they can’t. But you... you’re different. You’ve had all this shit happen to you -- you’re dad being gone, your mom checking out, now this -- and you’re still... Just... vibrant and... pure.

ANNA
Ha, I’m not sure "pure" is the right word for me. I just feel like I need to grow up in order to deal with all these things happening around me. I need to get my life together.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PAUL
Here we are.

Paul and Anna walk into Paul’s backyard where they stand silently staring at a giant old tree cradling a battered tree house. Paul gestures that Anna climb up the ladder to the tree house and Anna smiles for the first time since the party.

INT. TREEHOUSE – 1:15 AM

Paul lights a couple of candles and sets them on a ledge, illuminating the interior of the small treehouse.

PAUL
I wanted to show you something I found the other day.

Paul reaches for a tattered stuffed animal and pulls out an old NOTEBOOK from its cotton center.

ANNA
Our old book!

It is covered in children’s writing that warns, "KEEP OUT OR ELSE,” and loose pages hang out of its bindings.

PAUL
Remember how we used to pass notes to each other in this thing? We thought we were so damn cool with our little secret.

ANNA
Are you kidding? We were very damn cool little kids. Listen to this: "Florence Huckabee is a snotty tattletale. If her oinky nose was any bigger, she’d be able to shoot mucus from building to building and ride around the town like spiderman on her snot strings." And there’s an illustration to match!

PAUL
That’s a pretty good drawing. You really got Florence’s likeness, mucus and all.

Paul pulls the book towards himself and flips to another page. He stops on a page covered in doodles of a magical land with castles and villages, all labeled prettily.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Seriously, you’re a really good artist Anna. You should have kept drawing.

ANNA
Our teacher, Ms. Baker wanted to put me in the talented art program in the third grade. We had to create a portfolio with four drawings in it to turn in to the "judges." I misheard her and thought she said "forty" drawings... So, being an 8-year-old, I drew what I did best at the time. Forty pictures of our dog Pixie pooping in various positions. They didn’t let me into the program that year. They said my style was "too immature." I think they just weren’t artistically evolved enough for my vision.

PAUL
You were so ahead of your time.

Paul and Anna laugh and continue flipping through the book. Anna stops on a page. The smile leaves her face. She reads a passage.

ANNA
"I hate my mom. She doesn’t even care that I exist. I know that if Dad were here he would take me away and things would be so much better for us. Mom is like an evil witch and she drove Dad away. I wish I knew where he was."

A tear rolls down Anna’s cheek.

ANNA
I don’t know what to believe. Or who to be more mad at.

Paul puts his arm around Anna’s shoulder. She lays her head on him and he puts his head on hers. Paul closes his eyes and smiles.
INT. ANNA’S LIVING ROOM - 2:00 AM

All of the lights are out except for one lamp in the living room, under which Renee and Aunt Lily sit. Anna enters through the front door, carrying the OLD NOTEBOOK. Aunt Lily beckons for Anna to sit down between herself and Renee.

LILY
Your mom and I are ready to answer any questions that you have for us.

RENEE
I hope one day you can understand why I kept him from you all this time.

Anna turns to Lily.

ANNA
Where is he now?

LILY
He’s been living in an apartment building about an hour from here. He can’t purchase property because he is a registered sex offender. He makes money working as a truck driver.

ANNA
How do you know all of this?

LILY
I’ve kept in contact with Robert over the years. Mostly through letters. Anna, he’s been through a lot. He is a truly changed man. He pays for his mistake every day of his life that he can’t see you.

RENEE
As he should.

LILY
(Sighing)
Believe me Anna, he would never hurt you. He loves you very, very much. All he really wants is a chance to say he is sorry. And to say goodbye.

(CONTINUED)
RENEE
Well, not everything can be fixed with an apology. His actions were unforgivable. End of story.

ANNA
Stop. You don’t get to have a say in this. You’ve had it your way for 15 years. Now it’s my turn. What he did was really really wrong. But he is still my father. (To Renee) And the way you sprang this on me in the middle of my birthday party was absolutely THE worst timing you could have possibly chosen. But I guess it doesn’t exactly matter to you how I feel.

RENEE
I know. Everything I do is the worst possible choice. I’m the worst mom in the world. Maybe one day you’ll understand that I was protecting you from someone worse.

ANNA
You were hardly a mom to me while I was growing up. And now you want to jump in suddenly and be Superwoman and save the day? Well you can’t. It’s too late. You abandoned me as much as Dad did. Maybe that’s one of those unforgivable things too. I’ve made up my mind. I want to see him. I need to hear what he has to say. That’s my decision, Renee.

Anna walks out of the room and up the stairs. Renee has tears in her eyes.

RENEE
She is bound and determined to do anything that goes against my advice. I just don’t want her to go through any more pain...

LILY
(Pausing)
One day she will understand how much you really care for her.

(CONTINUED)
RENEE
She’s right though. I’ve made some horrible choices.

LILY
In situations like this, there is no "right choice" to make. You did the best you could. This is a tough situation for Anna, but she’ll come around. Just give her time.

INT. ANNA’S BEDROOM - 2:10 AM
ANNA slumps onto her bed, exhausted. There is a BUZZING noise. Anna brings her vibrating phone from out of her pocket. There is an incoming call from "BRENDAN."

ANNA
Hey.

BRENDAN
Hey sexy. What’s up.

ANNA
Nothing. Actually, that’s a lie. But it’s a long story.

BRENDAN
I’m in the mood for a bedtime story.

ANNA
Hah, not this one.

BRENDAN
Alright beautiful, if you say so. Whatcha doin’ right now?

ANNA
I’m lying on my bed.

BRENDAN
Mmm. Sounds sexy.

ANNA
Hah. Are you drunk?

BRENDAN
I had a couple drinks. But I couldn’t stop thinkin’ about you and how gorgeous you are when you’re laying down on your bed all sleepy. What are you wearing?

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
Oh my god. Umm... a t-shirt and shorts.

BRENDAN
Mmm, short shorts?

ANNA
Haha, I guess.

BRENDAN
Take 'em off.

ANNA
Haha, I can't believe you.

BRENDAN
Pleeeeeease?

ANNA
Fine. I'm taking them off. But only because I was about to go to sleep anyway.

BRENDAN
Don't go to sleep. I love talking to you. Are they off yet?

ANNA
Yeah -- (struggling) they're off.

BRENDAN
I bet your ass looks so sexy right now. Are you thinking about me?

ANNA
How can I not be, I'm on the phone with you.

BRENDAN
You know what I mean. Are you touching yourself?

ANNA
No...

BRENDAN
Try it.

ANNA
No!

(CONTINUED)
BRENDAN
Why not?

ANNA
I don’t know, it’s weird.

BRENDAN
Why is it weird?

ANNA
I don’t know. It just is.

BRENDAN
It’s not weird, it’s sexy. I’m touching myself thinking about you lying there in your underwear... Your hands running down your stomach. Just try it.

ANNA
I can’t, not with you listening.

BRENDAN
Haha, you’re silly. Would you do it if I wasn’t on the phone with you?

ANNA
I don’t know maybe.

BRENDAN
You don’t ever do it when you’re feeling horny?

ANNA
I mean, I guess I do. I don’t know.

BRENDAN
Okay, I’m gonna hang up the phone, but only if you promise to give it a try when I hang up. And I’ll be thinking about you all night long.

ANNA
Ugh, alright. Goodnight.

BRENDAN
Night beautiful.

Anna hangs up the phone and rests it on her bedside table. She stares at the ceiling for a little while. Finally, slowly, she runs her hand down her stomach and strokes underwear cautiously. Her right hand moves slowly in circles and she closes her eyes. She brings her left hand to cup one

(continued)
of her breasts. Slowly, she begins to pick up the pace. She begins panting and her bed is starting to squeak with the action until --

RENEE
(From the hallway)
Goodnight, Anna.

Anna wrenches her blanket over herself instinctually.

INT. ANNA’S BATHROOM - 2:30 AM

ANNA is washing her hands vigorously at the sink.

FLASHBACK: INT. ANNA’S BATHROOM - MIDDAY

A five-year-old ANNA is crying, staring at her face in the mirror. RENEE is looming behind her at the faucet -- she is vigorously washing Anna’s hands from behind the little girl. Little Anna continues to sob uncontrollably.

FLASH FORWARD: INT. ANNA’S BEDROOM - 2:30 AM

Anna finishes washing her hands and dries them. She stares into the mirror deeply before turning off the light.

INT. DINO’S DINER -- 11:00 AM

ROBERT sits at an empty booth at Dino’s Diner. He a 50-something non-descript white guy with graying hair. He might have been handsome once but he now looks rather gaunt. ANNA enters the small, quiet diner.

ROBERT
(Standing up)
Annabelle.

ANNA
Hi.

ROBERT
(Taking a deep breath)
Wow, I can’t believe it. You look just like your momma when she was your age. Here, siddown. I got us a table.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
(Sitting)
Cool.

ROBERT
(Sitting)
I’m glad you came.

ANNA
Yeah. Um, they have good bread rolls here.

ROBERT
You probably don’t remember us coming here together. Back when you were so small I could lift you over my head?

ANNA
Yeah, I don’t remember that at all.

There is a silence. The WAITRESS brings one non-alcoholic beer to Robert and a giant rootbeer float with a colorful straw and a cherry on top to Anna.

ROBERT
I used to get you root beer floats and you would go crazy for ’em. I ordered you one already. Hope you don’t mind. Though you’re probably a little old for all that now.

ANNA
No, it’s great. Thank you.

ROBERT
Are you hungry? Can I get you something?

ANNA
Not really, thank you.

ROBERT
(Pausing)
I guess you have a lot of questions for me.

ANNA
Yeah. I don’t really know where to start though.

(CONTINUED)
ROBERT
Let me. It’s all true. Everything they said about me. I did it.

ANNA
Did what exactly?

ROBERT
I thought Renee told you everything?

ANNA
She did, I think. I just kind of... Want to hear it from you.

ROBERT
I understand. I guess I’ll just... Start... I was a real bad man. I did bad things. Things that are real hard to say out loud. I have a sickness, I know that. And I don’t blame Renee for keeping me away from you. She always wanted you to have a perfect life. She used to read those books, you know the ones about raising your kids right. She was so dedicated to giving you the best life. And my mistakes meant that I couldn’t be a part of it.

ANNA
What did you do, exactly?

ROBERT
I collected pictures. Pictures of young girls. Children. I knew it was sinful. I’m so disgusted with myself for giving in to evil...

ANNA
Why did you do it?

ROBERT
It happened when I discovered the internet. I found that there were other people like me out there that I could talk to. Before then, I felt alone. I didn’t know what to do or who I could trust to talk to about my problem. I had fallen away from the church. But these other guys online were like me -- they had a problem that they couldn’t

(MORE)
ROBERT (cont’d)
understand or control. Some of us wanted to stop. It gave me a sense of community. They were my friends. We tried to help each other, to give support. But at the same time, this urge just takes you over. We would send pictures back and forth. The internet was new, we didn’t know where the pictures came from. In a twisted way, we thought we were helping each other. Doing the right thing by only looking at pictures. But I know now that it was all wrong.

ANNA
I don’t understand... Why did you feel like you needed to do... that stuff?

ROBERT
I’ve been asking myself that question every day for 15 years. I still don’t know the answer. God works in ways we can’t always understand. But I do know that I would NEVER hurt you, Anna. I have paid for my sins in every way you could think of. I went to jail for three years. When I got out, I couldn’t buy property because no one would sell to me. I couldn’t get a decent job, so I was stuck with my old job driving trucks. This is my driver’s license now.

Robert pulls out a DRIVER’S LICENSE that is branded with large red letters: "SEX OFFENDER."

ROBERT
But the greatest punishment has been not being able to see you grow up. Not being able to get to know the beautiful young woman sitting across from me. But I know Renee did a good job raising you. I can see her toughness in your eyes.

ANNA
If I have strength, it came from Aunt Lily. She took care of me after... everything happened. Renee (MORE)
ANNA (cont’d)
forgot about me. She wouldn’t even get out of bed.

ROBERT
I put her through more trials than any woman should ever have to go through. I understand that maybe you feel she wasn’t there for you when you needed her, but baby, she was making real tough decisions in order to keep you safe.

ANNA
Maybe she was a better person when you knew her but she’s different now. She’s suffocating me. She wants me to grow up and make adult choices but she just won’t let me go.

ROBERT
I remember when I was your age. I thought my momma and daddy were trying to ruin my life. They didn’t like my "rowdy" friends or my long hair. One night my momma came in my room with a pair of scissors and I bolted right out the door and never came back. I was 16 years old and I thought that I was invincible. I made a lot of stupid choices. But when my so-called friends left me high and dry and I came crawling back home with my tail between my legs, I realized that I was wrong about my momma and daddy. They took me back in with open arms and they forgave me. They only wanted to protect me from making what I now know were some really stupid decisions.

ANNA
But I’m not trying to run off with a rock-and-roll band. I just want to take a year or two off before I go to college. I want to get out of Oregon and see the world. I don’t even know what I want to DO with my life yet, so why should I pay a hundred thousand dollars for some degree that I don’t even want?
ROBERT
I don’t have all the answers, Anna, and it sounds like you’re realizing that your momma doesn’t either. If there’s one thing I know though, it’s that she loves you with all her heart. Try not to be so hard on her. Life is short.

ANNA
Maybe you’re right.

Anna stirs her rootbeer float idly and Robert gazes out of the window.

ROBERT
Do you think... Do you think I might have a chance?

ANNA
A chance at what?

ROBERT
Do you think Renee would agree to see me? I’d like more than anything to apologize to her. For everything I put her through.

ANNA
I don’t know, I’m sorry. She’s very stubborn.

ROBERT
I know. That’s why I fell for her in the first place. I just wish I could get one chance, just five minutes, just to make things right. I don’t know how much your momma told you... but I’m sick.

ANNA
They said you don’t have much time.

ROBERT
That’s right. I know it’s not much, and that nothing can ever make up for me not being there for you, but I’ve saved up a lot of money over the years. I didn’t really have anything to spend it on. I want you and your momma to have it when I die.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
You don’t have to do that, really.
We’re fine.

ROBERT
I want to. It’s yours.

ANNA
That’s really not necessary.

ROBERT
I’ve already written it into my will. It’s done. Money is nothing to me. The only thing I ever really wanted was your forgiveness.

ANNA
I don’t know if I’m ready for that.

ROBERT
(Tears in his eyes)
I don’t blame you. And I don’t want to force you to make that decision. But please, let me be in your life. We can come here and talk about whatever you want.

ANNA
I guess that’d be okay... I have to go now.

Robert wipes his eyes as she gets up from the booth.

ROBERT
Anna. Will you meet me here tomorrow? Same time? Please. I want to be there for you, just once.

ANNA
Okay.

ROBERT
I love you.

ANNA
Bye.

Anna leaves Robert sitting in the booth alone.
INT. ANNA’S KITCHEN 11:30 AM

RENEE is washing dishes in the sink. The radio is on a talk show and the RADIO DJ is babbling innanely about the latest celebrity gossip. Renee picks up a pot and begins scrubbing. She finds a spot on the pot that just won’t leave. She begins to scrub furiously. She scrubs faster and faster and is gasping for breath, tears streaming down her face. Finally she flings the pot across the room and collapses to the floor. Her fingers are bleeding. The RADIO DJ reports that Justin Beiber is dating a new starlet when the FRONT DOOR is heard opening offscreen. Renee quickly stands up and gathers her composure.

ANNA
(walking in)
Hey.

RENEE
How did it go?

ANNA
It was alright. He seemed... Nice.

RENEE
Yeah. He can seem that way.

ANNA
You should cut him some more slack. He’s dying, after all.

RENEE
Everyone dies eventually. It doesn’t make them a nice person.

ANNA
I can’t believe you. He defended you when I told him what a shitty mother you were. And you can’t do anything but put him down. He’s got a problem. He’s working on it. Who knows, maybe he really has changed? You’re just too stubborn and cold-hearted to give him a chance to show you.

RENEE
People don’t change, Anna. They adapt. They just find better ways to hide what they truly are. That’s what he’s doing to you. He’s fooling you Anna, just like he fooled me.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
You’re wrong.

RENEE
I know I’m wrong about a lot of things, but I am right about this. Robert will never change. He will always be who he is, and that is a sicko. A pedophile --

ANNA
Stop it. He’s still my father.

RENEE
He’s a pervert and a menace to society --

ANNA
STOP IT --

RENEE
HE’S A MONSTER AND HE DOESN’T DESERVE TO BE ALI--

Anna flings herself onto Renee, tackling her to the ground. The two struggle, pulling hair and scratching.

ANNA
SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP!

RENEE
GET OFF ME!

The two struggle on the floor for a moment before Anna finally breaks free and stands up over Renee, wild-eyed. There is a fingernail scratch on her cheek collecting blood.

ANNA
I loathe you.

Anna runs up the stairs.

EXT. ANNA’S HOUSE - 1:30 PM

LILY walks up the driveway carrying groceries. ANNA bursts from the front door, carrying several bags of clothing, her hair still in disarray.

LILY
Anna, what’s going on?
ANNA
I can’t live with her anymore.

LILY
What? What happened?

Anna stalks off down the street. Lily watches her leave and then enters the house.

INT. ANNA’S KITCHEN 1:30 PM

RENEE is still slumped on the floor. We hear the front door open from offscreen and LILY walks into the kitchen. She drops her bags when she sees Renee.

LILY
Oh my -- what happened?

RENEE
She’s gone... She’s gone...

Lily crouches down and cradles her sister’s head on her chest, rocking her back and forth.

LILY
Shhh, it’s okay.

RENEE
She’ll never come back...

LILY
Shh... it’s alright.

EXT. CLEMY’S HOUSE - 2:00 PM

A bedraggled, bag-laden ANNA rings the doorbell. CLEMY’S MOM answers.

CLEMY’S MOM
Anna. Uh, hi. Good to see you...
Come in. Is everything alright?

ANNA
Everything’s fine Mrs. Fulton. Is Clemy home?

Clemy’s Mom calls upstairs.

CLEMY’S MOM
Clementine? Anna’s here! Go on up, Anna.
INT. CLEMY’S BEDROOM - 2:00 PM

Clemy’s room is meticulously organized and decorated with bright, coordinated colors and a matching set of stylish furniture. There are awards scattered across the walls and one overburdened shelf supports trophies of various shapes and sizes. CLEMY is sitting at her desk typing when ANNA enters the room.

CLEMY
Hey girl. Woah, what happened to your face?

ANNA
I got into a fight with my mom.

CLEMY
What, a fist fight?

ANNA
More like a hair-pulling, scratching kind of fight, but yeah. I think I’m missing a chunk on the back of my head.

CLEMY
Holy shit.

ANNA
Yeah. I don’t think I can go back.

CLEMY
Seriously? Whatever happened, I’m sure it’ll blow over by tonight. Renee will want you back home.

ANNA
No, I’m not going back. She’s driving me insane... Do you think I could crash here for a little while?

CLEMY
Umm, I don’t know. I can check...

Clemy leaves the room and Anna slumps down on the bed. She leans over to take a peek at what Clemy is writing on her laptop. It is the beginnings of an essay for Brown University. Anna sighs and falls back on the bed. Clemy returns.
CLEMY
My mom said no... She’s friends with your Aunt Lily from book club and she doesn’t want to start any drama. I’m really sorry. I can hide you in my closet if you’d like. It’s kind of small but you can come out at night...

ANNA
(laughing)
It’s okay, Clemy. I understand.

CLEMY
What are you gonna do?

ANNA
I don’t know. I’ll figure something out. Ugh, why can’t I just have a perfect life like yours?

CLEMY
You’ve got to be joking.

ANNA
No, I’m serious. You’re perfect. You always get good grades and you’re responsible. You never act irrationally or get in trouble. You plan ahead, you know what you want to do with your life, and you don’t get in fist fights with your mom over your dad being a pedophile.

CLEMY
... Is that what happened?

ANNA
Yeah.

CLEMY
Ugh, I’m sorry.

ANNA
You have nothing to apologize for.

CLEMY
No, I know that. I’m just sorry that you have to go through all this craziness. You’re right, sometimes I forget that I do have it pretty good... But I’m not perfect. I want to have fun too.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
I know, I know. I’m just... So
lost. This new thing about my
dad... I don’t know what to think.
I saw him today.

CLEMY
You did? How did it go?

ANNA
It was... weird. He just seemed
like a normal guy. I think he’s
really sorry for what he did. But I
still don’t know if I can forgive
him for being gone all of those
years.

CLEMY
I mean, my dad left my mom for a
sixteen year old Phillipino girl he
met on the internet.

ANNA
Wait, was Su Ang seriously sixteen?

CLEMY
Probably, did you see her? If I’m
being truthful, she looked about
12.

ANNA
Okay, but Su Ang must’ve been at
least 18 for them to be able to get
a marriage certificate.

CLEMY
Fine. But I’m 18 too. That’s
disgusting. Why do men do that? Go
for girls way way younger than
them?

ANNA
Remember when Lenny Kravitz came
into town? Hailey Rothberg waited
on him at the restaurant she worked
at and he invited her back to his
hotel room. I think she was barely
18 at the time too. Meanwhile his
own daughter is 26.

CLEMY
To be fair, I’d totally do Lenny
Kravitz.
ANNA
What! But Lenny Kravitz is way older than your dad!

CLEMY
Yeah but his yumminess factor is off the charts. It counteracts all age boundaries.

ANNA
Oh my god, listen to yourself. You are no worse than your dad.

CLEMY
Woah, woah, woah. This is in no way the same thing. Lenny Kravitz is not a preteen Phillipino child.

ANNA
Well he might as well be! Or maybe you are the preteen Phillipino child in this Kravitz scenario.

CLEMY
It’s not the same thing at all. You know how I feel about my dad. I can’t believe you would even compare me to him. What if I did the same to you?

ANNA
Okay, okay, I’m sorry. I’m just saying, maybe you should cut your dad some slack. Yeah, Su Ang was young, but at least she was technically of age to give consent. My dad on the other hand, well, he likes little children. Actual, innocent little children, like the ones who still pick their noses and eat it. So yeah, don’t be so hard on your dad.

CLEMY
You’re right, I’m sorry. Your situation is much worse. But I’m not about to cut my dad any slack... Anyway. So, where can you go if you’re not going home?

ANNA
I don’t know, maybe Brendan’s place?
CLEMY
Ugh, his place is such a dump.

ANNA
Well what do you expect from a bunch of college guys living together in a small space?

CLEMY
Haha, I guess. I just don’t understand why it smells so strongly of corn chips.

ANNA
That’s probably all they eat.

CLEMY
I bet you’re right. I’m pretty sure one or two of them has scurvy by now. Can I ask you something though? What is it exactly that you see in Brendan?

ANNA
I don’t know. I don’t hate spending time with him?

CLEMY
No seriously. He doesn’t seem like... your type.

ANNA
My type? I’m only 18 and you want me to have a type? I don’t know, he’s smart and he knows how to have fun. He lives in the moment and he doesn’t do things just because other people tell him to.

CLEMY
He definitely functions on his own wavelength.

Anna smiles.

INT. BRENDAN’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

BRENDAN, an 18-year-old, wild-haired punk, has his back turned and is hunched over something in the center of the living room. The room itself is shabby and completely out of date. There are bits of trash and dirty plates scattered about the floor and on every surface. Three other BEDRAGGLED

(CONTINUED)
TEEN boys are sprawled across a large sofa and armchair. Brendan turns around to exhale a large puff of weed smoke.

**BRENDAN**

Yipes. Here you go bro.

Brendan hands a giant three foot pipe to a bedraggled teen with glazed-over eyes.

**BRENDAN**

So I told him that his answer key was completely effed. I said, if you give me five minutes I can prove to you that all these answers are wrong. So I sat down at the front of this class -- and it’s a lecture hall of about 200 students -- and I went one by one. This answer is wrong, this answer is wrong. The dude was fucking blown away. He told me that he’d been using that same answer key for years and no one had ever pointed out his mistake before. He just thought everybody kept doing really badly on the test.

**BEDRAGGLED TEEN 1**

That’s wild man.

**BRENDAN**

That’s why you can’t trust people in places of power. Most of the time they don’t know shit. I’m like, did I come here for you to teach me, or for me to teach you?

**BEDRAGGLED TEEN 2**

Heheheheh.

**BEDRAGGLED TEEN 3**

Dude, I need you to talk to my precal professor. She’s failing the shit out of me. It’s gotta be a mistake.

**BRENDAN**

Nah, that’s probably you man.

BEDREAGGLED TEEN 3 throws a piece of sushi at Brendan’s head, but Brendan dodges and catches it midair, popping it into his mouth.

(CONTINUED)
There is a knock at the door. Brendan gets up and peers through the peephole for a second. He opens the door.

BRENDAN
Anna Montana, hey.

ANNA
Hey. Can I come in?

BRENDAN
Course you can, what’s up?

ANNA
(To the others)
Hey guys. (To Brendan) Can I talk to you?

Brendan walks Anna to the Hallway.

INT. BRENDAN’S ROOM - NIGHT

Much like the rest of the house, Brendan’s room is disheveled, but slightly less so. There are band posters on the walls and a drum kit in the corner. BRENDAN and ANNA enter. Brendan beckons Anna to sit on the bed.

BRENDAN
What’s going on? Did you get in a fight?

ANNA
Yeah, with my mom.

BRENDAN
Damn. You wanna talk about it?

ANNA
Maybe later, not right now.

BRENDAN
Fair enough, no worries babe.

ANNA
Do you think I could stay here for a little while?

BRENDAN
You can crash here for as long as you need.
ANNA
Thank you. I really appreciate that.

Anna lays back on Brendan’s bed, sighing.

ANNA
Tell me something nice.

BRENDAN
Alright. You are the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen.

ANNA
Haha, shut up. No, tell me something real.

BRENDAN
You really don’t know how beautiful you are, do you?

ANNA
Tell me about our beach trip. What are we gonna do?

BRENDAN
Alright. Well, Christian scored us some acid. You still wanna try it right?

ANNA
What is it like?

BRENDAN
What do you mean?

ANNA
Just, tripping. What is it like?

BRENDAN
It’s hard to explain. When you take acid, you’re kind of at the mercy of your own mind and your surroundings. If you’re not in the right place -- mentally or physically -- the acid can turn ugly.

ANNA
Ugly?

(Continued)
BRENDAN
Yeah, but don’t worry about it
babe. We’ll be on the beach with
good people. It’s the perfect
location for a first timer to trip.

ANNA
Yeah, but what if I’m not in the
right "mental" place?

BRENDAN
You mean because of whatever
happened with your mom?

ANNA
Yeah. But it’s actually more than
that. A lot more.

BRENDAN
Well I won’t push you to tell me if
you don’t want to. But if you do,
I’m ready to listen.

ANNA
Everything’s just falling in on me,
all around. I don’t even want to
tell you. It’ll just drag you down.

BRENDAN
You can tell me.

ANNA
My mom dropped a bomb on me the
other day. She said she and my dad
got divorced because... my dad was
a pedophile.

BRENDAN
Damn.

ANNA
Yeah.

BRENDAN
Did he ever--?

ANNA
Touch me? No. At least, I don’t
think so. Shit, I don’t remember. I
was only three when he left.
Apparently he was part of some sort
of illegal kiddie website. He even
went to jail for years, and I

(MORE)
ANNA (cont’d)
didn’t know. He’s a felon. And I just remember him as "Daddy," you know?

BRENDAN
That’s messed up.

ANNA
Yeah. So I went to see him today.

BRENDAN
Oh yeah? Alone?

ANNA
I mean, we went to Dino’s, it’s not like he was going to try anything.

BRENDAN
Still, you could have let me know. I work there, I could have gotten one of the fry cooks to stand on guard and beat him with a spatula if he did.

ANNA
Ha, shush. He’s actually not that bad. I think he might me really sorry for everything. Oh, and I forgot to tell you the kicker. He’s dying.

BRENDAN
Holy shit, babe. I’m sorry.

ANNA
Yeah. And it seems his dying wish is to have me forgive him. And my mom too I guess.

BRENDAN
Are you gonna? I mean, he’s a pedophile. Those people don’t change. They can’t. They’re brains are hardwired wrong. We talked about it in Psychology.

ANNA
Maybe you’re right but he seems really sad. He’s lived this horrible life. I don’t think he has any friends or anything. I’m supposed to meet him again

(MORE)
ANNA (cont’d)
tomorrow. Maybe the least I could
do is give him some peace before he
dies.

BRENDAN
So what’s stopping you?

ANNA
There’s just this... weird, nagging
feeling that I can’t explain. I
have memories of me sitting on his
lap and playing, you know? Just
normal kid stuff. But what if it
wasn’t normal? What he if he was
like -- I can’t believe I’m about
to say this out loud, but -- what
if he was enjoying it?

BRENDAN
I’m sorry to say this but you might
be right.

ANNA
He said he never wanted to hurt me
and I think I believe him but I
can’t be sure. I was just so young
at the time. There was this lady.
Miss Allie. My mom took me to her
after the divorce. We would play
games and draw pictures. I thought
she was just a sort of babysitter.
But my mom told me that she was
actually a psychiatrist. They took
me to her to see if I was abused i
guess.

BRENDAN
Well, what did she say?

ANNA
Apparently she said I was fine. But
I don’t know how she could tell
just from me playing with legos.

BRENDAN
Well, why don’t you find her? Go
talk to her and see if she can tell
you what Little Anna said. It’ll
ease your mind.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
That’s actually a really good idea. Thank you Brendan, I’m going to do that.

BRENDAN
We can go tomorrow morning. Figure out where she is and I can drop you off and then when you’re done, if you don’t want to see him you don’t have to. We can do something nice, like go to the park or something.

ANNA
That’s incredibly sweet of you. (Sighing) I’m sorry I just dropped that emotional bomb on you.

BRENDAN
It’s okay, don’t sweat it babe. My home life was kind of messed up too. Nothing like that, but still.

ANNA
What happened?

BRENDAN
It was my big bro and I. We didn’t get along. He kinda tortured me relentlessly, beat the life out of me sometimes for fun. And to my parents, he was just the golden child. A genius, math and science prodigy. He could do no wrong. Every time I tried to talk to them -- tell them what Noah was doing -- Noah would find a way turn it all around and blame it on me. And they always believed him. That’s why I moved out when I was thirteen.

ANNA
Really? Where did you live?

BRENDAN
With friends mostly. Hopped from sofa to sofa. Survived. But hey, I’m paying my own way through college now. I don’t need them.

ANNA
That must’ve been really hard though. You were only a kid.
BRENDAN
Nah. It was better than staying at home. Not with them constantly putting me down for not being good enough. For not being more like Noah.

ANNA
But didn’t you do really well in school too? I mean, I heard this story -- I don’t know if it’s true or not -- that you memorized 100 decimals of pi one year? It’s practically legend now.

BRENDAN
That’s close. It was 400 decimals. At the end of our first week of class in 7th grade, our algebra teacher told us that any student who could memorize four hundred decimal places of pi and write them all on the board on Monday morning would have an "A" in the class for the rest of the semester. It was one of those impossible challenges that teachers use to get kids motivated, but that they think no one will ever actually pull off. But that weekend, I studied. I memorized it all by separating it into chunks of ten. When I went out and played frisbee, or ate dinner, or took a shower, I recited the digits, chunk by chunk, until I knew all four hundred by heart. The look on the poor guy’s face when I wrote it all out on the board on Monday morning was hilarious.

ANNA
What did he do? Did he give you an "A" in the class?

BRENDAN
Sure did. Every time we had an exam I’d hand in my blank test sheet with just my name on it. I got an "A" plus back every time.

ANNA
That’s amazing... And kind of terrifying. I’m -- I can’t say
ANNA (cont’d)
"impressed," that just falls too short.

BRENDAN
Well, the ol’ mom and pops weren’t impressed either. Noah could do no wrong, and it seems I could do no right. I thought that if I could show them that I could succeed too, that they would finally see me as more than just "Not Noah." But it didn’t change anything. Noah only tortured me more and in more inventive ways. He’d do horrible things and blame it on me. He’d create false evidence and everything to frame me. He found pleasure in seeing me miserable. Our parents were probably glad to see my ass leave in the end. They probably thought it would be a relief -- the "troubled child" was finally gone. Idiots.

ANNA
That’s horrible.

BRENDAN
That’s how I learned that I couldn’t depend on anyone else though. I found out how to grow up really fast.

ANNA
Yeah. You did really well for yourself.

BRENDAN
I can help you too. Anything you need, I got you.

Anna leans towards him. The two begin to kiss. Piece by piece, they shed their clothing, though they are covered by a thin blanket. Brendan begins to kiss Anna’s stomach, and then moves between her legs.

ANNA
Wait, stop.

BRENDAN
What’s wrong? I want to make you feel good.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
I just, I feel dirty. I’ve been out all day.

BRENDAN
So? I like it.

ANNA
Just don’t, please?

BRENDAN
Okay, I won’t.

The two begin kissing again.

EXT. BRENDAN’S HOUSE - MORNING
ANNA is pacing up and down the porch, her PHONE to her ear.

ANNA
1701 Maple? Okay, thanks Aunt Lily.

BRENDAN emerges from inside.

ANNA
I don’t know when I’ll be coming home. Yes, I will let you know. Love you too. Bye.

BRENDAN
Did you get an address?

ANNA
1701 Maple.

BRENDAN
That’s actually really close.

ANNA
Cool. The only thing is, she doesn’t know that I’m coming. What if she’s not home or she doesn’t want to talk to me?

BRENDAN
Well, we can see if she’s available and if not, I’ll drive you back to my place. No harm, no foul.

ANNA
Thank you so much. For everything.
Brendan kisses Anna briefly on the cheek and they both hop in his car.

EXT. MISS ALLIE’S HOUSE - MORNING

ANNA is already at the door. Miss Allie’s house is charming, like a fairy tale home. There are overflowing flower pots hanging all around and the glass front door is hung with a lacy curtain. Anna peers back at Brendan who motions a "thumbs-up." She turns back around and knocks on the door. From inside the house, a DOG BARKS loudly in response. After an uncertain moment passes, the lacy curtain parts to reveal MISS ALLIE, peaking through the door. She takes one look at Anna and opens the door, arms open wide.

MISS ALLIE
I would remember those green eyes anywhere. Anna, it’s so good to see you. You look just like Renee.

Anna stares back at Brendan, who is grinning.

MISS ALLIE
Come in, come in! Don’t be shy.

Miss Allie ushers Anna into her home.

INT. MISS ALLIE’S HOUSE - MORNING

Miss Allie’s living room is similar in charm to the outside of her home. There are soft chairs and rugs placed with love around the home. A giant old SAINT BERNARD sniffs Anna excitedly.

MISS ALLIE
This is Georgie. He’s a giant cuddlebug. Can I get you something to drink? Pop? Lemonade? Tea?

ANNA
I’d love a glass of water, actually.

MISS ALLIE
I’ll be right back. Have a seat wherever you like. They’re all comfy!

Anna looks around and chooses an orange-ish armchair with a particularly poufy cushion which she sinks into just as Miss Allie returns with a glass of water.

(CONTINUED)
MISS ALLIE
(Handing Anna the glass and
taking a seat of her own)
So, Miss Anna Banana. How have you
been? My you have grown into a
young woman, it’s incredible. What
grade are you in now?

ANNA
I’m about to be a senior in high
school.

MISS ALLIE
My, oh my. Well that means I’m
quite the old crone indeed. I
remember when you were just a
little thing, not even tall enough
to reach my waist, and here you
are, so tall.

ANNA
My mom never let me drink coffee.
She said it would stunt my growth.
I don’t think that’s true though.

MISS ALLIE
Perhaps she was right. I drank
nothing but coffee back in my
college days. And look at me, five
foot two, barely taller than
Georgie here.

Georgie barks happily from the sofa he has completely
sprawled out on.

ANNA
He’s really big.

MISS ALLIE
Never drank a spot of coffee in his
life.

ANNA
(Laughing)
He seems sweet.

MISS ALLIE
Do you have any pets?

ANNA
I had a dog, but she ran away.
Pixie was her name.
MISS ALLIE
Oh yes, I remember you drawing some very sweet pictures of Pixie.

ANNA
Oh my gosh, were they poop drawings?

MISS ALLIE
I’m sorry?

ANNA
Oh, nothing.

MISS ALLIE
You had such a talent for drawing, even at a young age. Do you still practice?

ANNA
Not really.

MISS ALLIE
Why do I get the feeling that you didn’t come here to talk about our pets and your art career Miss Anna?

ANNA
Right. I didn’t... I actually came to talk about... Well, my dad.

MISS ALLIE
I figured as much. I suppose Renee has told you the truth about... Robert, was it?

ANNA
Yeah, she did. And I went to see him yesterday.

MISS ALLIE
Really? How is he?

ANNA
He’s dying.

MISS ALLIE
Oh, that is a shame. How must you be feeling about that?

ANNA
I’m sorry, I just came here without calling, I should have made an appointment.

(CONTINUED)
MISS ALLIE
Please, I’m retired now. I’m all alone here with just Georgie to keep me company.

Georgie barks happily.

MISS ALLIE
I have open ears and nothing but time. And cookies.

Miss Allie gestures to a plate of cookies. Anna shakes her head.

ANNA
Well. It’s just that... Now that I know everything -- about my dad, and about his preference for little girls -- I just can’t help but wonder. My mom told me you said I was okay, and that you didn’t think that my dad did anything to me.

MISS ALLIE
And you’re wondering now if that’s really true?

ANNA
Well, yeah. Or, I mean, how did you come to that conclusion?

MISS ALLIE
When we’re talking about a very young child, as you were, it becomes difficult to discern to what level that child is aware of his or her surroundings. At around three years old, the brain begins to store some of the first memories of life. When I met you, you were a happy, healthy little girl. Of course, when I asked you about mommy and daddy you were distraught over daddy’s departure, but that was to be expected. I asked you to draw pictures of your family and nothing seemed out of place. There was nothing to suggest that Robert had abused you in any way. This went on for many weeks until I felt satisfied that, in time, you would be able to lead a relatively happy and normal life. Which I deeply hope you have.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
For the most part, yeah.

MISS ALLIE
Than that’s all I could ask for. I know you came here looking for a definitive answer but I truly cannot give you that, as I have no concrete evidence one way or the other. But ask yourself, is it really worth knowing? What is it that you are searching for?

ANNA
The truth. I just want to know the truth.

MISS ALLIE
You are clearly a very bright girl, Anna. You understand computers and such? The brain is a very complex computer. Right now, yours is squeaky clean and running at maximum efficiency. But sometimes our computers can be put together wrong, or they can break down due to old age or even external factors. The study of psychology can reveal all the ways in which a brain can "malfunction." I once came across a study of a man very similar to your father. He was normal in most every way until one day he was caught looking at lewd pictures of very young girls. His family couldn’t understand it. Even he knew something was wrong. When other symptoms began to show, the doctors scanned his brain and found a tumor. Luckily, they were able to remove the tumor, and miraculously the man felt no urges to continue his pedophilic behavior. It was as if a switch was turned off. Years went by and the man lived a normal life, started a family. Until one day he began to get those same strange urges. He went back to his doctors, and sure enough, the tumor had returned.
ANNA
They didn’t tell me what he was dying of... Maybe he has a tumor too?

MISS ALLIE
I’m not saying that that is the case with your father. But I will say that my life’s work has shown me that malfunctions can occur within the brain. And we owe more to that than we’d like to believe.

ANNA
I think I understand that... And that’s also kind of why I’ve felt so upset about this news. I guess there’s a tiny part of me that thinks, "what if I’m messed up too?" What if I’m a pervert? I don’t want to be with little kids or anything like that. But I was always insterested in sex. Like a lot. And from a really young age.

MISS ALLIE
Well that’s perfectly normal. Sex is a natural pleasure of life that we all enjoy. It’s certainly nothing to be ashamed of.

ANNA
Yeah, I know, of course sex is normal. But I mean, even as a little girl. When I was five I used to touch myself all the time. My mom would catch me doing it and she would wash my hands and tell me that that’s what monsters did. I don’t even know where I learned how to do that. What if I inherited it from him? What if, in a way, I’m like him? A sexual deviant? A monster?

MISS ALLIE
Anna. You are no a monster. Your father has a disease, yes, but that doesn’t make him a monster either. And you are in no way bound to become like him. Nature may deal the cards but ultimately you play the hand you are dealt. You make your own destiny.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
I know. It’s just been on my mind. I haven’t really even said it to myself until now.

MISS ALLIE
This is a really tough situation to be in, it would be stressful for anyone, and I’m so sorry you have to go through it my dear. But you are handling it so well. I can see that you are strong, just like your mother. You’re carrying this burden like a warrior. But promise me you will try to find some time to relax and clear your mind. It no good for the psyche to ruminate over fixed circumstances for too long.

ANNA
I’m going on a beach trip tomorrow.

MISS ALLIE
Perfect. Enjoy the sun and the surf. Let life give you something sweet. Just go where the wind blows you.

ANNA
I will try.

MISS ALLIE
I hope I’ve helped you, Anna.

ANNA
You have.

INT. DINO’S
ROBERT sits at the same booth as before. He jumps up when he sees ANNA enter.

ANNA
Hey.

ROBERT
Annabelle, hi.

Robert opens his arms and Anna leans in for an awkward hug.
ROBERT
Thank you for coming. It means a lot to me.

ANNA
No problem.

ROBERT
Who was that that dropped you off?

ANNA
Oh, Brendan? He’s my boyfriend.

ROBERT
Boyfriend, huh? Are you two serious?

ANNA
I don’t know. How can I say?

ROBERT
Does he treat you right?

ANNA
Yeah, I guess, I don’t know.

ROBERT
I’m sorry, I just -- I never got the chance to be a real dad for you. I guess I’m kinda trying to make up for lost years.

ANNA
It’s alright. Brendan’s nice. He’s very smart. And he plays music. You said you were in a band once. Do you still play?

ROBERT
Me? Nah. I played guitar once, yeah, back when I thought I was gonna be a rock star. But I gave all that up a long time ago. What does Brendan play?

ANNA
The drums.

ROBERT
A drummer, huh? Better watch out for those guys.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
Renee hates him.

ROBERT
And her momma hated me when I was young. If it wasn’t for your Aunt Lily and her being best friends, I’d never have been allowed in their house.

ANNA
So why’d you give it up? The guitar?

ROBERT
I guess it reminded me of the days when I was a reckless kid and did stupid things -- did drugs. Reminded me of all the mistakes I made that brought me to where I am today.

ANNA
Oh.

ROBERT
If I could do it all again I would have raised you right. Raised you in the light of God.

ANNA
Aunt Lily took me to church.

ROBERT
I know she did but Renee and I were never religious before. If I could do it again I would have been so I could set an example for you. Our time on this earth is short. Not just for me, but for all humanity.

ANNA
What do you mean?

ROBERT
The signs are all there. Rumors of wars, natural disasters, disease. The end times are near.

ANNA
You really believe that?

(CONTINUED)
ROBERT
Of course I do. It’s written in the Bible. His word is truth. My time may be up here, but you still have a chance. To live a life of righteousness. To earn salvation.

ANNA
Well, I think that whatever you’ve done, you’ve probably earned that.

ROBERT
God’s will is only known to him. But tell me... Can you forgive me, Annabelle?

ANNA
I don’t know if I’m the one that needs to forgive you. Maybe... Maybe you need to forgive yourself most of all.

Robert wipes tears from his eyes.

ROBERT
I don’t think I can do that.

ANNA
Listen, Brendan’s here. I told him to pick me up in 30 minutes... I’ve got to go. It’s been nice talking to you.

ROBERT
Think about it, Annabelle. It would make me so happy...

ANNA
You think about it. Goodbye.

Anna gets up to leave. Robert slumps his head in his hands as she walks out of the jangling door.

EXT. PARK - MIDDAY

CLEMY, ANNA, and BRENDAN sit on a park bench across from the playground. All around them CHILDREN laugh, scream, and play games.

BRENDAN
I could have come in with you.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
You threatened to have one of the fry cooks assault my dad with a spatula.

CLEMY
How is that diner job Brend?

BRENDAN
I make $200 a night. How much does your gig on the yearbook staff pay?

ANNA
Oh, ouch.

CLEMY
Hey, no need to get prickly.

BRENDAN
Sorry, it’s just my natural reaction as a little brother to shit-talk. Anyway, Niels is having a party at our place after the beach trip. You should come, Clem.

CLEMY
I don’t know. I still haven’t nailed down my Brown essay yet.

ANNA
Oh, please come! You said you wanted to have a little fun in your life! This is your chance.

BRENDAN
I swear, one night of alcohol will not lower your grade point average. If it did, I would have failed out of college within the first week.

CLEMY
Alright, I’ll go.

ANNA
YES!

Suddenly a large black lab, REX, bounds up to Anna and leaps into her lap, licking her face excitedly.

ANNA
Ohoho, calm down big guy!

PAUL walks up to the group and, pulling Rex from Anna’s lap, clips the dog’s leash back onto its collar.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Hey, sorry about that.

Paul’s eyes linger on Brendan’s arm, which rests on Anna’s shoulder.

BRENDAN
Hey man, you got quite a beast on your hands don’t you? You might want to keep that thing on the leash if it’s going to randomly attack people.

ANNA
Um, Brendan, you’ve met Paul right? He’s a good friend of mine.

BRENDAN
Oh, hey man. Yeah, you look familiar. Right, you went to school at James Cook?

PAUL
Yeah, we took P.E. together.

BRENDAN
Oh yeah, you were the little freshman that got clobbered every time played dodgeball. You would just curl up in the fetal position before coach even blew the whistle.

Clemy snorts.

PAUL
Right.

BRENDAN
Well hey man, there’s a party going on this weekend at my pad on Oak. It’s going to be legendary. You should come.

CLEMYS
Please come. No offense but at least if you came I wouldn’t have to third wheel it with these two.

PAUL
I don’t know. I um... Have this really important... appointment. I can’t miss it.

(CONTINUED)
BRENDAN
Fair enough. Well, maybe you’ll catch us next time.

PAUL
Right, next time. Well, Rex is looking a little restless. It’s right around his dinner time. See you guys later.

ANNA
What? It’s only 1 o’clock! Rex doesn’t eat ’til 4.

PAUL
It’s a new diet thing.

Clemy suddenly jumps up to join Paul.

CLEM
I’m coming with you!

ANNA
Fine... See you guys later.

CLEM & PAUL
Bye!

Clemy and Paul walk out of sight, leaving Anna and Brendan alone on the bench.

BRENDAN
You’re friends with that guy?

ANNA
Paul? I’ve known him since kindergarten. Florence Huckabee tried to get me in trouble for stealing her puzzle pieces but Paul called her out for hiding them in her own lunch box. Paul and I have been best friends ever since.

BRENDAN
Wait, is this the same kid that wet his pants every day in 7th grade?

Brendan laughs but Anna’s face is serious.

ANNA
That only happened once and your buddy Lars wouldn’t let him forget it for the rest of the year. Paul

(MORE)
ANNA (cont’d)
had a bladder infection, he couldn’t help it.

BRENDAN
Oh, I remember now. Lars was only messing around with him. He’s too sensitive. I guess you want me to be like that, huh? All artsy and sad, writing you little poems and leaving them inside your locker?

ANNA
That’s not such a bad idea.

BRENDAN
Anna, light of my life, your face shines like a banana, so I must make you my wife.

Anna shoves his shoulder playfully and he pulls her into his lap and begins tickling her. The two fight and laugh. Finally Anna pushes him away forcefully.

ANNA
Enough! You’re killin’ me!

BRENDAN
Alright, alright. Oh shit, my shift starts soon. I better drop you off back home.

ANNA
I’ll pack up all of our stuff for tomorrow.

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM – AFTERNOON

CLEMY and PAUL recline in Paul’s room. His room contains an interesting mix of ecclectic furniture and art. There is an old typewriter on the desk. It is clearly a "hipster" room.

CLEMY
I just don’t know what to write about on my application essay. I have nothing interesting to say. I wish I had a life like Anna’s. At least then I might have a shot at standing out from the crowd.
PAUL
Listen to what you just said. You really envy Anna right now?

CLEMNY
You know what I meant. I envy her individuality. She’s all creative and unique. Universities love that.

PAUL
You really gonna place your self worth on what some old geezers at an admissions office think about you? I bet the only excitement in their lives comes from collecting stuffed cats and pruning their prized fig bushes.

CLEMNY
See? That’s the kind of wit I need on my essay.

PAUL
Right... I wonder why she didn’t call me though. She could have stayed here.

CLEMNY
Who?

PAUL
Anna.

CLEMNY
Oh, right. You’re right. At least if she stayed at your place she wouldn’t risk catching hep B from a stray needle or something. I’m being mean. Brendan’s an asshole but I doubt he does heroin.

PAUL
What does she see in him?

CLEMNY
I don’t know. He is pretty smart I guess. They say he recited like a thousand digits of pi to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or something.
PAUL
But he’s a total douchebag.

CLEMY
You know us girls. We just caaan’t resist a bad boy.

PAUL
If I didn’t know you were being sarcastic I might believe that. He’s gonna put her in danger. Or break her heart.

CLEMY
Then maybe that’ll be the day she finally sees how much you love her.

PAUL
Huh?

CLEMY
Come on. Look at all those pictures you have of her on your mirror. You’re crazy about her. You always have been.

PAUL
She’s way beyond my league.

CLEMY
Leagues don’t count between best friends.

PAUL
I’ve shown her how much I care about her before. She doesn’t think of me that way.

CLEMY
Tried how?

PAUL
I -- I would do anything for her. If she ever needs me, I’m there.

CLEMY
Okay. I could say the same about my big brother. Have you ever tried to kiss her?

PAUL
No way!

(CONTINUED)
CLEMY
Why not?

PAUL
She has a boyfriend, for one.

CLEMY
Oh please, that douchenugget? There’s no competition between you and him. She’ll see that soon. Once the honeymoon phase is over.

Paul’s mom, JOAN, enters the doorway.

JOAN
Paulie? We’re going out for dinner tonight. Clemy, would you like to join us?

CLEMY
Oh, no thank you Joan, I have to work on my essay for Brown. Actually, it’s already 5:00, I get back to it right now.

JOAN
I know you’ll knock it out of the park, girl.

CLEMY
Bye Paul, by Joan.

Clemy exits.

JOAN
I’m choosing the destination tonight. Get your tastebuds ready for a feast!

Joan exits. Paul is alone in his room. He gets up to look at the pictures of Anna that he keeps clipped to the side of his mirror. His PHONE vibrates from the bureau. It’s ANNA. He picks up.

PAUL
Hey Anna, what’s up?

ANNA
Hey. I don’t know. I just got back from the park. I’m sorry if Brendan offended you. He messes around a lot.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Yeah, of course.

ANNA
He wants us to take acid on the beach tomorrow.

PAUL
Are you gonna do it?

ANNA
I don’t know, do you think I should?

PAUL
I don’t know, Anna. That’s getting into some really dangerous stuff. You don’t know what kind of consequences that could have on your mental state.

ANNA
That’s true, but I think this beach thing is going to be really good for me. Maybe I need this to kind of wind down and help me relax. Maybe the acid will be a distraction from everything that’s been going on.

BRENDAN
But do you really think that you know Brendan well enough to be in such a vulnerable state with him? I mean, what if he’s not really trustworthy?

ANNA
He cares about me more than you know. He’s actually been really helpful throughout this whole thing. You need to let go of the grudge you have been holding against him from the 7th grade.

PAUL
Is that what you think? That this is just a grudge?

ANNA
Well what else is it? Because if it’s not that then it sounds like you’re just hating on Brendan for no reason.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
No reason? The guy is a jerk. He and his friends are drug dealers and deadbeats.

ANNA
You sound like the jerk here. He has no problem with you. He invited you to that party and you didn’t want to go.

PAUL
I would rather chew off my own hand than spend more time than I needed to with Brendan.

ANNA
Well then you better not spend any time with me either. Because he is part of my life now.

PAUL
Anna.

Anna hangs up.

INT. BRENDAN’S ROOM - NIGHT

ANNA throws her PHONE aside. She tosses and turns on Brendan’s bed for a moment. Her phone vibrates. She picks it up and looks at the screen. It’s "RENEE." Anna lets the call go to voicemail. She then listens to the message.

RENEE
Hi Anna. I’m sorry about what happened yesterday. Please call me back. It’s about your father.

Anna tosses the phone aside again and falls asleep.

INT. DINO’S DINER - 6:00 PM

PAUL sits at a booth with his parents, JOAN and HUNTER, both flower children now in their 60’s.

PAUL
We really didn’t have to come here.

JOAN
Dino’s has the most delicious bread rolls. You should eat some if you (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JOAN (cont’d)
ever expect to grow meat on those bones.

HUNTER
Us Mendelson men don’t need bulging biceps to attract the ladies -- we have some thing better. Brains! Besides, Paulie’s already got a ladyfriend. Young Miss Anna’s had her eyes on him since they were both little squirts.

PAUL
For the hundredth time, Anna has a boyfriend and he is a moron.

The waiter appears at the table. It is Brendan.

BRENDAN
Hey man. How’s it hanging? Long time no see, huh? (To Joan and Hunter) Good evening, you must be Paul’s parents. Wonderful to meet you both. Can I get you started with something to drink?

INT. DINO’S MEN’S ROOM - 6:20 PM

PAUL enters the men’s room. BRENDAN follows soon after.

BRENDAN
Listen, asshole. You think I’m a moron right? Well I’m not too dumb to see that your eyes all over my girlfriend. And guess what? She doesn’t want you. Give it up man. You could probably get with one of those weirdo goth girls with your sad poems and your emo hair.

PAUL
I know a lot more about Anna than you could possibly even care to know.

Brendan pushes Paul against the wall.

BRENDAN
Don’t let me see you around her anymore.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Don’t worry. She doesn’t want me around her anymore either.

EXT. BRENDA’S HOUSE - MORNING

BRENDA carries some of Anna’s bags into his car.

BRENDA
That’s everything.

ANNA
I think I have a couple more bags... Nope, they’re already in the back seat. Where’s the water jug? Did we already put that in?

BRENDA
It’s all in except the tent. Gotta pack that in last so we can take it out first. Set up camp.

ANNA
Alright. Good. Are we missing anything else? Bugspray? Sunscreen?

BRENDA
We have at least four bottles of sunscreen thanks to you.

ANNA
You can never have too much.

BRENDA
I don’t think we’ll need that much sunscreen on Newport Beach.

ANNA
You never know... I’m just excited. And nervous.

BRENDA
Haha, don’t be nervous. We’re going on a beach trip to trip acid on the beach! It’s gonna be badass.

ANNA
Shhh! Don’t say that so loud.

BRENDA
What? Who’s gonna care?
(Screaming)
(MORE)
Tripping on acid!

Brendan slams the trunk shut.

INT. BRENDAN’S CAR – MORNING

Anna reclines with her feet on the dashboard. They are both singing their hearts out to Led Zeppelin’s "Kashmir" and flying down the empty highway.

INT. ROBERT’S LIVING ROOM – MORNING

ROBERT packs up various boxes of items as if he is planning for a move. He is closing the lid on one box labeled "photos," when he stops, opens the box and peers at the picture on top. It is of himself as a young man. He is decked out in 80’s glam-rock gear complete with leopard-print leotard and a teased-out a mullet. There are other pictures showing the whole rock group, all very young -- most likely in their late teens. Anna’s age.

EXT. CAMPGROUND – AFTERNOON

Anna unpacks their camping gear from the car. Brendan is on the phone.

BRENDAN
Yeah, we’re here man. Alright yeah.
No, we got a really chill spot, it’s right by the beach. Tonight’s gonna be awesome. Alright, peace man.

ANNA
How far away are they?

BRENDAN
Christian, Jeff, and Rich are gonna be here in about thirty minutes. Adam and Katelyn are gonna be here tonight. They had to stop and drop off Katelyn’s dog at her grandparents’ house.

ANNA
I’m nervous about meeting your friends.

(CONTINUED)
BRENDAN
Why would you be nervous?

ANNA
I don’t know, I’m just weird. Here, help me with this.

Anna and Brendan wrestle with a tent rod.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - SUNSET

CHRISTIAN, JEFF, and BRENDAN ready a fire pit for a bonfire. ADAM, KATELYN and ANNA sit by on a couple picnic blankets laid out on the sand.

KATELYN
I usually hate camping, but Adam talked me into it.

ANNA
Yeah, but this isn’t so bad. At least it’s not hot and sweaty.

KATELYN
Ugh, but it’s so windy.

ANNA
I guess. They’ll have this fire running soon though, so no worries.

KATELYN
I hate all this sand. It’s getting everywhere.

ANNA
It kinda feels nice though. If you stick your toes in it.

There is an awkward silence. Katelyn jumps up and walks over to talk to the guys, leaving Anna alone on the picnic blanket.

EXT. CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Anna walks down the beach alone, kicking the waves. We see a bonfire in the distance before her. Anna creeps closer to inspect.
EXT. HIPPIE BONFIRE - NIGHT

The sound of bongos drifts across the wind. There are various individuals dancing around the fire, as if performing a ritual. As we draw closer, we see a dreadlocked 20-something guy, STORM, juggling five balls at once.

STORM
(Spotting Anna)
Ahoy, friend!

ANNA
Umm, hi. Sorry, I kind of stumbled right in here.

STORM
All are welcomed here. I’m Storm. Here, have a seat.

Storm gestures to a log by the fire. Anna sits next to a HIPPIE GIRL playing the banjo.

HIPPIE GIRL
(To Anna)
You are beautiful.

ANNA
Thanks. I like your banjo. (To Storm) My name is Anna.

STORM
Well it is spectacular to meet you, Miss Anna.

Anna blushes.

STORM
Have you ever juggled before?

ANNA
Yeah. Badly.

STORM
Do you want to learn how to do it goodly?

ANNA
I think I’m a lost cause.

STORM
Anyone can learn to juggle. Here, come here.
Storm holds out a hand to Anna. She hesitates, but accepts.

**STORM**
Here, you’ve got to start with two balls. Just pass them back and forth in your hands and get used to how it feels.

Anna awkwardly passes the balls back and forth.

**STORM**
There you go. You’re a natural.

Anna drops the balls.

**ANNA**
Damn. See, I told you. It’s no good.

**STORM**
Here.

Storm picks up the balls.

**STORM**
Do you mind if I show you?

Storm places the balls back in Anna’s hand. He gently grasps her wrists and guides them, showing her how to make the proper juggling motion. Anna giggles.

**EXT. HIPPIE BONFIRE - NIGHT**

Anna and Storm are slightly separated from the group. They sit on a rock surveying the ocean. Storm passes Anna a pipe. She takes a small drag.

**STORM**
Anna, you just dropped by like a gift from the universe. Tell me about you. I want to know who "Anna" is.

**ANNA**
Okay, ask me something.

**STORM**
What’s your favorite cheese?

**ANNA**
Havarti.
STORM
That was a surprisingly quick answer.

ANNA
I’m serious about my cheeses.

STORM
What kind of music do you love?

ANNA
I can really listen to anything and find something to love. I know, that’s cliche but it’s true. I love all music.

STORM
(Passing the joint back)
Okay, that’s fair. But what music speaks to your soul?

ANNA
I guess... I always come back to 60’s and 70’s rock.

STORM
That must have been a beautiful time to be alive.

ANNA
(Taking a long drag)
Exactly. I mean, those musicians, they were part of an incredibly special time for artistic creation. The buying power was in the hands of the 20-somethings. The music that fueled the market was music that spoke for their generation. It had a meaning, they had something to say. I mean, artists like Joni Mitchell and Grateful Dead had soul. Nowadays tweens are the demographic with the most cash to spend on music, so we get brats like Miley Cyrus and Justin Bieber flooding our ears with dancy pop ballads that repeat the same two or three lines of meaningless drivel over and over again for three and a half minutes.
STORM
I can tell you really feel strongly about that.

ANNA
Yeah, sorry. I used to be a big music nerd.

STORM
Don’t be sorry. You’ve got an amazing passion wrapped up inside of you. You should let it out.

ANNA
I feel like I just ranted for a minute.

STORM
Tell me something else. How do you feel about politics?

ANNA
Ohhh, I’m not really interested in one side or the other. As far as I’m concerned, neither the Republican nor the Democratic party really stands for what they are supposed to stand for anymore. They got completely wrapped up in the debate over drugs, abortion, global warming, and gay marriage that those things became the defining feature of the candidates more than their stance on economic policies and the role of the government. Every election year feels more like a high school debate than an actual election of a political figure. Besides, I’m starting to think that it’s all for show anyway. Candidates can promise whatever they want and they are not held to those promises. And the Green Party isn’t even allowed to participate at the presidential debate. It’s just become the people with power and money keeping themselves powerful and wealthy. Our democracy is a sham -- it’s an oligarchy now. And there I go ranting again. This is strong weed.
STORM
No, it’s good. I’m loving this. Keep going. How do you feel about religion?

ANNA
Why don’t you tell me how you feel about religion? I want to hear what you have to say. Tell me who "Storm" is. If that is your real name.

STORM
It is. My mother gave birth to me in the middle of hurricane Andrew in a beat up Oldsmobile Alero. She was a gypsy. You would have liked her.

ANNA
It seems she raised a pretty cool kid, whatever she did.

STORM
I’ve experienced a few potholes on the highway of life, but I’m no worse for the wear. And my mom always stayed strong for me. Even after my dad left us.

ANNA
My dad left too. I’m sorry, it sucks.

STORM
But that’s another story.

ANNA
Right, let’s save that for another time.

STORM
A believe you were asking me about my view on religion.

ANNA
I believe I was.

STORM
Well my answer may be pretty boring compared to your very passionate...

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
Rants.

STORM
Haha. I don’t believe in an afterlife. I believe that we’re kind of a bundle of cells made up of a bundle of atoms that have decided to collide from the emptiness that is our universe. They dance together for a moment in space, and happen to become aware of themselves. And I believe that when we die, it’s over. We take a bow and become emptiness again.

ANNA
Wow. That’s beautiful. And very sad.

STORM
Is it? Well, what do you think happens after we die?

ANNA
Well. I think you’re partly right. We are a bunch of randomly assorted atoms that are jumbled together into a human body. But I don’t think we just become nothingness when we die. I mean, I guess I do, but then if you think about the universe being an infinite thing, then time becomes a non-thing. Every combination of atoms that can collide to form a human being WILL collide to form a human being. And with an infinite amount of time, those atoms statistically MUST combine again, and again, and again, in an infinite number of ways.

STORM
I love the way your brain works.

ANNA
I don’t know where all this is coming from. What was in that pipe you gave me? Just kidding.
STORM
Nothing but nature’s finest green bud. So what’s your next excuse for being so awesome?

ANNA
It’s so strange. I never talk like this, even with my aunt, and she’s very spiritual. Sometimes I can talk to Paul but even that is hard because I can see how much he loves me and he would agree with me about anything if eh thought it would make me happy.

STORM
Boyfriend?

ANNA
Oh, no, not Paul. He’s been my best friend since kindergarten. I do have a boyfriend though. We came here together with his friends. I don’t think they like me very much.

STORM
You shouldn’t assume the worst if you don’t even know the truth.

ANNA
What?

STORM
I just mean, you can’t know what anyone thinks of you for sure, because you can’t read their minds. So... what’s the point of assuming they’re thinking something negative?

ANNA
Well, maybe they give off signs about what they’re thinking. And I can read those signs and come to a reasonable conclusion.

STORM
Yes, but you’ll never know for sure. So, while you choose to believe something that makes you upset and self conscious, you could just as easily choose to believe something that makes you feel good.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
I’ve never heard airy optimism sound so... rational?

STORM
And I’ve never heard a choice of mine described as "rational" before.

ANNA
This is just a night of firsts then.

The two sit in silence for a moment, watching the waves.

STORM
We’re so lucky. I mean, to be right here. Two random collisions of atoms that have randomly collided.

ANNA
In the middle of infinity.

STORM
At Newport Beach, Oregon, United States of Fagmerica.

Silence falls again.

ANNA
Is that the sun rising?

STORM
We’ve been out here for a while now.

ANNA
I should go back. Brendan will think I got lost or drowned.

STORM
Brendan. Is that your old man?

ANNA
He’s my boyfriend, yeah. I don’t think he’s yet upgraded to "Old Man" status.

STORM
You’re right, you probably need another 20 years before that kicks in.

Anna smiles thoughtfully.
ANNA
I should go.

STORM
Have you ever heard of the word "orenda?"

ANNA
(Shakes her head)
No.

STORM
It’s a native american word. It refers to the spark inside all living things. It is what pushes us to accomplish great things. With it, they say you can find the strength to shape your future. I see a great light in You Anna. You are going to do incredible things.

ANNA
Shh. Don’t say anything else. I want that to be the last thing you ever said to me. Thank you. For everything. You have no idea how strange and wonderful meeting you has been.

Storm looks as though he will speak, but thinks against it and smiles, and instead hugs Anna for a long time. Anna finally breaks away from the embrace and takes one last, long look into Storm’s eyes. She smiles, shakes her head, and slowly walks away.

INT. BRENDAN’S TENT - EARLY MORNING

Anna climbs into the tent carefully, so as not to disturb Brendan. Brendan moves aside wordlessly. Anna climbs under the covers and sighs deeply, closing her eyes.

INT. ROBERT’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The small, drab room is nearly empty save for the boxes. ROBERT lies on his neatly made bed, staring up at the ceiling. He gets up and begins digging past the boxes in his closet until he unearth an old GUITAR CASE. Taking it in his arms, he sits back down on the edge of the bed and lovingly opens the case. As the sun rises, Robert strums a few notes on the guitar.
INT. BRENDAN’S CAR - THE NEXT DAY

ANA and BRENDAN drive in silence.

ANA
Why aren’t you talking to me?

BRENDAN
Huh?

ANA
I don’t know, you’re being really quiet.

BRENDAN
You’re crazy.

ANA
I had the most amazing sleep last night.

BRENDAN
Must’ve really tired yourself out.

ANA
Brend, you won’t believe what happened to me. Last night was probably the strangest and most magical night of my life.

BRENDAN
Wow. Sounds intense.

ANA
I met this group of hippies. They were playing music and dancing and just... being free. And I learned how to juggle!

BRENDAN
Sounds like you had a crazy night out there.

ANA
Yeah... What did you guys do?

BRENDAN
After you left we took the acid. Drank some booze, smoked some herb, got fucked up.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
Sounds like fun.

BRENDAN
Must sound really boring to compared to your "magical adventure."

ANNA
It doesn’t. I really wanted to trip with you.

BRENDAN
Must not have wanted to too badly for you to peace out all night without saying a word.

ANNA
I was just going to talk a little walk on the shore for a while. I didn’t know what to say to your friends so I just thought I would step away for second. I was going to come right back. But I found those people dancing and this guy juggling. And when they asked me to join in I just kind of... went with it. It was really selfish of me, there’s no other way to put it.

BRENDAN
Well, sounds like you had way more fun than we did anyway. So you made the right choice.

ANNA
I’m sorry, I should have taken you too.

BRENDAN
Don’t be sorry. You put yourself first rather than caring about what I want, or anybody else for that matter.

ANNA
It’s not a matter of putting myself first at all.

BRENDAN
Of course it is. Hey, nothing wrong with selfishness. It’s how we survive.
ANNA
But I still feel bad about ditching you though, I should have at least said something.

BRENDAN
Stop. You don’t owe me an apology. You don’t owe me anything. You can never forget that ultimately you are number one in this world. You’re number one, and all that other shit -- relationships, friends, family -- is extra.

ANNA
That kinda makes it sound like you’re saying, "I come first everyone else can go fuck themselves."

BRENDAN
Well, if they try to get in your way.

ANNA
But doesn’t that seem just a little... callous?

BRENDAN
World’s harsh babe. You should know that. The sooner you come to terms with that truth the sooner you can learn to deal with it.

Brendan steps harder on the gas pedal.

ANNA
Right. I’ll keep that in mind. Watch out!

Brendan swerves around a white car with its turn-signal on.

BRENDAN
Fucking idiot doesn’t know how to drive.

ANNA
Oh my god, he’s speeding up!

A middle-aged ANGRY DRIVER speeds up next to Brenda’s car. Both cars are now speeding dangerously fast down the highway.
ANNA
He’s yelling something at us.

Brendan flips the bird and swerves his car close to the ANGRY DRIVER, who is screaming unheard obscenities from his window.

BRENDAN
He wants to fuck with me? Asshole is gonna learn a lesson.

ANNA
Just slow down and let it go, you’re really scaring me.

BRENDAN
You want me to slow down?

Brendan screeches on the breaks and veers off at the nearest exit. The other car follows.

ANNA
What are you doing?

BRENDAN
Just stay in the car.

Brendan pulls into a GAS STATION parking lot. The other car pulls up beside him and the driver steps out. He is a 50-something asian man.

ANNA
He’s coming towards us.

BRENDAN
I can take care of this guy.

ANNA
Don’t go out there! Or at least -- take my mace with you.

BRENDAN
I don’t need any mace to deal with this guy.

Brendan steps out of the car.

ANGRY DRIVER
You need to be more careful with your vehicle, young man. You could piss off the wrong person and endanger yourself. I have a son your age --

(CONTINUED)
BRENDAN
You better step away from my
goddamn car, asshole.

ANGRY DRIVER
You can’t just flip the bird at
anyone. We’re all trying to get
somewhere and if you flip the bird
at the wrong kind of person --

BRENDAN
Looks like you’re the wrong kind of
person. Now step away from my
vehicle before I make you.

ANGRY DRIVER
Listen, if my son were to --

Brendan shoves the angry driver to the ground and kicks the
man repeatedly in the gut. The ANGRY DRIVER moans and gasps.

BRENDAN
You’re not -- my fucking -- father
-- piece of --

Brendan kicks the man between each word.

ANNA
Stop! That’s enough!

Brendan finally stops and surveys the man on the ground. The
man is writhing in silence. Brendan spits on him and returns
to the driver’s seat, fuming. He puts the car into drive and
pulls out of the parking lot. Anna sits in shocked silence.

INT. BRENDAN’S CAR - NIGHT

BRENDAN and ANNA have been driving in silence for hours.

BRENDAN
I’m sorry. I lost my temper.

ANNA
What was that?

BRENDAN
He was going to hurt us.

ANNA
Maybe, but did you have to kick him
once he was already on the ground?

(CONTINUED)
BRENDA
I shouldn’t have done that. You’re right. I’m sorry.

ANNA
It’s okay... Could you drop me off at home though?

BRENDA
You sure, babe? Look, I’m really sorry, I won’t let that happen again.

ANNA
Yeah, I know. I just need to talk to my mom.

BRENDA
Anything you want. You still gonna come to the party tonight?

ANNA
Yeah, of course.

BRENDA
Okay, meet me at the park at 9. A bunch of us are gonna pregame there and then head to the party.

ANNA
Alright. See you then.

INT. ANNA’S LIVING ROOM — NIGHT

RENEE and LILY sit on the big pink couch.

RENEE
She can be so cruel to me at times.

LILY
She’s a teenage girl. She wants to try out her new wings, test herself. She has to push away from you so she can learn to fly solo. And the harder you try to hang on, the harder she will push back. It’s only natural.

RENEE
I know that you’re right. But I think it’s much deeper than that. Have you ever noticed that she

(MORE)
RENEE (cont’d)
never actually calls me "mom?" I
don’t think I’ve heard her say it
out loud for years. Sometimes I
think she will never forgive me
for... Everything I’ve done wrong
in the past.

LILY
Listen to me, Renee. You did the
best you could. She’s going through
a lot right now, but she’ll come
around. Eventually.

RENEE
Maybe so. But I just wish that I
could have been her "mommy" when
she was growing up. I feel like
I’ve missed my chance now she’s
really becoming a woman. I will
never get to be "mommy" to my
little Anna ever again, and it
kills me. You know she’s always
considered you more of a mother to
her than I ever was.

LILY
That’s not true.

RENEE
You know that it is. After Robert
left, I couldn’t even get out of
bed to take her to school. You took
care of her, and I thank you for
that, truly, from the bottom of my
heart, I do. But part of me is
jealous for what I see between you
and Anna that I don’t have. She
doesn’t trust me, and I can’t
really blame her for that. I turned
into a person that I didn’t even
recognize after... Robert. I can’t
imagine how frightening that must
have been for her to lose her
father and her mother at the same
time.

LILY
You can’t keep punishing yourself,
Renee. You have a big heart, and I
know that you love Anna more than
anyone in this world ever could.
She WILL know that one day. I
(MORE)
LILY (cont’d)
believe in her. She’s an incredibly smart and sensitive girl. She gets that from you, by the way. Whatever you may think you, raised her right. Maybe you need to forgive yourself a little bit.

The front door creaks and Anna enters carrying several bags.

ANNA
Hi.

Renee runs to greet Anna with a giant hug.

RENEE
My baby.

LILY
Welcome home sweetheart.

ANNA
Alright, alright. It was only two days.

RENEE
You scared me.

ANNA
Can I put all this stuff down before you hug me to death?

LILY
Go on sweetie. But can you come back downstairs and have a chat with us?

ANNA
Uh oh.

LILY
Don’t worry, it’s not about you leaving. Though that was very foolish. Just go and come back and we’ll talk.

Anna shuffles upstairs with her bags.

RENEE
To think we thought we had it bad growing up. Poor Anna has gone through more in this past week than any person can expect in their lifetime.

(CONTINUED)
LILY
To gain a father and then so soon
to...

ANNA
(walking down the stairs)
What’s going on?

RENEE
(gesturing to a spot on the
sofa)
Come sit down, love.

ANNA
(choosing a single armchair)
I’m good here.

RENEE
Fine. Anna, your Aunt Lily and I
need to talk to you about your
father. I tried to call you before
but you didn’t answer.

ANNA
I was at the beach. There’s no
service out there. What’s up?

LILY
Robert’s health has taken a sharp
turn for the worse over the past
couple of days. We don’t know how
much time he may have left. He
might not make it through the week.

ANNA
What? He seemed fine when I saw him
a couple of days ago! I mean, he
was a little thin but he didn’t
look like he was about to die. Have
they even tried radiotherapy?

LILY
He has a very advanced brain tumor.
The doctors say it had probably
been developing for years by the
time they caught it. It would be
impossible to operate now without
causing permanent damage. Right
now, he’s in the hospital but it’s
only to keep him comfortable for
the time being. There’s nothing
else left to do but wait and hope
that he passes on to heaven
peacefully...
RENEE
Heaven? Oh please.

ANNA
Would you give it a rest? You are the one acting like a child here. Didn’t you hear what Aunt Lily said? He has a BRAIN tumor. Who knows how long it’s been growing? Maybe THAT’S the reason why he had those compulsive thoughts. I talked to Miss Allie and she said that there was a man in Texas who shot up a whole school. She said he left a note saying that he thought he did it because something was wrong in his brain, and when they performed the autopsy they found a tumor the size of a tennis ball! I know that what he did was disgusting, loathsome, scum of the human race kind of behavior, but what if he really couldn’t help it? What if it could have been cured?

RENEE
Oh Anna. You’re still so innocent and naive. I wish it were so easy to explain the bad things away and have a fairytale ending, but life is rarely ever that simple..

ANNA
STOP. TREATING ME. LIKE A STUPID. CHILD. Aunt Lily disagrees with you and I don’t see you calling her naive and innocent. I’m not a child anymore, in case you haven’t noticed. You had the chance to be a mother to me and you chose to check out instead. And now you’re overcompensating by trying to lock me away from the world. YOU. Need to GROW UP. Aunt Lily, I want to see my dad tomorrow so I can forgive him before he dies. Will you take me?

LILY
Of course, Anna. But --
ANNA

Good. (To Renee) If you were a decent human being you would do the same.

Anna storms out of the living room. We hear the door slamming shut from offscreen.

EXT. ANNA’S HOUSE - 9:00 PM

Anna walks down the road. Streetlights flicker on.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Anna and Brendan are on their backs, looking up at the nearly full moon.

Anna shivers and turns to Brendan, burying her face in his chest.

ANNA

I thought you said there were gonna be a bunch of people here.

BRENDAN

Yeah they bailed to go smoke hash. But that’s alright, I’m digging just spending time with you. Here, I have some beers in my bag.

Brendan leans over and shuffles around in his backpack. He opens the beers, but takes a long time shuffling things out of view.

ANNA

Are those beers wrapped in a Chinese puzzle box or something? What are you doing over there?

BRENDAN

Here you go (handing her a can).

ANNA

(Taking a long gulp) Truthfully, I’m glad it’s just us. I’m kind of stressing out about my dad and everything. They said he’s only got a couple of days left. I have to go see him tomorrow for what might be the last time.
BRENDAN
Shit, I’m sorry.

ANNA
Do you mind if we don’t go to the party tonight? I’m not really in the mood.

BRENDAN
Course not babe. Anything you need. Just relax and watch the stars.

Anna and Brendan stare at the stars together. Anna falls asleep with her head on Brendan’s chest. When she awakes, she looks up at the stars again. They are brilliantly bright and fluorescent in color, and they are sliding around the sky hypnotically.

ANNA
What’s going on?

Brendan mutters something, but the noise is distorted. Anna answers but her lips move in slow motion. The asphalt rolls like waves beneath them. Brendan says something but his voice fades into nothing.

INT. ANNA’S MIND

It is pitch black. Images of Paul and Anna’s notebook and Japanese cats explode kaleidoscopically from the center of the vortex.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Anna is babbling loudly.

ANNA
I see it. When I close my eyes. Everything. Woah. Woah. Woah. What did you do Brendan?

BRENDAN
Hey. Shush, it’s okay. You gotta be quiet or someone will hear us. I put a tiny tab of acid in your beer. I felt bad cause you missed out on the beach.

ANNA
No, Brendan. Why?

Anna rubs her eyes and then inspects the skin on her hands.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
I don’t like this ground. The concrete. Will you take me to a tree? I think I would feel much better by a tree.

BRENDAN
Alright, let’s go by a tree. Come on, get up.

Brendan guides her up and then stops.

BRENDAN
Did you hear that?

ANNA
What?

BRENDAN
I think I hear voices. We should probably get out of here before the cops find us.

ANNA
Oh my god, do you think the cops will arrest us? I don’t want to go to jail like this. I’m really scared.

BRENDAN
Come on, let’s get out of here babe.

EXT. ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Brendan opens the passenger door of his sedan for Anna and guides her in. Anna picks curiously at the buttons on her shirt. Brendan gets into the driver’s seat.

ANNA
Do you hear the sirens?

BRENDAN
No babe. You’re just tripping out. I don’t hear anything.

Brendan starts the car.

ANNA
Where are we going?
CONTINUED:

BRENDAN
Listen, I gotta drop off something for Bryant at this party. Then I’m gonna take you somewhere safe, okay? Just try to relax for now, alright?

ANNA
Alright. Okay. It’s just... weird.

Anna leans in to inspect the dashboard.

EXT. BRENDAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brendan and Anna pull up outside of a house that is blasting music.

BRENDAN
Alright, I’m going to go inside and find Bryant. Then I’m gonna come back and we’ll go somewhere and relax. Just stay here. Even if it feels like a long time, don’t leave the car. It’s just the acid that makes it seem like time is going really slowly, alright? I’ll be right back, babe.

Anna nods and closes her eyes.

INT. BRENDAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Teens are dancing and chatting and drinking beer. Loud electronic music plays. Brendan navigates through the crowd. JEFF, CHRISTIAN, and MATT are playing beer pong and trying to hit on girls.

BRENDAN
Bryant? Anybody seen Bryant? (To Jeff) Hey man how’s it going, you seen my man Bryant?

JEFF
Bryant went on a beer run ages ago. Should be back soon though, bro.

BRENDAN
Alright, well I got this bag of hash for him. He better come get it before I smoke it allllll man.

(CONTINUED)
JEFF
Hell yeah, what are you waiting for? Let’s light one up. Bryant probably so shitfaced he won’t even notice, dude.

Brendan and the Jeff sit down on a couch. Brendan checks the time on his phone and looks towards the door. He then shrugs and lights up a pipe. CLEMY yells from offscreen.

CLEMY
BERNDAN. Is that you Berndan? Oh my god. Oh my god. I am SO drunk.

BRENDAN
(Sniggering)
Hey, the good girl has decided to come to the dark side. Hey, do you smoke hash?

CLEMY
I do now!

JEFF
ALRIIIGHT! I like this girl!

INT. BRENDAN’S CAR - NIGHT
Anna traces lines in the fog on the car window. She draws a little stick figure girl and then falls back into her seat. She closes her eyes.

INT. BRENDAN’S CAR - NIGHT
Anna’s eyes flash open. She opens the door and leans out to vomit, but nothing comes out. Anna drags herself out of the car and onto the ground. She then sits and clutches her knees. KATELYN and MATT are groping at each other in the bushes.

KATELYN
(Noticing Anna)
Look at how messed up that girl is.

MATT
(To Anna)
You having a good time?

The two laugh and move to a more secluded bush.

Anna moans. She gets up and erases the drawing of the little girl on the car window and walks into the house.
INT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Anna stumbles into the living room where drunk teens jostle her.

ANNA
Brendan? Brendan?

Anna spots Brendan smoking on the couch. Brendan jumps up.

BRENDAN
Baby, what are you doing? You shouldn’t have left the car.

ANNA
I want to go home. Right now. Take me home. I want to go.

JEFF
Dude, your girl is freakin out.

BRENDAN
Calm down, baby. Bryant is going to be here any second and then we can go.

ANNA
Clemy?

Clemy is making out with Jeff out on the couch. Jeff’s hand is well up her thigh. Anna pokes Clemy.

CLEMY
(Seeing Anna)
ANNA BANANA. I LOVE YOU. Oh my god. I am so drunk.

ANNA
I’m so... confused.

CLEMY
I know, it’s weird. But I’m at a party and I’m drunk and it’s awesome!

ANNA
No, I mean --

BRENDAN
Anna, go back to the car, I’ll be right there.
Anna pushes Brendan away and he falls back onto the couch. She turns and walks out of the door and Brendan shrugs to his friends.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Anna sits down on the lawn and grabs her phone. She calls Paul.

   ANNA
   Paul? I’m on acid and I’m confused.
   I need you.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE - NIGHT

Paul’s beat up minivan pulls into the driveway. He is still in his pajamas as he walks out and lifts Anna to her feet.

   ANNA
   You’re here.

   PAUL
   I’m here.

   ANNA
   I’m so sorry I yelled at you. I’m so sorry, Paul.

   PAUL
   Shhh, it’s okay. Everything is going to be okay now. I’m here.

Paul guides Anna to the passenger’s seat and he gets into the driver’s side.

   ANNA
   I don’t want to go home like this. I can’t be alone. I’m scared.

   PAUL
   You will never be alone if you don’t want to be.

   ANNA
   (Crying)
   Paul, it was awful. I saw... I saw... I can’t think straight.

   PAUL
   It’s okay, you don’t have to talk. We can just go to my house, is that okay with you?

(Continued)
ANNA
Yes. I don’t want to be here anymore.

INT. PAUL’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Paul guides Anna in through the front door.

PAUL
Okay, we have to be quiet now until we get to my room. Do you think you can do that? Let’s go, quietly now.

INT. PAUL’S ROOM.

Paul grabs his dirty clothes and shoves them into a hamper while Anna looks around. She stares into the mirror for a while and then catches sight of numerous pictures of herself and Paul taped up around the edges of the mirror.

PAUL
You don’t have to sleep in my bed if you don’t want to. I can make you a place on the couch. Or -- or you can sleep on the bed and I’ll stay on the couch. Or --

ANNA
Just lay down with me for a second. Tell me something. Anything. Talking is good. I think the acid is wearing off.

Anna lies down on Paul’s bed. Paul lies down with her and stares at her. He reaches out to hold her hand.

PAUL
They’re cutting down the treehouse.

ANNA
Noooo.

PAUL
The tree’s rotten.

ANNA
We have to go see it. One last...

Anna is already asleep. Paul smiles.
INT. ANNA’S MIND

From Anna’s POV, we see her being carried in ROBERT’s arms. She is just around 3 years old. Robert is smiling at her and bouncing her up and down. He brings her into his bedroom. Robert lays Anna down and takes off her pajama pants and pink undies. He has a jar of vaseline in his hand. He takes the vaseline and rubs it on her vagina, smiling.

ROBERT
You have a little rash there don’t you. That feels good though, doesn’t it?

The dream ends.

INT. PAUL’S ROOM – MORNING

The sun is peaking through the curtains and a ray shines on Paul and Anna’s hands, still clasped together. Hunter opens the door.

HUNTER
Paul, do you have any--

Hunter catches sight of Anna and smiles. He backs out of the room and closes the door. Paul cracks open an eye and extracts his hand from Anna’s. He gets up and leaves the room.

Anna’s phone rings. She rubs her eyes and checks the screen which reads, "Aunt Lily."

ANNA
Hello?

LILY
Morning sweetheart. How are you feeling?

ANNA
I’m okay.

LILY
Your dad is really ecstatic that you decided to see him today sweetie. You are being so mature about all of this. I just want to say that I am really proud of you.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
Yeah. Thanks.

LILY
We’re going to be leaving for the hospital at 10:00 is that alright? Can you make it here by then?

ANNA
Yeah.

LILY
Okay, great. He’s so excited to see you.

ANNA
Okay.

LILY
Alright, sweetie. I won’t keep you any longer. You can do this. I’m so, so proud of you honey. You’re doing a really good deed.

ANNA
Thanks Aunt Lily. Bye.

LILY
Bye!

Paul walks into the room, carrying breakfast.

PAUL
Good morning. How do you feel?

ANNA
Queasy.

PAUL
Okay, well you don’t have to eat if you don’t want to. Are you still feeling a little weird from last night?

ANNA
No, I’m fine. I thought I would never be sane again but I’m fine now. Except, I’m supposed to be home so we can go to the hospital at 10:00. And last night... I saw something really disturbing.
PAUL
What, like a hallucination?

ANNA
A hallucination, or a dream, or a memory, I don’t know. But it was of my dad.

PAUL
Oh. Do you think it could be an uncovered memory?

ANNA
I don’t know. I also saw your face and dancing cats, so it could have just been the drug.

PAUL
Listen, Anna. you don’t have to go today. You can take some more time, I’m sure your dad would understand.

ANNA
We’ve already waited long enough. He might make it any longer.

ANNA
Do you think you could give me a ride to my house?

PAUL
Of course I will, Anna. I’d do anything for you.

ANNA

PAUL
You look surprisingly alright considering I found you in a puddle of mud and possibly vomit.

ANNA
Thanks.
INT. PAUL’S LIVING ROOM – MORNING

Paul and Anna walk down the stairs into the living room where Hunter and Joan are waiting, poised in horrible attempts at seeming natural.

ANNA
Hi Joan, hi Hunter. I’m sorry I had to stay here last night without announcing myself. Paul kind of rescued me from a tough situation last night.

HUNTER
Don’t be ridiculous. You know you’re more than welcome to stay here any time you like, Banana.

JOAN
Will you tell Renee I said hello sweetheart, and that she should stop by soon? I’ve found a low-light indoor plant that would be perfect for her bay window. She’ll love it.

ANNA

JOAN
Have a good day you two.

HUNTER
Have fun!

When only Paul can see, Hunter winks at Paul. Paul rolls his eyes and follows Anna out the front door.

EXT. ANNA’S HOUSE – NOON

PAUL and ANNA pull into the driveway. Brendan is waiting there in his sedan. He gets out of his car just as Anna and Paul exit theirs.

BRENDAN
Anna, I’ve been waiting for you. (To Paul) what the hell are you doing with her?
ANNA
Paul was the one who picked me up last night when you were too busy getting high with your buddies.

BRENDAN
Are you still tripping? Because I told you to wait in the car and that I would get you home safe and sound when I could. And I’m sorry I got caught up taking care of your drunk shit-show of a friend.

ANNA
You are the most manipulative, sadistic --

BRENDAN
You are acting crazy and you made a fool of yourself at the party last night.

Paul steps between Anna and Brendan.

PAUL
I don’t like the way you are talking to her.

BRENDAN
Oh that’s nice. I see how it is. Did you sleep with her last night? You sleep with him Anna? I bet you did. I bet he told you it was all going to be alright and to just relax in his bed. You whore.

Paul raises his fist but Anna pushes him aside. She is shaking with rage and she swings her fist hard into Brendan’s face. Brendan doesn’t hesitate to swing back.

PAUL
Wait, stop! You’ll hurt her!

Paul tries to push himself between Anna and Brendan but Anna knocks him aside.

ANNA
I can fight my own fights!

She turns back to Brendan whose nose is bleeding and pounces on him, knocking them both down. The two begin wrestling on the lawn.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Stop! No!

Renee appears at the front door.

RENEE
Oh hell no.

GEORGE
Woah now.

Renee runs back inside the house. Renee reemerges, carrying a can of mace. She grabs him by the hair and aims it right at Brendan’s eyes. Brendan screeches.

RENEE
If you ever lay a hand on my little girl again, I’ll break it off of you. Understand? Now you are gonna get the hell off of my lawn or I will call the police.

BRENDAN
Okay!

Brendan scrambles to his car, wiping his face.

ANNA
(To Brendan)
Don’t ever contact me again.

INT. ANN’S LIVING ROOM - MIDDAY

Renee tries to inspect a cut on Anna’s cheekbone. Paul looks on.

ANNA
No, mom. It’s alright. What you did out there was really cool. Totally crazy, but really cool.

RENEE
It was exhilarating!

ANNA
Come on, Paul. I can get you some disinfectant for that cut on your hand.
INT. ANNA’S ROOM - MIDDAY

Anna and Paul enter Anna’s room. Paul picks up the notebook that is still lying on Anna’s bed.

    ANNA
    Wait here a sec.

Anna leaves and returns a moment later with disinfectant. Taking Paul’s hand, she gingerly applies a cotton swab to his tiny scrape.

    PAUL
    Ouch, it stings.

    ANNA
    You’ll live, I think.

Paul stares at Anna and then leans in to kiss her. She pulls back.

    ANNA
    Woah, hey. I’m -- I’m really sorry
     Paul. I just --

    PAUL
    What? You just what? Anna, I want
     to ask you something and I want you
     to really think about it. What am I
     to you?

    ANNA
    I don’t know, I --

    PAUL
    I am always there for you at your
     every beck and call and then just
     pat me on the head at the end of
     the day. I love you. I want to be
     with you. I want to kiss you and
     hold you. This came out all wrong,
     I’m sorry. I wish I could have
     written it down.

    ANNA
    Paul... You’re my best friend. I
     love you too. I love that you are
     there for me when I need you. But
     does that mean that we have to be
     romantic? I just don’t know if
     that’s where you belong in my life.

(CONTINUED)
PAUL
Well maybe I don’t belong in your life at all. Is that what you are saying? Maybe the only space you have is for assholes who ditch you at parties and call you a whore.

ANNA
Get out.

PAUL
I’m gone. But I’m taking this. You don’t deserve it.

Paul picks up the notebook and storms out.

Renee enters and wordlessly wraps her arms around Anna. Anna begins to cry uncontrollably and buries her face in her mother’s arms.

ANNA
Mommy...

Anna lays her head into Renee’s lap. Renee strokes Anna’s hair.

RENEE
Oh, my Annie. It’s alright.

ANNA
It’s almost 10:00. We’re supposed to be at the hospital.

RENEE
I’ll take you.

INT. RENEE’S CAR - NOON

Anna sits in silence, picking at her sleeve while Renee drives. After a few turns, Renee pulls the car into the parking lot.

ANNA
What time is it?

RENEE
It’s 10:15. We’re a little late, but I’m sure it’s okay. You know, Anna, no matter what I may think about your dad, I think it’s very brave of you to be doing this today. I’m proud of you. You better get going. I’ll be right here.

(CONTINUED)
ANNA
Mom?

RENEE
What is it, honey?

ANNA
I don’t think I need to do this. Look, whatever he did is in the past. We’ll never know whether he’s actually sorry or healed or reborn or not. I want to believe that he’s sorry. But I don’t need to see him to do it.

RENEE
Okay. But he’s in there expecting you to show up.

ANNA
I know. I expected him to show up every day for years, and he never did. And after a while, I accepted life without him. I don’t hate him and I’m not angry. If it’s forgiveness he needs, I can tell Aunt Lily to let him know that I forgive him completely for being human. But I’ve already got a kickass, mace-weilding mom. I don’t think there’s anything I need from him anymore.

RENEE
Maybe you’re right. But you don’t have to tell Aunt Lily to pass on your message.

Renee opens her car door and steps out. From the car, Anna can see her mother walking steadily into the hospital. After some time, Renee returns.

ANNA
What did you say to him?

RENEE
I told him that you forgave him. And I told him that if he truly was sorry... that I forgave him too.

Renee starts the car and begins to drive home.
ANNA
I’m proud of you, mom.

RENEE
Alright, alright.

They drive on.

EXT. PARK - MIDDAY

Anna and Clemy sit on a park bench. Anna is drawing in a notebook.

CLEMY
The moment I pressed "send" on the application, I thought of a million things that I could have changed. Now all I can do is wait. I hate waiting. Oh, I’m secretly terrified Anna.

ANNA
It’s hardly a secret. You’ve told everybody that you met today.

CLEMY
But what if I get waitlisted? They say Brown only accepts a handful of their waitlisted applicants every year. I’d rather just know for sure that I didn’t make it.

Anna and Clemy are silent for a moment.

CLEMY
I promise I will never bring this up again if you don’t want me to, but can I ask... What about your dad? How are you dealing with everything that happened?

ANNA
Actually, I’m kind of alright. I went to the funeral, just to finally close that whole chapter of my life and really say goodbye. But it wasn’t painful for me. I never really knew him. I have one amazing mom and that’s enough.
CLEMY
Don’t hate me but... This would make an incredible college application essay.

ANNA
I’m thinking I might take a year off and hitchhike across the country. Learn to juggle five balls at once.

A large truck rolls by that reads, "Frank’s Tree Removal."

ANNA
Hey, I gotta go. I’ll see you later.

CLEMY
Alright, see you.

EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE - MIDDAY

Anna walks down the street. She approaches Paul’s house where Frank’s Tree Removal is already unpacking their chainsaws and other gear. Paul is standing out front.

PAUL
Anna. Hey.

ANNA
I’m sorry. You were right.

PAUL
I was an asshole.

ANNA
No, you were right. I was using you. I knew how you felt about me and I took advantage of that. It wasn’t fair and I’m sorry.

PAUL
Why are you apologizing? I was absolutely out of line. I should never have said --

ANNA
It’s okay. I understand why you said those things. I need to learn how to be strong and depend on myself now. Which means I have a lot of self-exploring to do.

(CONTINUED)
Anna rips a page out of her journal and hands it to Paul.

ANGULAR
This is for you.

It is a drawing of Anna and Paul together as kids -- the same one from Paul’s bedroom. Anna reaches into her purse and pulls out the actual photograph.

ANGULAR
Sorry, I stole it from your room.

PAUL
Thank you Anna. This drawing is incredible. I will treasure it always. Except I really wish it was a picture of your dog pooping.

ANGULAR
You’re a poop.

Paul laughs. Then he runs into the back yard. Anna follows.

EXT. PAUL’S BACK YARD - MIDDAY

The crew are getting ready to saw down the tree which holds Anna and Paul’s treehouse.

PAUL
Wait! Wait.

Paul climbs into the treehouse and retrieves the tattered old notebook.

PAUL
I was going to let them shred it. I thought it would be poetic justice or something, but I realize that’s actually really dumb.

ANGULAR
I’m pretty sure that’s not what poetic justice is anyway.

PAUL
I told you it was dumb.

The two watch as the crew saws down the tree, finally reducing it to a stump. Pan out to view the Oregon suburb and further out until green forests are all that can be seen.

(CONTINUED)
THE END
This is to certify that Lauren Elizabeth Reeks has successfully completed her Senior Honors Thesis, entitled:

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Director of Thesis
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for the University
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Honors Program

April 21, 2014
Date