

A Little Sedated

by

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FADE IN:

INT. MIKE'S CAR -- MORNING

EDDIE WILGUS (17), who's awkward, but has a semblance of the strong man he will one day become, sits with his face turned, looking out the passenger window. He is in a deep depression.

MIKE TAYLOR (17), wearing a band T-shirt with designer jeans and Oakley sunglasses - with a sunnier disposition - is driving them to school and consoling Eddie.

MIKE

You have to really wallow in this, Eddie. You know, feelings like these don't come everyday.

EDDIE

What, humiliation?

MIKE

It will take some time to get over it, but luckily we're young and we have nothing but time.

EDDIE

Yeah, I'd settle for money over time.

MIKE

But you need time to spend it.

EDDIE

Whatever, man. Don't give me your positive outlook on life. I'm not ready to hear it.

MIKE

Eddie, dude!

Mike slams on the breaks.

EDDIE

What?

MIKE

Get the fuck out!

EDDIE

What?

MIKE

Get the fuck out of my car and go hitch a ride with someone with as shitty an attitude as you - and guess what? You'll go nowhere.

They look at each other and after a moment he starts driving.

EDDIE

Sorry, dude.

MIKE

You don't think I fucking have feelings? I mean, I don't like to get dumped on.

EDDIE

All right.

MIKE

I mean chicks are one thing, but friends, man. Friends can last forever.

EDDIE

Yeah.

INT. BRENDA'S BATHROOM - DAY

A bathroom mirror. The sink is running. Gagging is heard (O.S.). After a moment the toilet flushes. BRENDA MILLER (17), comes into frame, breathing heavily. She's cute, at 5' 6" 115 lbs she is below her ideal weight (having just lost 10 lbs).

She splashes her face with water and gurgles some, spits out, and stands in front of the mirror holding her iPhone in front of her so she can see her image in it and her reflection from the mirror simultaneously. She is videoing herself for her YouTube channel "Perfect," and her TikTok account, @brendafrienda. She has 261 and 106 subscribers, respectively. She is very enthusiastic.

BRENDA

So I learned this from FadingAway.com, or something dramatic like that. We all are dramatists. To cut down on the acid, 'cause you know your stomach acid's gonna burn through your throat, 'cause obviously your stomach acid is supposed to be in your stomach. Other things go in your throat. Not that I know anything about that.

She's about to drink a powdery baking soda concoction, and stops.

BRENDA

Oh my God, but I had this amazing idea what this all means!

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

I'm, like, in here upchucking, and my cat is, like, scratching at the bathroom door hearing me yack. And I didn't want to worry her. It's a cat so obviously she has no fucking idea what's going on, and then I realized something about human intelligence! We're so smart, we know how to do other things with our food than nourish our bodies. In a twisted way, we nourish our minds by not nourishing our bodies.

EXT. ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL -- MORNING

A typical suburban high school. Mike and Eddie walk lazily up to the schoolyard. The homeroom BELL is heard. Some STUDENTS hustle off, some linger about, still chatting and smoking.

EDDIE

That's fucked up.

MIKE

Anyway, this shit will get you fucked up.

He takes out a little tab wrapped in cellophane.

EDDIE

What is it?

MIKE

Acid.

EDDIE

Acid?

MIKE

Yeah.

EDDIE

Oh.

MIKE

Check it out.

EDDIE

No, I'm not doing that now.

MIKE

Why not?

EDDIE

At school? This makes you go crazy,  
doesn't it?

MIKE

Well, so does school.

EDDIE

Yeah, I guess you're right.

Eddie takes it.

MIKE

Anyway, it's a good time.

EDDIE

Yeah.

INT. HISTORY CLASS -- MORNING

Eddie's tripping hard. He looks around in the sea of  
CLASSMATES and finds his desk. The TEACHER speaks.

TEACHER

Now, I have something you guys might  
like. To begin our studies on World  
War II, like I promised: *Saving  
Private Ryan*.

A STUDENT hollers his approval.

TEACHER

Now those of you with a queasy stomach  
may want to shield your eyes at the  
opening Invasion of Normandy. As  
you may know, it's pretty realistic.  
But I wanted to show you the  
difference between reading something  
in your history books and really  
seeing it. So these dates in your  
books won't seem like things that  
happened long ago. They're happening  
right now. During this movie.

The room darkens. A flurry of EXPLOSIONS and CRIES are heard.

EDDIE

Ahh!

The teacher looks at Eddie. He regains his composure.

EDDIE

Sorry.

A few classmates laugh. BLASTS and CRIES are heard.

EDDIE

Ahhh!

TEACHER

Excuse me, Eddie, would you like to go out in the hallway till Normandy is over?

EDDIE

No, sir!

Eddie stands at attention, and is suddenly SHOT. He falls to the ground in agony, gripping at his chest, his leg. His classmates look on. Some laughing, others in disgust at his ostentatious display.

DREAM SEQUENCE

-Eddie crawls along the battleground amidst the carnage of bodies. BULLETS and BOMBS zing overhead.

-Eddie rolls over onto his back, looking up at the sky, sensing death.

-As the clouds pass, the scene changes to an idyllic countryside.

-He sees a rustic farmhouse with a beautiful maiden, VALERIA BLANCO (17) - the prettiest exchange student in Annandale High - in farm girl regalia. She runs to his side, grabbing his hand.

EDDIE

This is the last goodbye... Please know, Valeria, I'll always love you.

VALERIA

Oh, Eddie! You'll never see your unborn son!

EDDIE

Tell him his daddy died in the greatest battle of all. No, not in winning your heart, for I see that as a defeat in that we now must part. But in fighting for my country, being all I could be!

-He dies.

END DREAM SEQUENCE

After a moment, Eddie opens his eyes. He's on the classroom floor, at Valeria's feet. She glowers at him. All the class is staring at them. Eddie continues his overtures.

EDDIE  
I'll always love you, Valeria. I'll  
always love you...

VALERIA  
(repulsed)  
What?

The class breaks into laughter. Eddie, humiliated, realizing what he's doing, jumps up and runs out of the room.

INT. BATHROOM STALL -- MORNING

Eddie's on his knees, hugging the toilet, not to throw up in, but as an anchor holding him to the ground. Brenda swings open the stall door and screams.

BRENDA  
Oh my God! What in the hell are you  
doin' there?

EDDIE  
Shhh! I'm trying to... I'm trying  
to... Think.

BRENDA  
You're a psychopath!

EDDIE  
Oh my God, I thought I was in the  
boys bathroom. I'm sorry.

BRENDA  
Is that what you usually do in the  
bathroom? You hug the toilet?

EDDIE  
No, of course not.

He runs off.

EDDIE  
God, I'm an idiot.

BRENDA  
Hey.

She goes to the toilet, and sticks her fist in her mouth with two probing fingers extended, reaching down her throat, gagging. A sharp cackle rends out of her and she pukes liquid and chunks. She goes to the mirror and sees a grossly fat version of herself in the reflection.

INT. CAFETERIA -- AFTERNOON

Eddie and Mike stand at the back of the line. Eddie sees Brenda standing toward the front. Mike notices.

MIKE

You like her?

EDDIE

Who?

MIKE

Brenda Miller. The girl with the sunflower dress.

EDDIE

She's cute. Her flowers are in bloom.

MIKE

Yeah, well, she's not your type.

EDDIE

Why's that?

MIKE

She's smart.

EDDIE

Oh.

MIKE

Anyway, I don't think she's been to a party in her life. Not the kind of girl that would go for you.

EDDIE

Look at who's acting negative.

MIKE

Well, ask her out then.

EDDIE

I'm going to.

MIKE

Well, go ahead, Eddie. I'll give you ten bucks if she accepts a date with you.

EDDIE

Ten bucks, come on. Put some real money on it!



MIKE

I don't need to, 'cause you don't have any real money to take. Ten bucks will drain you dry as it is.

EDDIE

All right, tough guy. I happen to know she likes me.

MIKE

Oh, and where did you get this information?

EDDIE

We met in the bathroom.

MIKE

What?

EDDIE

She walked in on an intimate conversation I was having with the toilet a few minutes ago.

MIKE

You're right, Eddie. I shouldn't have given you that acid.

EDDIE

It's ok, Mike, 'cause you know, the world is this huge ball of fun, and I'm just a speck of it that can mingle and mix with everyone!

Eddie shimmies to the front of the line where Brenda is.

EDDIE

Hi, thanks for keeping my spot.

A FRESHMAN (14), is not happy about this.

FRESHMAN

Hey, you can't cut!

EDDIE

She was saving my spot.

FRESHMAN

Then you both have to go to the back of the line.

EDDIE

All right come on, Brenda.

He slips his arm under hers. She twists out of his grasp.

BRENDA

Hey! What are you doing?!

EDDIE

You want to wait in line with me,  
doncha?

BRENDA

No! I don't even know who you are.

EDDIE

Oh my God. I'm, like, insulted.

BRENDA

Well, you're an idiot!

EDDIE

Oh, now who's acting like one?

BRENDA

You are.

EDDIE

Yeah, but you can't just judge a  
book by its cover. You have to get  
to know me better, than to call me  
an idiot.

Mike walks up.

MIKE

Actually, Eddie, she hit you dead  
on.

EDDIE

Mike! This is my buddy, Mike.

MIKE

Hey, Brenda.

BRENDA

Look, Mike, your friend is a psycho.

MIKE

Look, I have to apologize.

FRESHMAN

Hey, get out of the line!

MIKE

Look, will you wait, pal? I'm doing  
a little mediation here. It's part  
of my Worker's Ed. hours, please.

FRESHMAN

What the hell!

MIKE

Look, Eddie and I made a bet, because your beauty was worth the wager. And we know that you don't like to go out and socialize with the derelicts - and you have more reasons than what we can think of I'm sure - but Eddie is smitten with you.

EDDIE

I am. Whatever he's saying is straight from the heart.

MIKE

And you're breaking this poor lowly kid's heart! I mean, did you ever read *Nicholas Nickleby*?

BRENDA

No.

MIKE

It's Dickens.

BRENDA

I know it's Dickens.

MIKE

Well, you read *Great Expectations*?

BRENDA

Yes... Look, what does this have to do with anything?

MIKE

Eddie here is like the orphan from those classic Victorian books: He can't read.

EDDIE

I can read!

MIKE

Not the writing on the wall, shut up.

BRENDA

Look, where are you two sitting?

MIKE

Over there by the window.

BRENDA

Let me get my lunch and I'll sit with you.

MIKE

Ok.

They get out of the line.

MIKE

See, she likes you.

EDDIE

Wow, she does. She's going to sit with us.

MIKE

Exciting times, Eddie. You'll thank me one day.

LUNCH TABLE

They sit patiently waiting for Brenda, who walks quickly by.

MIKE

Brenda!

Mike waves her over. She stops and reluctantly turns around.

BRENDA

Aren't you guys getting lunch?

MIKE

We have your love to feast on.

BRENDA

First off, shut up before I throw my lunch in your face!

She slams the tray down on the table.

BRENDA

Secondly, this isn't funny!

MIKE

What?

BRENDA

This pervert was in the girls bathroom.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

MIKE

He was talking to the toilet.

BRENDA

I know what he was doing. He's crazy.

MIKE

He's smitten.

BRENDA

I also saw your display in history class.

EDDIE

You're in my history class?

BRENDA

Very observant. If you kept your eyes off of Valeria Blanco once in a while you'd see me there too. You know, you guys are a bunch of jerks.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

MIKE

He wants to make it up to you.

EDDIE

No, I do. How should I do that?

MIKE

A date.

EDDIE

Would you go out with me?!

BRENDA

No. You're crazy.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

BRENDA

What is he on?

MIKE

It's a hallucinogen.

BRENDA

So you're delusional as well.

MIKE

Look, I have a way to resolve this. The other day, as I was doing some research, I found a contest. As I'm an adventurous guy, as can be attested by this here encounter with you, I decided to try my luck. And as fate would have it - as it can only be called - since it is the perfect occasion for you and Eddie to go to the grand opening of Loews movie theater in Union Square Friday night, tickets for two!

BRENDA

You both are idiots. You know that?

MIKE

Well, I don't know, Eddie. You have to do this for yourself. I'm hungry.

Mike leaves.

BRENDA

I'm going.

EDDIE

Please, don't go! I'm sorry I scared you.

BRENDA

You didn't scare me.

EDDIE

I just... I never did acid before. I freaked out.

BRENDA

Look, Eddie, you're a nice guy...

EDDIE

Then go out with me, please, I'm desperate!

BRENDA

Well, that's very romantic. How could I refuse?

EDDIE

Oh great, what's your number?

He takes out his phone.

BRENDA

No.

EDDIE

What?

BRENDA

(beat)

Ok. Here, take down my number.  
Quick, before I rethink this.

EDDIE

Oh please, don't think. It works  
for me.

BRENDA

(917) 555-4639.

EDDIE

Ok, I'll call you about Friday.

BRENDA

Maybe.

EDDIE

Ok, maybe I'll call you about Friday.  
Maybe another day too.

BRENDA

No, let's just keep it to Friday.

EDDIE

Ok.

BRENDA

No, I mean... Oh, forget it.  
(rushing off)  
It was nice meeting you.

EDDIE

(smiling)  
Have a nice day.

INT. HALLWAY - LOCKERS -- DAY

Brenda approaches MONA (17).

BRENDA

How many calories are in a kiss?

MONA

Depends how deep it is.

BRENDA

Or how deep the guy, which in Eddie's  
case I can't say is much.

MONA

Eddie Wilgus?

BRENDA

Is that his last name, what is that Polish?

MONA

I think his great grandfather built the subway system.

BRENDA

What?

MONA

Yeah, like he was the architect or something.

BRENDA

Are you serious? He must be loaded.

MONA

Whatever he's got he'll throw away. He's the typical prodigal son. Come on, Brenda, you're not like one of them.

BRENDA

What do you mean? I come from a good background, albeit I'm not the descendant of an oil baron.

MONA

No, a partier: Drugs? You can't date Wilgus. He'll send you under the ground, as in a casket, and not the subway his ancestor is responsible for. The only money you'll be seeing is him throwing it away.

BRENDA

I don't know, he's cute.

MONA

So are you. Don't sell yourself short.

BRENDA

You know what Jane would say.

Mona smiles. Brenda assumes an English accent.



BRENDA

It is a truth universally acknowledged  
that a man of a good fortune is in  
want of a wife.

They laugh.

MONA

Yeah, she also never married. Save  
it for fiction, Brenda, that's what  
Jane did.

INT. WILGUS CAFE -- DAY

Eddie walks into the cozy coffee house, which is owned and  
operated by his dad. It has a charming decor. He goes behind  
the counter, grabbing an apron and cap. His dad, GREG WILGUS  
(40s), congenial, is at the register.

GREG

Hey, Eddie.

EDDIE

Hey, Dad.

GREG

How's school goin'?

EDDIE

Ugh. I'm gonna strangle this frickin'  
history teacher of mine.

GREG

Well, then you wouldn't find out all  
those important dates and events  
that happened in human history, now  
would ya?

EDDIE

Will you shut up?

GREG

All right, get your apron on. I  
gotta go in the back, into the office.  
But everything's all right, right?

EDDIE

Yeah... Don't expect a good report  
card.

GREG

I never do. Just get the number  
that goes in the cash register right,  
Eddie, and we should be ok.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- DAY

Brenda finishes a run. She is drenched in sweat. She looks down at her iPhone and the running app reads: 9.9 mi 92:35 time 772 cal. She pumps her fist.

BRENDA

I'm Queen of the Universe!

She starts taking selfies of her face and upper body with her crop top, but her hands are shaking and she only gets blurry pics. She talks to the phone.

BRENDA

I remain a blur, absolved from solidity. I am like Bruce Lee prescribed, "Be like water," mixed with Ophelia's death dive in the river. I will take the flowery wreath from her head and immortalize her with my death!

She runs off.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN -- EVENING

Brenda's bingeing on Oreos, cold rice, Frosted Flakes, red pepper hummus with celery, and scarfing down the remains of a roasted chicken. Her brother, CHARLIE (16), comes in.

CHARLIE

What are you eating for a marathon?

BRENDA

Holy shit! You.

CHARLIE

Yeah, it's me, your favorite sibling - well, you're only one, so you better treat me right, not like the way that you're treating yourself.

BRENDA

What do you know?

CHARLIE

A thing spoken by our parents to whom *excellence* isn't a word it's actually a metaphor for how screwed up the people who attain it are.

(beat)

Hummus and celery, a healthy snack.

BRENDA

Tell me what they said.

CHARLIE

Mom said you're bulimic, and Dad didn't understand her in depth explanation, since...

BRENDA

Apparently she's a mail-ordered bride and Dad just uses her to fuck and fuck us over with their parenting.

CHARLIE

Whoa, that was hostile. What happened to you, Brenda, you used to be fun? A dork, but a fun one. Why are you doing this to yourself?

BRENDA

I'm almost an adult.

CHARLIE

That never stopped anyone from doing stupid things before. Probably justified it.

INT. MIKE'S CAR -- EVENING

Mike and Eddie are smoking a joint in the parking lot of Wilgus Cafe. They can't stop laughing.

MIKE

Oh, fuck, man. I don't know, man. All I know is, man, Mr. Dartin, dude, in Worker's Ed., he's got a big head. I know head size has no indication of brains.

EDDIE

Well, maybe it's helium, right? Maybe God meant him to be a helium balloon, ya know.

MIKE

But he would've been popped already, if not from your jabbing than mine, ya know. I woulda popped him, or, like, kids, like, fifty years ago would've got him. His head, man, it's just there!

EDDIE

(stifling laughter)  
Stop it, man. You're killing me, man. Oh my God, I gotta go back to work, man. My dad's gonna know.

MIKE

Oh man, dude, all I know is, get me some coffee or some kind of liquish. *Liquish*, did I say that right? Liquorice. No. Liquids, dude. Oh my God, I can't - my mouth it's so dry, dude. I feel like it's a rug, ya know. Like a sacred rug, though. Ya know, like one of those Buddhists - or whoever the hell prays when they throw down a rug in the street - that's my tongue right now. Like there's a little dude praying on my tongue to, like, the west is it? Where does the sun come from, man?!

EDDIE

It's from the east.

MIKE

Oh my God, I swallowed up the little guy! I just swallowed the little guy. He was praying. He doesn't know which way to pray. He's in my stomach. He's dead and there's no horizon anywhere. So fuck him. Little praying guy, I ate him.

EDDIE

Stop it, dude, just stop it! This is not right. I'm goin' back to work.

Eddie gets out.

MIKE

All right, man.

INT. BRENDA'S BATHROOM -- EVENING

The faucet runs, gagging is heard (O.S.). She flushes the toilet and rinses her mouth, and drinks the baking soda drink and stares into the mirror aiming her iPhone toward her, recording.

BRENDA

God, you look so good from this angle. Why couldn't God have made you from this angle at all the other angles? Motherfucker. See, God doesn't know what it's like to be human. If you're watching, ha ha, Motherfucker!

Her arm goes slack and she drops her arm, and dangles the phone by her side.

BRENDA

I don't know how much longer I can go on. I just don't want to feel. I just want to be left alone. I want to be a lonely rock, or a pebble on the sand with millions of other pebbles and particles of sand. I want to be part of the beauty, but I don't want to try to be beautiful anymore. But most of all, I don't want to be ugly anymore.

(beat)

I don't want to be the fungus or algae or whatever the hell Marine Biology can come up with to classify me! 'Cause it's gonna take someone in some fucking institution that's smart enough to categorize my fucking ugliness!

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET CORNER -- NIGHT

Eddie walks haltingly, obviously nervous, palming his phone.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda's in bed reading. Her phone rings, she scrutinizes the unknown number, and cautiously answers.

BRENDA

Hello.

EDDIE

(deep voice)

Hey.

INTERCUT - PHONE CONVERSATION

BRENDA

Who is this?

EDDIE

It's Eddie.

BRENDA

Oh hey, Eddie. Your voice sounds different.

He breaks it off.

EDDIE

I was trying to make my voice sound more masculine.

BRENDA

Well, a valiant effort I grant you,  
but I needn't such theatrics.

EDDIE

Ok.

BRENDA

According to the handbook, movies  
are for dates, and we're not going  
on one so there goes those plans. I  
suggest - and you are welcome to  
bemoan this - as I almost hate to  
say it, 'cause I've heard things -  
not to get too specific about the  
things - but one of which you like  
drugs more than books and ergo would  
not want to go to the library with  
me 'cause I have a project in History,  
as you do too, and we need primary  
sources, so there goes my lame date  
for you.

EDDIE

Ew.

BRENDA

*Ew* is right. Frankly, Eddie, I am  
distancing myself from people, and  
you being one of them...

EDDIE

The library sounds lovely.

BRENDA

*Lovely?*

EDDIE

Hey, I'm trying.

BRENDA

As my dad says, "Don't try, succeed!"

EDDIE

Am I succeeding?

BRENDA

No. A dead giveaway of not is asking  
if you are.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

CHARLES MILLER (late 30s), her dad, foreboding in his suit, lectures Brenda at eleven years old, LITTLE BRENDA, helping with homework.

CHARLES

Brenda dear, if you have to ask whether you're succeeding, you're not. God made very explicit instructions, and one of them states you'll know when you get there. You may be frantically without a GPS, 'cause in this instance of human potential the destination where you're arriving to is too new to be even on the map, not at the place you're accustomed, which you're reverting back to by asking the question, "How am I doing?"

LITTLE BRENDA

Sorry.

CHARLES

I'm not, you know why?

LITTLE BRENDA

Why, Dad?

CHARLES

Because you're just like me, loves her daddy, but to a point, and that is to the degree that he provides. And if he is ever caught in an insecure moment with his daughter she'll never trust him again. That is how I'm doing. A parent must be parent to himself before he is to anyone else.

LITTLE BRENDA

So you're raising me to be a parent?

CHARLES

Well, isn't it apparent?

LITTLE BRENDA

(smiles)

Oh.

He tousles her hair.

LITTLE BRENDA

(squeals)

No, don't!

CHARLES

You have your mother's hair and your father's brain under it. Don't mess that up.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

Brenda says as an incantation, staring into her laptop webcam.

BRENDA

I'll never be weak, for my Father is strong: the one in heaven and the one on the ground.

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Eddie's sitting on a bean bag. Mike's on his bed, half asleep watching TV. Eddie stifles a cry.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

MIKE

Hey, man. What's wrong?

EDDIE

I miss my mom, man.

MIKE

Hey.

EDDIE

I'm sorry. I get so weird.

MIKE

It's all right, man.

EDDIE

Like I miss her and then I don't 'cause she caused a lot of trouble, and she's hard to talk to, you know. But then I'll say, "I love you." 'Cause I know she feels strange saying it. 'Cause she doesn't want to be a burden. Like her love is a burden, you know. And then she'll say, "I love you too, Eddie. You don't know how much."

(MORE)



EDDIE (CONT'D)

Like she couldn't wait till I said it first, you know. Like an orange can't wait to be peeled, and then it just squirts right at you when you bite in. She just bursts. And I feel so bad all those times I haven't been with her. That bitch.

MIKE

Hey, man.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

MIKE

It's all right, man.

EDDIE

What was she thinking?

MIKE

She wasn't, man. She's mentally ill.

EDDIE

You'd think love could conquer any illness, but it's like it just makes it worse 'cause it makes it that much harder to let 'em go. If you didn't love them it'd be nothing.

MIKE

Hey, if you didn't love your mother you'd be a murderer.

EDDIE

Yeah?

MIKE

You think Hitler loved his mother? No way. He wouldn't be able to kill all those people if he had a good relationship with his mother.

EDDIE

Unless his mother was crazy too.

MIKE

Nah man, he was beyond crazy. And don't put that on any mother. That's a man's ego that makes him murder like that. That has nothing to do with love and all with hate.

EDDIE

Yeah.

Beat.

MIKE

Anyway, you wanna crash here tonight?

EDDIE

I don't know.

MIKE

You feel all right to drive?

EDDIE

Yeah, I guess.

MIKE

Well, don't if you're not ready. I don't care, you can chill out on that rotunda chair and we'll just sit here all night watching TV.

EDDIE

Yeah.

MIKE

Whatever, man.

EDDIE

Whatever.

INT. LIBRARY -- AFTERNOON

Brenda, 5 lbs lighter (110 lbs), and Eddie walk between foreboding bookshelves.

EDDIE

I can't even breathe in here. It smells like something died.

BRENDA

Well, all the authors of these books, they're all dead.

EDDIE

Well, they didn't need to leave their corpses here.

BRENDA

It's pretty lengthy.

EDDIE

Let's just use the internet.

He takes out his phone. She pushes it away.

BRENDA

No, the internet is just a great distraction. If you want to learn the proper way you start with the basics: Books.

EDDIE

Oh, man. See, I knew you were going to turn into a tutor with me.

LIBRARY TABLE

They sit across from each other. She slams a book down.

BRENDA

Now read!

EDDIE

I'm not reading.

BRENDA

Why not?

EDDIE

I can't read.

BRENDA

What do you mean you can't read?

EDDIE

I'm dyslexic.

BRENDA

You're dyslexic?

EDDIE

Yeah, except I don't see the words backwards, I see the world backwards, and in my world I don't gotta read!

BRENDA

There's poetry in the world, Eddie, and they're all held in by words, which are held by these books. If you don't open them you'll never learn about all the amazing things life has to offer.

EDDIE

I have eyes. I see enough of the world.

BRENDA

Eddie, you can't possibly see what once was and what may never be, until you look in here.

He leafs through it.

EDDIE

Wow, cool. I think I see what will never be: Me as a reader.

BRENDA

Look.

She goes around the table, sitting beside him.

EDDIE

You're not teaching me how to read.

BRENDA

Can you see these words?

EDDIE

Of course, I can see them. I'm not blind.

BRENDA

What do they say?

EDDIE

(slowly)  
"The world was changing..."

BRENDA

That's how fast you read?

EDDIE

Fuck you.

BRENDA

No, go ahead.

EDDIE

(a little faster)  
"The world was changing..."  
(breaks off)  
You don't get it. I have to look at the words as clusters. I can read faster. It's just when I don't practice I start jumbling up the letters. People who read normally, they automatically put words or letters in clusters. I have to just work at that consciously. That's all, but I don't feel like it.

BRENDA

Eddie. So you can read?

EDDIE

Stop acting like I'm a retard!

BRENDA

I'm not.

EDDIE

Look, Brenda, I can read, all right. It's just the way I see it, even my own brain from the beginning was like, "What's the big deal with this?" And my brain, being more imaginative than other boring people, was like, "Ah I see! I'm gonna switch around these letters, see if I can make something better out of it instead of boring words that anyone can read, and apparently anyone can write!"

Sweeping his arm around, encompassing the library.

EDDIE

I mean, look at all these fucking books, Brenda. I mean, who cares? Have you ever walked into a bookstore and seen like fifty new bestsellers on the shelves? Who the fuck cares? There's books about everything.

BRENDA

Eddie, slow down. I think I see your problem.

EDDIE

What?

BRENDA

You are a retard.

EDDIE

Shut up.

He hits her arm. She hits him and they begin to mock fight, entangling their arms. She screams. PEOPLE look over.

BRENDA

You don't behave yourself, we're gonna get kicked out of the library.

EDDIE

Well, they didn't card us, and I'm underage. I can't possibly handle all this education until I'm twenty-one.

BRENDA

You're a dork.

EDDIE

Hey, lets go to a bar!

BRENDA

What?

EDDIE

I got a fake ID. Let's go!

BRENDA

Eddie.

EDDIE

What?

BRENDA

I can't believe you.

EDDIE

Sure, and you can get in, 'cause you're a chick.

BRENDA

Eddie.

EDDIE

Brenda.

BRENDA

How many drugs do you do?

EDDIE

How many books are in this library? They couldn't chronicle all my drug abuse.

He laughs. She doesn't.

EDDIE

I'm just fucking kidding.

BRENDA

You're awful.

EDDIE

Let's get blasted.

BRENDA

No, I'm reading. If that's what you want to do then do it with someone else.

EDDIE

Ohhh.

BRENDA

You're awful.

He sticks out his tongue.

EDDIE

I can actually read better if I lick the page. My dog taught me that one.

He licks it. She screams.

BRENDA

What are you doing? Eddie! What? Don't lick it!

More people look over.

BRENDA

Oh my God! Let's go.

She rushes off, embarrassed. Eddie lingers behind.

EDDIE

Sorry folks, you can study now.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - TRAVELING -- AFTERNOON

Brenda drives silently. Eddie sits aloof. Beat.

EDDIE

You gonna talk to me or you just gonna drive?

BRENDA

(snapping)  
Will you be quiet?

EDDIE

You know, I didn't want to go the library...

BRENDA

You're going home!

EDDIE

Oh, that's fine. You know, you're fuckin' tough.

BRENDA

Look, Eddie, we... you know what I mean, there is no "We." So don't worry about it.

EDDIE

I'm not worried about anything.

BRENDA

That's your problem.

EDDIE

What?

BRENDA

That.

EDDIE

Again: What?

BRENDA

You don't worry about things. You have to worry about things. If I wasn't worried about things I'd run this red light.

EDDIE

Well, maybe you should. Maybe you should fuckin'...

He tries pushing her leg off the brake pedal.

BRENDA

No, get off! No...!

EDDIE

Get off the fuckin' pedal!

He pushes her thigh, playfully yet aggressively.

BRENDA

Don't touch me!

He retracts his hand, realizing he went too far.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

Beat. The light turns green. They drive.



BRENDA  
You, you are so annoying.

EDDIE  
Yeah.

BRENDA  
That's how you get by in life.

EDDIE  
What, by being annoying?

BRENDA  
No, by being cute. But that's -  
that's - but *cute* doesn't play with  
me.

EDDIE  
Well, you're *hot*, you know. I mean,  
but you know, *hot* plays with me.  
But I guess I'm - I'm... Fuck it. I  
don't know.

BRENDA  
Will you just shut up?

EDDIE  
Well, where you wanna go?

BRENDA  
I'm taking you home.

EDDIE  
Oh come on, at least get some coffee  
with me, huh? I know of a great,  
stupid, idiotic place that I work  
at. It's on me.

BRENDA  
You work somewhere?

EDDIE  
Yeah, you know, I do things outside  
of fuckin' school.

BRENDA  
All right. Just one cup.

EDDIE  
Oh, fine.

INT. WILGUS CAFE -- AFTERNOON

Brenda and Eddie walk in. Greg is at the cash register.

EDDIE

Hey, Dad.

GREG

Eddie!

EDDIE

This is Brenda.

GREG

Oh, hi.

BRENDA

Hello.

GREG

So what are you two doing? It's a nice day out.

EDDIE

Yeah, we just went to the library.

GREG

The library. Ooh sounds exciting.

EDDIE

Tell me about it.

BRENDA

We have a project in history.

GREG

Well, getting Eddie to the library is a project in itself.

Some CUSTOMERS come in.

GREG

Hey, what do you two want?

EDDIE

Give me a coffee. And you want the triple fudge cheesecake, it's delicious?

BRENDA

No. Yes. Yes and no.

(laughs)

Yes with a little no on top.

GREG

And to drink, Brenda?

BRENDA

Ooh, I'll take a...

She takes too long scanning the menu on the back wall.

GREG

How about a vanilla latte, made with all kinds of chemicals that keep the calorie content remarkably small?

BRENDA

(laughs)  
Ok, you got it.

GREG

All right. Sit down, make yourselves comfortable.

BANQUETTE BOOTHS

They sit at a table.

BRENDA

Your dad is real nice.

EDDIE

Yeah, you see that picture.

He points to a family portrait on the wall: Eddie as a little kid, Greg younger, and Eddie's mother.

BRENDA

Oh.

EDDIE

That's my mom.

BRENDA

She's real pretty.

EDDIE

Yeah, she was.

BRENDA

What happened to her?

EDDIE

She's a lunatic. She pulled her pants over her head once and started running down the street, saying she was grabbed by one of her plants in the garden.

BRENDA

What?

EDDIE

Yeah, she just lost it.

BRENDA

I'm sorry.

EDDIE

That's all right. I see her once in a while. She tried to kill herself a few years ago.

BRENDA

Gosh.

EDDIE

I shouldn't even be telling you all this.

BRENDA

No, I'm sorry.

EDDIE

Ah, I don't know why Dad keeps her picture here.

BRENDA

Well, she's your mother. She's still your mother, no matter what she did. She loved you, you know.

EDDIE

Ah, it's so stupid. We should have gone to the bar like I said.

BRENDA

Well, I don't have a fake ID like you.

EDDIE

Yeah, but you look like a fake, so they'd let you in.

BRENDA

Shut up.

EDDIE

They only let fake people into the bars.

BRENDA

Uh huh.

EDDIE

That's why they're so popular. Only fake people are popular. And drugs are the perfect stimulant for being a little more real when you're feeling so fake. It balances you out.

BRENDA

I don't want to hear anymore of your philosophy on why you ravish your mind on drugs, Eddie.

EDDIE

I don't *ravish my mind*.

BRENDA

You're going to end up like your mother if you don't be careful.

EDDIE

Well, you're trying to act like her right now.

BRENDA

You need a positive influence in your life.

GREG

Eddie!

Greg waves him over.

EDDIE

(jumping up)  
Yeah, Dad!

BAR COUNTER

Greg puts the tray with their drinks and cheesecake on the bar table. As Eddie goes for it Greg pulls it away, stopping him.

GREG

I didn't want to tell you this now, but I got a phone call that I didn't especially like.

EDDIE

What's that?

GREG

Why don't you tell me?

EDDIE

What?

GREG

We'll talk about this later. When you can think more clearly.

EDDIE

What?

GREG  
One of your teachers.

EDDIE  
Oh.

GREG  
Yeah.

EDDIE  
What?

GREG  
I'm not happy, Eddie.

EDDIE  
Hey, get off my back, all right?

GREG  
You better straighten up, son!

A beat, and Greg slides the tray back.

GREG  
There.

Eddie grabs it and starts to walk away.

GREG  
Hey!

Eddie turns around.

GREG  
She's a real cute girl.

EDDIE  
Thanks.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR -- NIGHT

They're making out intensely. She stops.

BRENDA  
Oh, Eddie.

EDDIE  
What?

BRENDA  
My hair.

She primps her hair.

EDDIE

Sorry.

Pause.

BRENDA

You don't have to stop kissing me.

EDDIE

Oh.

They resume.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

Brenda's mom, LINDA (40s), quietly listens while Charles (present day he's in his 40s), tries to get through to her.

CHARLES

There's gonna be things you're not gonna want to hear. Mom and I have been looking into treatment centers...

BRENDA

What?!

CHARLES

And if this keeps up we have no choice but to put you into one of them.

BRENDA

I can't believe you guys!

CHARLES

Well, I mean, we're just as shocked as you, Brenda. This is very dangerous.

BRENDA

Come on, you guys are just so stressed out! It's nothing more... you forgot what it's like to be a teenager.

CHARLES

Well, maybe. Maybe we don't know what it's like anymore, especially the age you're growing up in. It's harder than ever. So maybe you need the help that we can't give you.

BRENDA

Oh my God! What are you going to pull me right out of school?

CHARLES

If we have to.

BRENDA

What about next year?! What about NYU?!

CHARLES

NYU will be there when you get out.

BRENDA

Oh my God, I'm gonna miss graduation!

CHARLES

You're not gonna miss anything if you stop what you're doing.

BRENDA

I can't believe you're threatening me. I'm being threatened in my own home. My family - which is supposed to protect me - is threatening me!

CHARLES

We're doing this for your own good.

BRENDA

Oh yeah! Right! I'm fine, look at me, I'm fine. Physically, I'm fine. There's nothing wrong with what I'm doing once in a while.

CHARLES

And that's what the problem is, that you don't even realize you have one.

INT. MIKE'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- MORNING

Mike's STEPDAD catches him sneaking in.

STEPDAD

Michael!

MIKE

Hey, what's up?

STEPDAD

Where were you last night?

MIKE

Well, I don't know if you want the sordid details.

STEPDAD

You know you have a curfew.



MIKE

Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm... No seriously,  
the car broke down...

STEPPAD

Right, Mike. Look, you know how  
much anxiety you've caused your  
mother?

MIKE

Hey, Mr. Dude! The car broke down!  
And I found some people along the  
fuckin' highway who were much more,  
uh... amicable and nicer than my  
own stupid stepdad! So why don't we  
leave it at that, and I'll be out of  
your hair, as thin as it is, and as  
much as I'm making you lose it, very  
fuckin' soon!

STEPPAD

You don't talk to me like that!

MIKE

Well, how...? What would you like  
me to say?! Would you like me to  
paint fuckin' flowers for you? I  
don't know what to do with you, dude!

He storms into his room, slamming the door.

MIKE

Motherfuckers! Motherfuckers!

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BACKYARD -- NIGHT

A regal three-story home filled with TEENAGERS partying.  
BABIES EATING DINOSAURS are playing. Their banner of a baby  
eating a Tyrannosaurus Rex is hanging from the trees. The  
frontman, BABY MAN (18), croons a lilting, maudlin love song:

BABY MAN

I can see your anger,  
You needn't stab me too,  
With words that are strangers  
To both me and you.  
You don't really love me,  
I always knew,  
You'd laugh and scorn me  
When we were through.

I can read your gestures,  
I can see your moves.

(MORE)

BABY MAN (CONT'D)

I ain't so stupid,  
And you ain't so smooth.

You needn't scream.  
Words can caress.  
Words can be heard  
As pretty as a dress.

INT. MARCUS' CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Valeria and MARCUS (17), her jock boyfriend, are parked on the street outside the party, making out. He begins to manhandle her. She breaks off.

VALERIA

You are a salvaje!

MARCUS

What?

VALERIA

You maul me like an alley cat!

She slams the door as she leaves.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- CONTINUOUS

He screeches off, leaving her in a cloud of smoke.

VALERIA

Imbecil! Gallina! If you had some  
cojones you wouldn't run, dickhead!  
Poco hombre.

Some PARTIERS look to the street, most notably, CHRISTINE and CHRISTINA (17), as they snap pictures with their iPhones of Valeria looking off into the dark street where Marcus has disappeared in a cloud of exhaust smoke. They immediately load them to their Instagram page "whispersisters".

CHRISTINE

(typing)

*Mr. Scholarship to Notre Dame is  
leaving without his dame!*

CHRISTINA

(typing)

*Is this Latin lover too fast for our  
cornerback to cover?*

CHRISTINE

I "like" it!

Christina and Christine tag it #whatlovedoes #whatlovewas #loveontherocks #yourcheatinheart #modernromance #meminusyou #crymeariverbitch. They sigh and giggle.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Eddie's texting pictures to Brenda of all the "walks of life" she's missing.

BRENDA (TEXT)

*More like a walk on the wild side*

EDDIE (TEXT)

*Lol. I try to run with a crowd that goes full throttle.*

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She sees a teen ogling a young girl.

BRENDA (TEXT)

*People frisking one another is actually illegal if he turns out to be legal and she not.*

She Googles "Pine Lake Summer Camp" on her laptop. It hits on a rustic welcoming camp with cabins by a lake.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. PINE LAKE SUMMER CAMP - CABIN -- NIGHT

JEREMY (17), a camp counselor, sits on the sofa just in his briefs, chain smoking. Little Brenda stands at a safe distance hesitatively.

LITTLE BRENDA

This is wrong what I'm doing, but I'll do it. I don't know why.

JEREMY

Why ask why? Give it a try. If the sensation takes you, follow it beyond the arithmetic and boring books of school. This is summer camp and lots of promiscuity goes on. The wildlife brings out the animal in us all.

LITTLE BRENDA

Here.

She walks to him and he brings her in.

JEREMY

My.

Beat. He touches her.

JEREMY

What were nightmares, through what we share, we abolish that of which we were scared.

LITTLE BRENDA

I don't think we should be doing this.

JEREMY

Take off your shirt.

Beat.

JEREMY

Get those pants and panties off, my needs you shall no longer scoff.

He leads her to her bed.

JEREMY

I feel like the groom with his newlywed. Of course, you're a dirty girl and not worth marrying, especially what you've tempted me to do. You in your looks say more than you can say, and I've been talking a lot, but you've been leading the way.

LITTLE BRENDA

Can you turn the lights off? I don't want to see this.

JEREMY

Just keep your eyes closed, and your body in gentle repose, and I will give you pleasure no one knows.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BRENDA'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda's still staring at the summer camp on her laptop, having recorded her retelling of the incident via her webcam.

BRENDA

Bear the tumult of this life in stride, rather than succumb to it in strife.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BACKYARD -- NIGHT

It's 3:00 AM. The band is still playing. Baby Man is really drunk. There are only a few conscious teens left.

BABY MAN

Yeah, we're crazy and insane.  
We're flowers without a brain.  
We're a cloud in the sky vaporized  
by the rain.

But you know we're not extinct like  
those motherfucking dinosaurs!  
Fuck those motherfucking dinosaurs!  
Like a whore!

Wahhh! Yeahhh!  
We dig them up,  
The emotions in the mud!  
Their bones are crud!

They don't like us no more,  
'Cause we put them up in a museum,  
And we get experts to see-'em!

LIVING ROOM

Valeria on the couch stirs and gets up disoriented. Eddie (drunk) walks in from the backyard.

VALERIA

Oh my God, I have to go. ¿Dónde  
está el baño en esta porquería?

She bumps into Eddie, feeling around his chest.

VALERIA

Oh, what is that?

EDDIE

It's Eddie. I'm in your history  
class.

VALERIA

Oh, hey, Eddie.

She remembers the scene he made over her in class.

VALERIA

Oh my God! You!

EDDIE

Look, I'm sorry about that.

VALERIA

No, it's funny... It was, uh... it was charming.

EDDIE

Well, thanks.

VALERIA

No, you're...

They lock eyes. Beat.

VALERIA

Oh my God, I have got to go to the bathroom. Can...? Oh my, I'm gonna throw up, unless... I going outside, I don't care.

EDDIE

No, no, here. Wanna go to the bathroom?

VALERIA

Anywhere.

Eddie looks around.

EDDIE

All right, all right, all right, just, just, just wait, just wait.

She grabs his arm and he guides her.

INT. BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

EDDIE

Here.

They walk in.

VALERIA

Dios mío. I'm so sick.

He starts to go.

VALERIA

Please, no don't leave. I feel like I'm gonna die.

EDDIE

Are you all right?

VALERIA

No, just - Dios mío.  
(MORE)

VALERIA (CONT'D)

Does your heart ever beat so fast  
that you wonder if you're ever gonna  
catch up to it?

EDDIE

I guess.

VALERIA

Oh my God. I'm so... I feel like  
I'm gonna throw up but I can't.

EDDIE

You're beautiful.

VALERIA

What?

EDDIE

I'm sorry, I shouldn't of...

VALERIA

(smiles)

You're so... silly.

They kiss clumsily. He leans into her against the sink as they break into laughter and scrumptious kisses. The door knocks, as it's ajar, it swings open.

VALERIA

Oh, we're... Yeah?!

A DRUNK DUDE stares, embarrassed and jealous.

DRUNK DUDE

Oh, can I go to the bathroom, dude...?

VALERIA

I don't know, should we let him in?  
I don't know! Oh, shit. You too  
have to go?! Oh my God, going to  
the bathroom is craazzy!

She regains her senses.

VALERIA

Oh, go the bathroom! And I'm gonna  
call a taxi. Thanks for knocking.  
You just fucking woke me! Oh my  
God, I am so tired. I'm so tired.

She walks off.

EDDIE  
(dejected)  
Yeah, have a good night.

INT. LUNCHROOM - ENTRANCE - AFTERNOON

Mike is working the crowd. He spots two pretty girls, JANE and SHERRY (16).

MIKE  
Jane, missed you the other night.

JANE  
What's up, Mike?

MIKE  
Hey girl, how you doin'? What's up, Sherry.

SHERRY  
Hey.

MIKE  
Yeah, you didn't go to the Total Fuck Ups Tour. It was awesome.

JANE  
Yeah, I know, I missed it.

MIKE  
Yeah, I mean, She Screams He Dreams was there.

JANE  
Aw, shit.

MIKE  
Yeah, and, like, some other stupid bands, but it was cool. It was really cool.

SHERRY  
I know. My mom wouldn't let me go on a frickin', you know, school night.

MIKE  
Oh, you gotta get around that.

SHERRY  
Yeah, well we aren't as cool as you, Mike.

MIKE  
Well, you know, if you want me to talk to your mom...



SHERRY

No, I don't think so.

## LUNCH TABLE

Eddie sits, nervously, Brenda should be coming any minute. The sun blinds him through the windows. He jumps up and starts hitting the shades like a bad pet, trying to turn them down.

EDDIE

Fuckin' shades, man.

MIKE (O.S.)

Yo, Eddie!

(to girls)

That's my bud.

Eddie walks over.

MIKE

You met Jane?

JANE

Hey.

EDDIE

Yeah, yeah, I've seen you around.

JANE

Yeah.

MIKE

Jane is, like, totally smart and like...

JANE

Shut up.

MIKE

No, she's cool, she's cool. No, but Eddie's got this funny fuckin' story about what happened to him over the weekend. You gotta hear it.

JANE

What?

EDDIE

(nervous)

I don't know.

MIKE

Oh, come on, dude. You can tell it.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

It's cool. They're not gonna tell the cops or nothin'.

EDDIE

Aw fuck, dude, what are you talkin' about?

MIKE

See, he is so good at playing it off, right? Look at his eyes, man. He has One Way signs, like Do Not-fuckin'-Enter 'cause you'll get in a head on collision with his ignorance!

They laugh.

MIKE

I love it. I love this guy. But if he doesn't want to tell what happened last weekend, ya'll girls gonna have to go with us this weekend. You know what I'm saying?

JANE

Mike, you are too much.

MIKE

All right, girls.

They walk off.

MIKE

That's how you gotta play it, bro, that's how you play it!

LUNCH LINE

Eddie and Mike stand in line. Brenda walks in. She's lost 5 more lbs (105 lbs), sporting a sexy new look. Her mascara and eye shadow make her eyes pop. Her weight loss gives her a regal, but fragile look.

MIKE

Phew, Eddie, bro. Your girl is smokin'.

EDDIE

(nervous)  
She's not my girl, man.

MIKE

Well, if she ain't, she's gonna be somebody's, bro. She's hot.

EDDIE

All right, man. Lay off me.

MIKE

All right, dude. I'm sorry. You can't get excited.

(shaking it off)

Euuh! Who can study under these conditions? I need to be in a monastery. Swear to God. My heart's gonna explode and then you're gonna be pickin' pieces up of Mike, and they're gonna go, "What happened?", and you go, "Hey, he looked at too many girls, man!"

EDDIE

Will you shut up?!

MIKE

All right, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, man.

Brenda walks up. Now Mike's nervous, too.

BRENDA

Hey, ya'll, what are you doin'?

MIKE

Uh, you know, we're talkin'.

BRENDA

Yeah, it's kinda obvious.

MIKE

Oh was it?

He laughs awkwardly. Eddie looks at her, a smile of recognition, then a look away.

BRENDA

Uhh, maybe I should, like, go somewhere else...

MIKE

No, no! Come on, I don't think anyone's gonna yell at you for cutting.

They laugh.

MIKE

I mean, we were, you know, holding your space.

BRENDA  
Oh, well that's sweet.

EDDIE  
Yeah.

MIKE  
Anyway...

Mike thinks fast and starts coughing with feigned distress.

MIKE  
Ow.  
(coughing)  
Shit, ow. God.  
(clears throat)  
Eyah!!

BRENDA  
Are you all right?

MIKE  
Nah, you know what it is? I've got  
asthma, and sometimes that shit acts  
up. I need some water!  
(phlegm cough)  
Gazillya-yahh. Ahh!

BRENDA  
Are you okay?

MIKE  
No, no, you guys stay here. I need  
somebody else. Help me!

He runs off. They laugh, catching his drift that he was a  
third wheel.

BRENDA  
All right.

EDDIE  
Anyway, we were talking about next  
weekend.

BRENDA  
Oh, yeah, what's going on?

EDDIE  
I don't know. Mike had been talking  
about The Total Fuck Ups Tour, but I  
think they passed.

BRENDA  
(bewildered)  
Okay.

EDDIE  
No, no, it's a real tour.

BRENDA  
(humoring him)  
Yeah, I'm sure it is.

EDDIE  
Uh, anyway. Um... But uh, we, we  
could uh, you know, go...

BRENDA  
(saving him)  
Somewhere...

EDDIE  
Yeah. Like, uh, the moon, maybe.

BRENDA  
Yeah.

EDDIE  
Like, we could get space suits though.  
I think we need those.

BRENDA  
Oh, yeah, yeah. And a rocket ship.

EDDIE  
Sure. But I'll bring the oxygen.

BRENDA  
Or the oxygen tanks.

EDDIE  
Oh yeah, you gotta have that.

BRENDA  
Yeah. Who's gonna fuel it, you know  
how high gas is now?

EDDIE  
Oh, I know. How much is that gonna  
cost?

BRENDA  
Billions.

EDDIE  
Oh, shit. I'm gonna have to, like,  
work extra hours.

BRENDA

Yeah.

They laugh.

BRENDA

Yeah, you're funny.

EDDIE

No, I'm not... I'm funny with you.

BRENDA

Oh, well, that's reassuring.

EDDIE

No, no.

(beat)

Anyway...

BRENDA

Wow...

EDDIE

Yeah...

They stand there oddly attracted to one another.

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BACKYARD -- NIGHT

BABY MAN

Love you.

I love you.

Sounds silly to say.

No one Googles "Love," do they?

That's because they don't know it.

They need someone to show it.

Ya can't reap if you don't sow it!

Brenda and Mona are drinking beer from the keg.

MONA

Ok, like how much weight have you  
lost?

BRENDA

The more I lose the more I gain in  
the eyes of many!

MONA

Whoa, ok, Jane. You are doing this  
healthily, right?

BRENDA

Health is my wealth in which I spend  
to get it back again!

MONA

I think you're going manic, or  
lightheaded from skipping meals.

INT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda walks in, reveling in her drunken state. The band's music is heard, to which the teens are chanting:

TEENS (O.S.)

We're Babies Eating Dinosaurs!  
You know you want it, want it more!

BRENDA

(to iPhone)

And there they go, wild people, you know! People are so wild! I feel like an angry cheetah, with long legs and decorative spots. And I just want to climb stony hills and raise my head high, a silhouette of beauty in the sky. I wanna be a cheetah before I die.

She stares enchanted with herself, actually liking her image for once.

HALLWAY

Brenda walks around, giving everyone a wink and a smile.

BRENDA

Beautiful spots. Why look at youuu.  
Spots, spots, spots. I spotted youuu.  
Where's Eddie? Where's my steady  
Eddie?

LIVING ROOM

The Whisper Sisters stop her.

CHRISTINE

Hey.

BRENDA

What's up?

CHRISTINA

Brenda, how you doin'?

BRENDA

I'm all right. How're you girls?

CHRISTINE & CHRISTINA

We're cool.

BRENDA

Nice. You girls, like, uh, enjoying the festivities and all that stuff?

CHRISTINA

Oh no, we don't drink.

BRENDA

Oh, really?

CHRISTINE

No, we're just here, ya know. Just being cool.

BRENDA

Yeah.

CHRISTINA

Hey, are you going out with Eddie Wilgus?

BRENDA

Yeah, why?

CHRISTINE

Oh, it must...

CHRISTINA

Oh, forget it.

BRENDA

What? What're you talking about?

CHRISTINA

Well, he was kissing Valeria Blanco, like, last Saturday night.

CHRISTINE

In the bathroom.

BRENDA

What are you talking about? Valeria wouldn't give him the time of day!

CHRISTINA

Well, look, that's just what we heard.

Brenda smiles forcibly in spite of them and storms off.



## BACKYARD

Brenda runs out, Valeria and Marcus are sitting together. She overhears their conversation, which makes her sicker.

MARCUS  
Your body is an oil rig. And I wanna dig.

VALERIA  
(giggles)  
Shut up!

MARCUS  
You're like an angel with a poker face.

He kisses her neck. She giggles.

## LANDSCAPED POND

Eddie and some STONERS are finishing a joint.

BRENDA  
Eddie...!

EDDIE  
Hey, what's up?

She walks right up to him, reading him for a few moments.

BRENDA  
You know, you're an asshole.

She runs off. Eddie just stands there blankly.

## BABIES EATING DINOSAURS

BABY MAN  
I'm just a man without a girl,  
Without a woman he loves.  
But then you come along  
And remind me what's love.

Love in your heart,  
How you give it to me.  
You're the beauty of pain,  
The same coin, but more currency.

## LIVING ROOM

PAUL BROWN (17), cool and nerdy, with one prosthetic eye, confides in Mike.

PAUL

Mike, you know, I think you got a drug problem.

Paul hands him his prescription bottle of Adderall.

PAUL

And I'm your problem.

They laugh. Mike pays him. Paul pumps his fist in the air.

PAUL

I love drugs!

MIKE

I love drugs!

PAUL

I love drugs!

MIKE

No way! We can't love the same drugs.

PAUL

Why not?

MIKE

You're right, there's more than enough for everyone!

EXT. VICTORIAN HOUSE - STREET - MIKE'S CAR -- NIGHT

Eddie talks to Mike through the driver's side window.

MIKE

Well, you could do whatever the fuck you want, Eddie. But yeah, if she found out, she found out. And, hey, it looks like I've got some stiff competition out there. I didn't know you were so smooth.

EDDIE

Come on, man.

MIKE

It's like chasin' that first high; always want to get higher. It's weird, I used to smoke pot, man... It's like when I first kissed a girl, the emotion was all over the place. When I first got high it was the same thing. It was like I was nowhere but I was somewhere. It was awesome. Now it's all gone, man.

EDDIE  
Hey, man. You ok to drive?

MIKE  
Dude, listen to me. Do I sound fucked up?

EDDIE  
Yeah.

MIKE  
Well, that's 'cause I always am.

They laugh. Mike takes off abruptly.

BABIES EATING DINOSAURS

BABY MAN  
Beauty may have its flaws  
But it's only making Truth  
Look better than ugly laws.

EXT. INTERSECTION -- MOMENTS LATER

Eddie's car pulls up to Mike's, stopped at a light.

MIKE  
Oh, you took your car, huh? Well,  
how'd she get home?

EDDIE  
I don't know, man. But I'll beat  
you home!

Eddie revs his engine.

MIKE  
Oh, man. Don't fuckin' push me!

The light turns green and they're off!

MUSIC VIDEO - INTERCUT BETWEEN CAR RACE & BABIES EATING  
DINOSAURS

-A frenetic song from Babies Eating Dinosaurs, with the partygoers moshing, really getting wild, plays over Mike and Eddie's race, like a music video.

BABY MAN (O.S.)  
I saw a pregnant woman yesterday!  
They installed a convertible top on  
her bel-lay!  
So everyone could see the fetus as  
it grows.

(MORE)

BABY MAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's amazing what they can do now,  
you never know.

I was walkin' just down the street.  
The sidewalk started to move beneath  
my feet.  
Now everything's a conveyor belt.  
We don't even need our legs or the  
fate we're dealt!

In the carnival of time  
You can lose your mind.  
Now we go into the sea,  
A grand piano plays with me.

I fell in love with a girl.  
Who doesn't in this world?  
There's so many beautiful ones!  
They're shining like the sun!  
I can't go on, but I do!  
With your love I'll make it through!

In the carnival of time  
You can lose your mind.  
Now we go into the sea,  
A grand finale awaits me!

-They go upwards of 80-mph, with Mike in the lead.

INT. EDDIE'S CAR - TRAVELING -- CONTINUOUS

Eddie grabs his phone and tries to record this but fumbles  
with the wheel.

EDDIE

Fuck!

INT. MIKE'S CAR - TRAVELING -- CONTINUOUS

Mike's phone rings. He answers.

MIKE

I can't talk right now! I'm drunk  
driving!

EXT. MAJOR FOUR-WAY INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

-The light at the four-way intersection is green, and their  
two cars are rapidly approaching.

-Eddie's catching up. He's on the inside right lane next to  
the shoulder, while Mike's on the outside left passing lane.

-The light turns orange, and even at their speed they're not going to make it, but that doesn't stop them.

-They are neck and neck and they simultaneously look at each other through their windows, making eye contact for a moment.

-Eddie hesitates, then slams the breaks, screeching to a halt.

-Mike motors through the red light.

-A fourteen-wheeler truck comes full speed from the perpendicular lane. In a split second before impact Mike utters:

MIKE

My Mother!

-The truck sideswipes Mike's car, violently flipping over his Alfa Romeo, which tosses him out of the car.

END MUSIC VIDEO

INT. EDDIE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

EDDIE

Mike?! No Mike! No Mike! No Mike!

EXT. MAJOR FOUR-WAY INTERSECTION -- CONTINUOUS

The car flips right on top of Mike, crushing him, and rolls off him, leaving his mangled body on the road.

EDDIE'S CAR

Eddie's in shock, realizing he would've been the one hit had he gone through the light. He jumps out of his car.

EDDIE

Mike!

ROAD

He collapses next to Mike, afraid to touch him.

EDDIE

(crying)

Mike! My man. My only friend forever and ever, I love you. Forever and ever, goodbye my only friend. My only friend. Goodbye, I love you forever and ever, goodbye! Mike, Mike, Michael, Mikey, Mikey, Michael, Mike, you owe me ten dollars.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You can't go, I haven't paid you  
back yet. You haven't paid me back.  
I will never be able to pay you back,  
nor my mother, nobody, for what I  
did to you. I did this to you! I  
hate you!

He gingerly snuggles next to him.

EDDIE

I love you. Don't go. I love you.  
Don't go. Not now. I need you.

(beat)

It's ok.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - BASEMENT -- NIGHT

Brenda is sitting on the couch with Paul, beers scattered.

PAUL

They say, "Don't do drugs," ya know.  
"Don't do drugs. Don't do drugs.  
Kills your brain cells." Do they  
kill your soul? Nobody knows, right?  
The brain cells aren't mine to begin  
with. My soul is me. Ya never heard  
of soul cells, 'cause there can't be  
any. So they go, "It kills your  
brain cells." So what? There's  
enough cells everywhere. Look, people  
are buying them, talking into them,  
they're everywhere. We can kill  
cells, fuck 'em!

BRENDA

You're just so smart! I always  
thought you were, like, this nerd!  
You're, like, you're adorable! You're  
standing there talking about something  
so important. I don't even care  
what you're saying, that's what's so  
amazing. But I used to see you and  
I just thought you were the biggest  
dork!

PAUL

Well, I don't know if that's a  
compliment...

BRENDA

No, no just shut up. Will you stop  
talking? You're so annoyingly  
attractive.

PAUL  
All right, I didn't know, ya know.  
I just...

BRENDA  
Come here.

They kiss.

PAUL  
Oh my God, you're hot.

They start making out intensely.

PAUL  
Holy shit. All right, I drank a  
little too much to be moving this  
fast.

BRENDA  
(laughing)  
Haven't we all?!

INT. HOSPITAL - PSYCH UNIT - ROOM -- NIGHT

Eddie is on the bed in a trance. DR. BERT BROWNING enters.

DR. BERT  
Hi, Eddie. I'm Doctor Browning.  
You can call me Bert.

EDDIE  
Bert?

DR. BERT  
Yes?

EDDIE  
If I was a potato would I grow in a  
closet?

DR. BERT  
Huh?

EDDIE  
Potatoes keep growing, especially in  
dark, cool environments. I too grow  
in the closet of my soul.

Dr. Bert stares at him, trying to gauge where he's at.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Brenda and Paul collapse onto his bed.

PAUL

I'm too drunk to drive you home.

BRENDA

That's ok. I'm too drunk to care.

She cuddles up with him.

PAUL

God, you're skinny.

BRENDA

You really know how to sweet talk a girl, doncha?

They start making out, and then he moves on top of her.

BRENDA

Watch out, not so rough.

PAUL

Hey, I'm just learning the routine myself here.

They laugh and keep making out.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. PINE LAKE SUMMER CAMP - CABIN -- NIGHT

Jeremy, the camp counselor, and Little Brenda are sitting on the porch while he smokes.

JEREMY

You like me, right? Why are you so aloof? What you did I didn't make you. I mean, I was persuasive, aggressive, but it was far from rape. I mean, I don't even know if it should be even in the same conversation...

LITTLE BRENDA

Statutory.

JEREMY

Huh?

LITTLE BRENDA

By law it's statutory rape. If you're under seventeen you can only have a relationship with someone at maximum three years older. You're six, and you shoulda known better.



JEREMY

Look, bitch!

He grabs her arm rashly with force.

JEREMY

You looked up *statutory rape*? I mean, you never said...

LITTLE BRENDA

"No" was all I said to your "yeses," all led to bed.

JEREMY

And me dead if you tell anyone! My life, my future, which I'll have none of, will be over before it even began. I knew my undoing would be a woman, all of whom decrease the life span, even if it's God's master plan, of which I think you are little or more the devil to make me fall in love.

(beat)

I don't know why I'm still holding your arm, perhaps because it's the only part of you that can do so much - all of which excludes me - including your touch.

LITTLE BRENDA

You're hurting me.

JEREMY

Your favorite phrase, from my favorite lay. An eleven year old, Christ! I swear to God, Brenda, I'm as good at avoiding the law as I am breaking it, and I'll do the latter to you if you tell on me, on us, really. It was not just me. You made us and now you break us, while I snap all your vertebrae and rip open your throat and ejaculate in you one last time!

LITTLE BRENDA

That's gross.

JEREMY

You sure have strong opinions of what I have to say when it's negative. I told you I loved you while I came and you acted with as much reaction

(MORE)

JEREMY (CONT'D)  
as a golden retriever who's forgot  
his name. Such was the game we  
played.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PAUL'S CAR -- MORNING

Paul drives Brenda home in blinding light to their hangovers.

BRENDA  
My dad's gonna kill me.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM -- MORNING

Brenda and her dad are having it out. She is wearing multiple  
sweatshirts to conceal her gauntness. Her mom just quietly  
listens.

CHARLES  
I don't know why you are acting so  
immature, Brenda.

BRENDA  
Immature? Grounding me because I  
refused to be driven home by a drunk  
driver?

CHARLES  
You're grounded because you were too  
drunk to call your mother or me.  
You're not grounded for the entire  
year because you actually had enough  
sense to not drive with a drunk  
driver.

BRENDA  
I could be dead. I could be strewn  
across the highway, and I'd be freer  
than I am in this house!

EXT. MIKE'S HOUSE -- DAY

Eddie rings the doorbell. MIKE'S MOM (40s), opens the door.  
She is the picture of grief.

MIKE'S MOM  
Hello, Eddie.

EDDIE  
Miss - Misses Taylor...  
(beat)  
I'm so sorry.

MIKE'S MOM

I know.

EDDIE

It's all my fault.

MIKE'S MOM

No, don't say that.

EDDIE

It's all my fault.

MIKE'S MOM

Crazy kids. You're just crazy.  
We're all crazy. Let this be a lesson  
to you, Eddie. Don't let Mike die  
in vain.

EDDIE

I won't.

MIKE'S MOM

You carry on. You stop foolin'  
around, ya hear me?

EDDIE

Yes, ma'am.

MIKE'S MOM

Stupid kids. Ya don't know what you  
got. You just don't know what you  
got. You have a world of potential  
in you. You just throw it away.  
Just throw it to the wind.

EDDIE

I'm so sorry.

MIKE'S MOM

Michael would want to have -  
(correcting herself)  
Michael would want you to have...  
God, what would Mike want to have?  
Were you his best friend, Eddie? I  
don't even know. He kept so many  
secrets.

EDDIE

No, of course we were best friends.  
He didn't have any secrets.

MIKE'S MOM

He couldn't share with me what drove  
him to do this... to ruin his life,  
to destroy his life, to end his life!

EDDIE

It wasn't on purpose.

MIKE'S MOM

No nothing ever is. 'Cept it happens that way. It might as well be on purpose. Maybe it's God's purpose. It doesn't... Does it matter anymore?

EDDIE

I... I don't know.

MIKE'S MOM

Damnit!

She erupts in tears. He offers a hug. She embraces him.

MIKE'S MOM

So mad.... I'm so mad....

EDDIE

I'm sorry.... I'm so sorry.

After a moment they separate. She composes herself.

MIKE'S MOM

Please Eddie, just take... take these things... I can't. He would want you to have his things.

EDDIE

I can't take his stuff.

MIKE'S MOM

Just... just the nonsense! Nothing makes sense to me. I could care less about his dumb teenage crap he'll never have the chance to grow out of.

EDDIE

I'm so sorry.

MIKE'S MOM

We're all sorry. It doesn't make a bit of difference. Right now at least. My heart is broken. I just really can't do this. Please, you come to his room.

EDDIE

I understand.

INT. CHURCH - FUNERAL -- DAY

Mike's mom is overwhelmed, and throngs of HIGH-SCHOOLERS and TEACHERS attend. The PASTOR eulogizes Mike.

PASTOR

...a child really. A young soul the Lord chose to take. And though our hearts break, though we may raise our fists at the sky and cry and lament the injustice, we must not make Michael's death overshadow his beautiful life. And the beauty he gave us all. And in this we profit. We understand that we are all just here for the present moment, and what a gift life is. And we all live a better life having known his.

MOURNERS walk by the closed casket with Mike's picture atop.

EXT. CHURCH -- LATER

Brenda is now 93 lbs. Her and Mona walk from the service.

MONA

He was beautiful.

BRENDA

Yeah.

MONA

I mean, he wasn't classically handsome, and his nose was kinda long.

BRENDA

Like a droopy dog's, which actually was kinda cute

MONA

Yeah, it's like he had these features that on anyone else would look ugly, but somehow on him it worked.

BRENDA

Maybe he was an alien and he collected all he needed about earth and then he contrived his death to look like an accident, but really he was sent back to the planet Asshole, 'cause that's really who he was, too.

MONA

Shut up.

INT. PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTION - BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Eddie enters the room. EDDIE'S MOM (40s) - much aged from the image of her in the family portrait earlier - sits in a hospital bed passively watching TV.

EDDIE

Hey, Mom.

EDDIE'S MOM

(happy, guarded)

Eddie, how are you?

They hug from her bed.

EDDIE

I'm all right. How are you?

EDDIE'S MOM

I'm ok. It's good to see you.

EDDIE

It's good to see you, Mom. I'm sorry I haven't been here in so long.

EDDIE'S MOM

It's ok.

EDDIE

It's just I get so busy, Dad and the shop, and school.

EDDIE'S MOM

How's school?

EDDIE

Ah, lousy.

EDDIE'S MOM

Why?

EDDIE

Friend of mine he, ah... He died.

EDDIE'S MOM

Oh no.

EDDIE

Stupid. I should've stopped him, Mom. I could've. We were partying and we just drove off...

EDDIE'S MOM

Oh Eddie, you should never do that.

EDDIE

I know. You don't think I know?  
Christ.

EDDIE'S MOM

That's awful.

EDDIE

It's just... and I can't stop thinking  
of it. I dream of it. I... I'm  
going fucking nuts.

EDDIE'S MOM

You're not going nuts.

EDDIE

I saw his mom. She was so sad, Mom.  
I forgot that old people got so sad.  
I thought that when you get old you  
get used to how bad life is. But  
it's like, it never gets old. You  
do. You get old, but life stays  
new.

(beat)

And then I've been thinking these  
awful thoughts, you know, like I  
might hurt myself.

EDDIE'S MOM

Eddie, stop this. Look at me.

(beat)

I know you had an awful childhood.  
I know I was an awful mother.

EDDIE

Mom.

EDDIE'S MOM

Listen to me. You're not crazy.  
And the world: It's crazy. You got  
that? The problem with me is I went  
crazy with the world. But what you  
need to do is take a deep breath...  
And realize that it's not worth losing  
your mind over something that treats  
you so unkind. If your friend's  
death is bothering you then let him  
go. You let me go, haven't you?

EDDIE

What?

EDDIE'S MOM

You don't visit.

EDDIE

I visit when I can, Mom.

EDDIE'S MOM

I'm not making this a guilt trip,  
but realize, son, that we are all  
evil. And somewhere along the line  
I stopped masking my evil, and I  
lost the boundaries. Either I crossed  
over them or they crossed over me.  
And those I loved put me in here.  
Not because they didn't love me, but  
I stopped being lovable.

EDDIE

Mom.

EDDIE'S MOM

Your dead friend is unlovable. That's  
why he causes you this grief. Let  
him go.

He looks at her in disbelief.

INT. DR. BERT BROWNING'S OFFICE -- DAY

Eddie is in a therapy session with Dr. Browning.

EDDIE

I don't know why I come here,  
honestly, it just makes things worse.

DR. BERT

Why do you think so?

EDDIE

'Cause it just makes me think more  
and more about Mike.

DR. BERT

It's the grieving process. It takes  
time.

EDDIE

But I don't want to fucking take the  
time to talk about it.

DR. BERT

Psychotherapy is not for the timid-  
hearted. It involves exploring issues  
and oftentimes emotions.



EDDIE

Well, if you don't mind I'm not a good explorer. I don't give a fuck about canyons where precious jewels are hid, and I don't care just the same of digging inside myself for that shit.

DR. BERT

You have very lucid imagery in the way you explain things, it's very metaphoric. Have you tried writing as a way to vent your pain?

EDDIE

No, I hate writing. It's too hard for me. I'm dyslexic.

DR. BERT

That shouldn't stop you. Dyslexics are very creative people.

EDDIE

Well, thanks. I'm still in the same spot. My fucking friend was killed just 'cause he didn't stop at a light. One fucking light - over how many you stop at in your life - and you're dead?

DR. BERT

That's why they're there, to prevent such outcomes. And you two were also drinking.

EDDIE

Man, he could drink enough liquor and still balance on a gymnasium pole with two toes.

DR. BERT

So you don't think if he was sober it would have made a difference?

EDDIE

Of course it would. So would funny thoughts in your head make a difference on how you operate.

DR. BERT

Sure.

EDDIE

It's testosterone.  
(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Chicks don't race. It's the burden  
we as guys carry.

DR. BERT

What, violence?

EDDIE

Yeah, we're fucking violent. I want  
to kill the next son of a bitch who  
walks in my way.

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - FOYER -- NIGHT

Eddie walks into a party as BILL (17), approaches him.

BILL

Wilgus, what are you doing, man? I  
haven't seen you around in some time.

EDDIE

Yeah, I don't have to go to school.  
Bereavement absence, you know.

BILL

Yeah, I'm sorry to hear about Mike.  
Truly. He was one of the smartest,  
coolest guys I know. Next to you of  
course.

EDDIE

Yeah, well I learned from the best.

BILL

Hey, I got something that'll cheer  
your spirits.

EDDIE

You know, I have to get tested now.  
I go to a psychiatrist.

BILL

No way. So you're not even smokin'  
anymore?

EDDIE

Well, what else is there to do?

BILL

I got some coke, bro. It's in and  
out of your system in a few days.

EDDIE

Coke, that shit is real addictive,  
ain't it?

BILL

Nah.

BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

JOHN (18), is making lines of cocaine on the table.

JOHN

Hey Eddie, sorry about Mike, man.  
He was a mensch.

EDDIE

Thanks, John. I appreciate it.

JOHN

I'm sure he's at this party with us  
tonight. Hey, pull up a seat for  
him and draw him up a line!

BILL

Yeah, all right.

Bill pulls up a chair to the table, and with a razor blade,  
pushes over a line of coke and talks to the empty chair.

BILL

There you go, Mike. Fly with angel's  
wings on a pinch of powder.

John snorts a line.

JOHN

This shit is good.

BILL

Oh, Mike just jumped in my body!  
I'm the medium. I will snort the  
line for him!

He does. John and Bill laugh.

EDDIE

Hey man, don't tarnish his memory  
like that. He was more than, ya  
know, a drug addict.

JOHN

True, true. He was a gigolo, boning  
the babes. Like we are going to do  
tonight!

John and Bill hi-five.

EDDIE

God, is that all you guys care about?

BILL

Yeah.

EDDIE

What about leaving something on this planet when you're done?

JOHN

I'll have kids one day.

EDDIE

Yeah, but what if they end up screwed up, man? Especially the way you all act.

JOHN

Look, Eddie, it's cool. You're still in mourning. Your good buddy died. It's hard to have good times when such bad times are around us. But remember, you are not a proselytizer. You are not going to convert us into sobriety, or answering a greater call. Especially when you sink down to our level.

John lays out a thick line in front of Eddie. Eddie stares at it, contemplating.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- NIGHT

It's midnight. Brenda's jogging exasperated and recording with her iPhone her twisted pep talk.

BRENDA

And of course, the run isn't determined by how determined you are, but how your natural proclivities to avoiding or enduring pain is, coupled with your goals - one of which is to be a perfect specimen!

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Eddie enters his room with a burst of energy.

EDDIE

Wow, this shit is good! I feel so good. God, I feel like I could jack off to eternity!

He grabs his tablet, goes to a porn site and sees a stunning porn star, AMORETTE LOVE (20s). She disrobes and says:

## AMORETTE LOVE

Here I am exposed. Take me now or  
live with eternal regret. In a world  
of uncertainty my love is the best  
bet!

Eddie jumps in his bed and starts feeling himself up with  
the tablet, sensually moving it up and down his body.

EDDIE

Oh baby, yeah. You want to fuck and  
suck and make a baby out of wed-luck?  
And get hit by a truck and crucified  
by its fender? And fend off  
offenders. Pedophiles who just smile  
all the while like rape is in style?

He jumps out of bed and gyrates his pelvis in a karate move.

EDDIE

Hiya!

He swivels his pelvis again awkwardly and comically.

EDDIE

Karate-chop-cock! Hiya! Karate-  
chop-cock!

(beat)

No wonder you can use your dick as  
an instrument of violence.

(stops)

That's not right. This is illegal  
what I'm doing. Oh my God, where do  
I get more of this stuff?!

EXT. PARKING LOT -- NIGHT

Paul gets out of his car. Eddie gets out of his.

PAUL

Hey, man.

EDDIE

Hey.

They shake hands with Eddie slipping Paul a wad of cash.

EDDIE

Four-hundred-and-fifty?

PAUL

Yeah, that's thirty at thirty  
milligrams. Fifteen a pop. Shit's  
expensive, you know.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

But don't go through it too fast.  
You'll kill yourself.

EDDIE

I don't care, it's fun.

PAUL

Yeah, that's what fun will do, make  
you not care. Seriously Eddie, just  
use it for recreation, man. Or I  
won't give you no more. I'm not  
like that, all right?

EDDIE

Yeah, man.

PAUL

How you doing?

EDDIE

I feel like shit.

PAUL

That's withdrawals.

EDDIE

I just feel like there's so much  
emotion. Even half of it would be  
too much.

PAUL

I know, man. He was my friend, too.

EDDIE

We were like as close as someone  
could get without being gay, you  
know.

PAUL

I know.

EDDIE

And then I raced his car. I did  
that, Paul. It's on me. His life,  
it's all on me.

PAUL

It's nobody's fault, man. Shit  
happens to the best of them, brother.  
You know that. You're just beating  
yourself up 'cause there's no one  
left to beat up.

EDDIE

Yeah?

PAUL

Yeah, kid. Fucking pains me to see you like this.

Paul hands Eddie his bottle of Adderall.

PAUL

Fucking Mike was gonna be somebody. He wants you to love yourself, Eddie. I know that.

EDDIE

Do you?

INT. BRENDA'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

The water is running, the toilet is flushing, she's fighting with the mirror.

BRENDA

I feel fat and ugly! The only boy who likes me has one eye! Of course, the lesser to see me with. If he had both eyes he'd have depth perception. He'd see where I never end, the body never ends! Disgusts me! I hate myself!

INT. DR. BERT BROWNING'S OFFICE -- DAY

Eddie is high on Adderall and coke, talking a mile a minute. Dr. Bert is trying to follow him, but is taken aback.

EDDIE

Abstinence and me is not a sobriety I take much stock in. I love drugs. The way it makes me feel King. And everyone is just a possession for me to toy with. Why even love is servant to my whim!

DR. BERT

I'm having trouble following your train of thought.

EDDIE

A train that's off track! Or a train torn from a bride's dress the bridesmaid stepped on in contempt and disdain for the bride to be, which she will never be.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Or is it a terrain which I am pioneer,  
exploiting the indigenous tribes  
with religion and Western thought?  
The tandem which dominates like a  
pimp over his whores.

DR. BERT

I'm very concerned by your attitude,  
and your current state.

EDDIE

What's wrong with my state? I speak  
like a poet, don't I? Like Burroughs  
who dwelled in the sewers of human  
condition, conditioned by morphine  
and a dystopia which lifted the  
manhole cover for cars to fall into  
and deflate by vantage point of an  
artist embodying the arts. The  
Humanities and Sciences, throw them  
in too, to his repertoire, from which  
he acts arsonist and bomb squad. He  
is a terrorist of thought, planting  
seeds like mines that blow up and  
don't dally in the conventional  
education's proposition of reaping  
in such designated seasons. No, his  
seed explodes and grows, not destroys,  
mind you.

He stops for a moment, astonished and exhausted.

EDDIE

Oh shit, I should have written all  
this! I'm gonna be published before  
I even graduate high school!

DR. BERT

You're going to hyperventilate. Let  
me get you some water.

EDDIE

I'm cold. Damn cold.

Dr. Bert hurries out. After a moment Eddie gets paranoid.  
He cracks open the door and sees Dr. Bert on his phone.  
Eddie sneaks out of his office.

INT. WILGUS CAFE -- EVENING

Eddie is standing at the cash register. He looks out at the  
CUSTOMERS sitting in the cafe with utter disdain and contempt.



EDDIE

(to himself)

Customers. Custom-monsters. They eat pastries and danishes, crumb rolls and bran muffins. They sip their lattes, blind to all the pain that exists. And these drugs are a joke. How my tolerance builds up against them; like my fucking immune system is a fortified wall against all types of pleasure. Like pleasure is not for me!

A customer, MR. WELKER (60s), approaches.

MR. WELKER

Hello.

EDDIE

Hi, welcome to Wilgus Cafe. What can we do ya for?

MR. WELKER

Well, I'd like a caramel latte and a cinnamon roll, please.

EDDIE

At your pleasure.

MR. WELKER

You know, you look like one of my students.

EDDIE

I was once. You're Mr. Welker.

MR. WELKER

And I can't recall the name, but I remember the face.

EDDIE

That's all right, you have lots of students. They're supposed to remember you. I mean, you're the role model that is supposed to leave a lasting impression.

MR. WELKER

True.

EDDIE

If a student forgets a teacher it's the teacher's fault.

MR. WELKER

And likewise, if the teacher forgets the student, I guess. It just comes with having thirty odd kids, five different periods of them.

EDDIE

It's just a shame students couldn't teach teachers the same memorable lessons through which their spirit lives.

MR. WELKER

Oh, you all do. I've seen more human nature in my classes than anywhere else in my life.

EDDIE

Let me ask you a question that's out of your field. You're the chemistry teacher, right?

MR. WELKER

Right.

EDDIE

Periodic table hanging on the wall like the Ten Commandments of Science?

MR. WELKER

Sure.

EDDIE

Letters to memorize of chemical elements?

MR. WELKER

Sure.

EDDIE

What is the chemical combination of cocaine?

MR. WELKER

I don't know.

EDDIE

Of course you don't. It's not part of your drug campaign! Nobody knows the drug composition! That's a load of shit! You know, I have lymph nodes swollen to bowling balls, and no one's noticed. Just a cold? A touch of the flu?

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It's from staying up for numerous days! I need help, God damnit!

MR. WELKER

I'm sorry. You should tell your parents.

EDDIE

I want them to see what their upbringing and dreams have done to me. I want them to know how much in spite I hold them. I want to die and incur upon them the biggest debt mankind has ever regretted to get and never reimburse: the hurt of losing your best friend and a lover. And the irony is, that's just what my dad lost with my mother. And so I just get to have...! Fuck it! I'm done talking to you. Goodbye.

Eddie storms out of the store, leaving the register unattended and Mr. Welker in bewilderment.

EXT. EDDIE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Eddie's still rambling on, talking to himself and walking at a heightened pace, as he makes his way to his front door.

EDDIE

When will I stop growing into an adult? In a relationship with drugs that leave you a poison to the antidote?

INT. EDDIE'S FOYER -- CONTINUOUS

He enters sweating profusely, throwing down his jacket and yanking off his sweater and undershirt. He shoves his hand down his pants pocket and yanks out a bag of coke which spills onto the floor.

EDDIE

Fuck!

He gathers it up hastily, then starts pouring it festively over his head. Cocaine starts to fall from the ceiling like snow in the house.

EDDIE

(astonished)

I have just the nose for this job.

He gets down on his hands and knees, snorting the coke/snow on the ground like a dog. His nose starts to burn and he rolls onto his back in euphoria. He admires the snowfall.

EDDIE

Merry Christmas! And God bless us everyone!

He here's JINGLING from outside. He looks out the window and sees SANTA AND HIS REINDEER in the sky approaching.

EXT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - ROOFTOP -- CONTINUOUS

Eddie is standing on the roof exasperated, looking around majestically and desperately.

EDDIE

Hey Santa!

He jumps up and down waving, trying to get Santa's attention. He stumbles and regains his balance, laughing, disoriented. As Santa gets closer, Santa changes into SATAN who's whipping the reindeer and prodding them with his pitchfork.

The reindeer transmute into deviant SATYRS, half men-half goats, who CACKLE and sneer as they pull the devil's sleigh in submission. Beautiful NYMPHS appear next to Satan in his sleigh, salaciously caressing him, bathing him in affection.

The nymphs start to use BDSM toys on the satyrs: a studded velvet paddle, a feather tickler, spanking their goat behinds, titillating them, and making them SHRIEK in freakish delight, which fills Eddie's core with horror and pain.

One nymph takes up a huge coiled bull whip that looks comical compared to her lithe, ethereal physique. It looks like it could fell an elephant. She unleashes it like a venomous snake, striking the head satyr, who SCREAMS in ecstasy. The satyr turns its head to Eddie and smiles. It is Mike's face. Eddie collapses in horror.

EDDIE

No! Mike! Mike is going to Hell!  
Hell! Hell! No! No!

He stumbles around the roof in shock.

INT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - GREG'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Greg is awakened by the noise on the roof above him.

GREG

What the hell?

ROOFTOP

EDDIE

Mike!

FRONT LAWN

Greg runs out onto the front lawn, seeing Eddie.

GREG

Eddie!

INTERCUT BETWEEN EDDIE AND GREG

EDDIE

Dad, the sky, Dad, is crying! God is so sad, Dad. God sent the sky to my heart. I can't stop from caring. It's scaring me!

GREG

Eddie, just don't... Look, you come down, ok? Just come down. Just... Don't jump!

Eddie reacts as if the notion just struck him. He runs to the edge of the roof, as Greg runs, getting below the roof, ready to catch him, as Eddie stands precariously on the edge.

GREG

No!

They pause, staring at each other.

GREG

No, Eddie, no! Please, son. Just don't...  
(avoiding "jump")  
Just go back the way you came!

EDDIE

My mother!

Eddie falls head first, as if giving into the weight of his mind. Greg takes a stance, readying himself beneath Eddie's fall, with his arms out. SLAM! A sharp CRACK is heard, the breaking of bone. A devastating blow. Greg buckles to the ground. Not a cry. He is inert. Eddie lies a few feet from his father, having ricocheted off him.

Eddie gets up unscathed. Greg has broken his fall. He looks at his father with fear, as he lies there lifeless. He tries to approach him, but then sees his body start to undulate like a serpent.

Eddie stumbles back, frightened. He knows he's out of his mind, but can't figure it out. He looks for Mike, the satyr, in the sky, but now sees Mike's face on his father's, with his grotesque goat horns emerging from his head. Mike is haunting him. Eddie runs off in horror.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

She reveals her inner thighs. There are scars. She cuts with a razor blade and blood dribbles down, which entrances her. She assumes her kid-like 11-year-old voice.

BRENDA

The Crazy Lady came back. She had one big tooth, it covered her whole mouth, and her dress was a storm in the sky.

She slashes her other thigh and winces.

BRENDA

There were lightning bolts going across her body and raindrops falling all over her shoulders and chest and stomach and hips and one of the raindrops had a bomb inside it!

She cuts below a scar, methodically.

BRENDA

And her legs were so long - like long where they were meant to be long and short where they were meant to be short - and the raindrop with the bomb exploded when it hit her lap and she blew into bits. But instead of body parts it was baby body parts from all the kids she's never gonna have!

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Darkness, with grotesque shadows, Eddie runs. He's frightened by his own energy. He slows down, catching his breath. He's shirtless and bathed in sweat.

He sees a car idling. The headlights are penetrating the misty shroud of night. The interior light is on, revealing JESSICA, a beautiful woman (30s), at the wheel. It's as if she's sitting at a warm hearth. She waves him over. He questions it, then approaches slowly. She rolls down the driver's side window.

EDDIE

Are you...? You were made by some kind of amazing God!

JESSICA

(laughs nervously)  
So were you. Come in, stranger.  
What's your name?

EDDIE

(laughs nervously)  
Eddie.

JESSICA

Eddie, huh?

EDDIE

Yeah, Eddie. Just crazy Eddie.

JESSICA

Come on in, Crazy Eddie. My name's Jessica.

EDDIE

Hey.

JESSICA

Hey.

He motions toward the door handle.

JESSICA

Wait. Just stand there a moment.  
You look so beautiful in this light.

EDDIE

Yeah?

JESSICA

Yeah.

EDDIE

Come stand with me.

JESSICA

Ok.

She gets out wearing a dress that emphasizes her hourglass figure. Eddie is dumfounded. A LOVE SONG is heard from her car stereo. He extends his hand out to her to dance, a true gentleman. She takes it and they dance slowly. He feels her close to his chest. She rests her head on his shoulder.

JESSICA

You, um... You're so cute.

EDDIE  
You're beautiful.

JESSICA  
You're silly.

They kiss passionately, nearly engulfing each others' faces.

JESSICA  
How old are you?

EDDIE  
I'm almost eighteen.

JESSICA  
You're not even legal.

EDDIE  
Why, how old are you?

JESSICA  
(laughs)  
I could be your mother.

EDDIE  
No.  
(laughs)  
My mother is much older, and uglier.

JESSICA  
How could you say that about your  
mother?

EDDIE  
What do you mean? You're young and  
beautiful. How could you say that  
about you?

She suddenly transmutes to his mother.

EDDIE'S MOM / JESSICA  
Eddie, I love you.

EDDIE  
What...? What are you doing? You're  
not my mother.

EDDIE'S MOM / JESSICA  
How could you say that?

EDDIE  
Wha...? What are you talking about?  
You disowned me!

She turns back to Jessica but he still sees his mom.



JESSICA

What are you talking about? I didn't say I was your mother.

EDDIE

That's right. You never acted like it either! Why don't you just kill yourself? You've wanted to do it since the day I was born. Probably because I was born. You couldn't stand to look at me. I can't stand to look at you!

JESSICA

You're crazy!

EDDIE

No, no, you're the one who's crazy! You're the one who's gonna die alone! Not me! I got people who love me. I just... I just... I don't love me. That's why I do all these drugs. That's why we all do drugs. Nobody loves each other, ma! I learned from the best. Thanks for handing that wonderful wisdom down to me, ma. You're the best!

JESSICA

I was just trying to have a good time.

She gets back in the car to get away from him.

EDDIE

Yeah, you go away then. You were trying to have a good time with my dad, and you got... I get it. I see how it works. We almost had a good time, too. And I see how much it hurts to get pregnant with good times, and then have the burden of carrying them to term. And the life that it leads to. Go, run! Drive away, you bitch!

JESSICA

How dare you? You're a psychopath!

EDDIE

That's right, I'm on the path to psychos! And you almost went down it with me. What a ride! Sorry ya missed it. See ya. Fuckin' whore.

JESSICA

You're a fuckin' asshole and a freak!

EDDIE

Don't you know it. Where the fuck  
am I to go now? My own mother. My  
own mother. My own mother. Oh...  
I'm gonna throw up...

He starts gagging, dry heaving, on his knees, crying.

EDDIE

God help me.

JESSICA

Hey, are you ok?

EDDIE

No. I think I'm dying... I think  
I'm dying...

JESSICA

I'm gonna call 911.

EDDIE

No, no, let me die.

JESSICA

No, I don't want anybody else to  
come across you. You're fuckin'  
crazy.

(she calls)

Hello? Yeah, we got some kind of  
nut over here. No, I'm all right,  
but I don't think anybody else is  
around him. Please, get somebody  
out here right away! I'm not  
staying...

Eddie dry heaves. She drives off. He throws up blood,  
shaking. He's soaked in sweat. He collapses, unconscious.

INT. PAUL'S CAR -- NIGHT

Brenda and Paul are sitting in his car. Brenda, at 78 lbs  
looks shockingly wan and fragile. Her hair is like straw,  
her limbs like match sticks, and she has grown a soft, downy  
layer of lanugo over her body and face.

PAUL

You need to get healthy. You look  
like shit.

BRENDA

Thanks.

PAUL

You know what I mean. You don't need to fish for any compliment or make anybody feel guilty for not giving it. You're beautiful, but you're treating your body like a fuckin' rag doll. And that's what you're starting to look like.

BRENDA

It's so easy for you. It's just easier for guys.

PAUL

It's not easier, it's different. We don't obsess over our looks maybe. Maybe that's a problem with society, but you better figure yourself out no matter what or you're gonna die like this, Brenda. Fuck what magazines tell you to look like. What do you feel like?

BRENDA

It's tied into with what I look like, that's the problem.

PAUL

Well, you know the problem so why don't you solve it?

BRENDA

It's like... solving the measurements of a circle. Somebody finally figured it out and it's an infinite number. How are we supposed to work with a number that never ends?

PAUL

Ya stop questioning it and you just start working with it. Nothing ever ends, except maybe our lives, which we don't even know for sure what happens after - so what the fuck? Right now, this moment never ends, 'cause we're always in it. The past is just a construction of what our minds have to make to deal with it. So make a construction of what you need to deal with your body.

She looks at her phone as it chimes with a text.

BRENDA

I gotta go.

She motions to the glove compartment. He knows what for.

PAUL  
You're ridiculous.

BRENDA  
I'm right at the finish line. I  
just need a good surge to get ahead.

PAUL  
Ahead of what?

BRENDA  
Myself of course.

He gets his bottle of Adderall, and pours a couple in his hand, but Brenda makes a grimace. He gives her the whole bottle.

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

Brenda and her parents are in a deep discussion over her dramatic weight loss. She chuckles to herself.

CHARLES  
This isn't funny.

BRENDA  
I'm not laughing. I'm laughing at  
myself, the only person who has a  
sense of humor anymore.

CHARLES  
You're so much better than this.

LINDA  
Charles.

CHARLES  
Speak! You want to speak? Just  
censor, Dad. He doesn't know what  
to say.

LINDA  
Brenda, what are you trying to do?

BRENDA  
I'm trying to succeed, and I haven't  
said this before, but I've tried  
this Adderall, and it... Oh, there's  
no talking to you.

CHARLES  
You're doing drugs? Well, at least  
you're consuming something.

LINDA

Charles.

CHARLES

You look like a goddamn scarecrow.

BRENDA

Well, then how come I'm not scaring you away?

CHARLES

You watch it, little lady.

BRENDA

I'm hardly little, and I'm not acting like a lady, so I'm just a castoff. Say it. You're not proud of me. 'Cause your pride is all I aim to have. You're fucking approval, which to this executive, who thinks he knows how to tell people what to do...

LINDA

Brenda.

BRENDA

...to run a company, but not his family like one!

CHARLES

I give up. I'm calling Dr. Gouldman first thing, and we're having you admitted.

LINDA

Goddamnit Charles, will you let me talk?!

CHARLES

Just throw your two cents in anytime, Linda. You wanna talk and I want action. That's the difference between men and women.

BRENDA

You sexist bastard.

CHARLES

What?

BRENDA

You make me sick the way you think you can talk to Mom.

CHARLES

Your mother has nothing bad to say about me that I haven't addressed with her and my own fucking psychiatrist a million times! So don't think you're the only one who needs help. You're breaking our hearts, and I won't let you anymore.

BRENDA

You can only break somebody's heart if you love them. And I don't love you anymore.

CHARLES

An eye for an eye makes the world go blind.

BRENDA

Well, then get me my seeing-eye dog. More affectionate and loyal than you two!

INT. BRENDA'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda stares at the mirror in disgust. She pulls out her iPhone recording. She pulls up her blouse revealing her ribs, which can easily be counted, as they jut out. She's slightly satisfied with this. Her thighs have a substantial gap between them, but the reflection in the mirror changes to an obese version of herself.

She puts the phone down and opens the bottle of Adderall and pours out a few in her hand. She stares at them. She pours more Adderall into her hand. She speaks to the mirror.

BRENDA

Daddy's little girl is perfect.

(beat)

Aside from an indiscretion with a camp counselor - many it would turn out to be.

Jeremy appears in the mirror.

JEREMY

Remember what your Dad says.

BRENDA

(methodically)

"You have your mother's hair, but your dad's brain under it, don't mess that up too."

JEREMY

Your ditzzy mom, whose respect is about the size of my flaccid dick - which you had no trouble make rise. But you would never say that you liked it, even though you left an open invitation every night, suggesting to the residence director what a light sleeper you were and couldn't have any roommates.

BRENDA

You told me to do that! You're getting things mixed up.

She pours more into her hand.

BRENDA

These orange pills will make you small.

She swallows them.

BRENDA

And more of them will make you smaller.

She swallows more, and gulps down water from the faucet. Then takes out another bottle.

BRENDA

And Brenda has snuck out Daddy's Oxycodone for the perfect blend of speed and sedation. It's a new craze sweeping the nation.

She opens the Oxycodone, looks, shrugs, then downs all of it. She downs all the Adderall too.

BRENDA

You did teach me some things. How the conscience fucks you over into making decisions that it should override, and deep in the recesses of your being you know you shouldn't do, but on the surface you have no qualms with.

JEREMY

You made a great enterprise of that. And now you continue the venture. Will you get any angel investors? Or will you turn into an angel after you divest yourself of this life?

BRENDA

Only one way to find out.

JEREMY

Oh, there's many ways to die. And in my short life span... 'cause I killed myself. I hope you're happy. Od'd on heroin, trying to get back the ecstasy we made together!

BRENDA

Good, 'cause it killed me too!

She slams her fist against his image in the mirror, breaking it.

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY -- LATER

Brenda knocks at her brother's door, disoriented and sedated. She holds her iPhone recording.

BRENDA

Hey, Charlie.

(whistles)

It's the big sister. The one that just got balled out upstairs. I just wanted to say, you're a lovely brother, you really are. I want to thank you for being my brother for a long time, you were my brother. And no one coulda done it any better. There were times that I wanted to kill you, but looks like I've just done it to myself.

Charlie opens the door abruptly.

CHARLIE

What are you talkin' about?

BRENDA

(surprised)

Oh my God, you look so different than the door I've just been talking to!

CHARLIE

What's wrong with you?

BRENDA

I just did a lot of pills and stuff, so if the coroner can't figure it out, then everything that the empty bottles in the bathroom would suggest.



CHARLES

Oh my God, Brenda, are you out of your mind?

BRENDA

Hopefully out of my body real soon. If you know what I mean.

She starts for her room.

BRENDA

I love you so. I love you so!

Charlie walks to the foyer.

CHARLIE

Mom! Dad! Brenda's acting crazier than usual!

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She walks in woozily.

BRENDA

I... What... Are we...? What, I'm fine. I'm just, ya know, I'm so touched by the world. Like the world won't stop touching me, ya know. It's like the world's molesting me, and all you people are silent! You're blind, man! You, you didn't even see the world when it touched me, what it did to me!

She collapses on the floor.

BRENDA

(mumbles)

I'll keep drivin'. Play your music. You know, I'm fine.

INT. BRENDA'S BATHROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Charles runs into the bathroom. He grabs the empty bottles in the sink, reads their labels, and runs out.

INT. BRENDA'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Charles runs in. Brenda is prostrate, listless.

CHARLES

On no! No! Brenda baby, you stupid, stupid...!

He checks her breathing and pulse. Her breathing is shallow and erratic, her pulse slow. Linda runs in.

LINDA  
Brenda! Brenda!

She shakes her but she's limp, unresponsive. She slaps her quickly and repeatedly, but nothing.

CHARLES  
God, you scare us, you scare us so much! Call the - call 911!

Linda runs out. Charles touches Brenda's arm fleetingly. After a moment Linda runs in holding the phone to her ear.

LINDA  
Baby, it's ok. Mama's here, she's gonna make everything ok.

Charles stands in the doorway helpless.

CHARLES  
God! God!

LINDA  
(to phone)  
Yes, my daughter is unconscious, she's OD'd. She's taken... What has she taken?!

CHARLES  
Adderall and Oxycodone. I don't know how many. Enough to matter! You don't know how much we love you. And you never will. You can't. You can't.

Charlie is stunned at seeing his dad cry.

EXT. MAJOR ROAD -- NIGHT

An ambulance is speeding down the road with SIRENS blaring.

INT. AMBULANCE - TRAVELING -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda is unconscious on the gurney. A PARAMEDIC is performing CPR on her.

EXT. MAJOR ROAD -- CONTINUOUS

A second ambulance turns onto the road with SIRENS blaring, and falls in line behind the first ambulance.

INT. SECOND AMBULANCE - TRAVELING -- CONTINUOUS

Eddie is unconscious on the gurney. PARAMEDIC 2 is performing CPR on him.

EXT. HOSPITAL - ER -- NIGHT

The two ambulances stop and paramedics from both get out and run around and open their back doors. One set of paramedics grabs Brenda's gurney and carries her in (with Linda following behind), and the other set grabs Eddie's gurney and carries him in.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER - CURTAINED PARTITION 1 -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda's wheeled in and met by a DOCTOR, NURSES and an INTERN.

PARAMEDIC

Patient is seventeen, female.  
Overdose on Adderall and Oxycodone.  
On arrival comatose. Gave her two  
of Narcan. Resps shallow at 10,  
tremulous. Mother says she's  
anorexic.

The Doctor checks Brenda with his stethoscope.

DOCTOR

What's her name?

LINDA

Brenda.

DOCTOR

Brenda, can you hear me?

LINDA

Brenda, dear! Brenda?

DOCTOR

Brenda!

She's unresponsive. Little Brenda, ghostlike stands at the foot of her gurney staring at her older self among the melee. (No one can see her.)

DOCTOR

Get a CBC, Chem-19, CMP, Electrolyte  
panel. Let's get a chest X-ray!

The Nurse attaches a heart rate monitor to her. The Doctor shines a penlight in her eyes.

DOCTOR

Pinpoint pupils, not good. Set up  
an ET for intubation!

NURSE

Blood pressure 80/50.

INTERN

Heart rate 40.

DOCTOR

She's bradycardic.

JANE AUSTEN (40s), appears in elaborate Victorian dress,  
fanning herself gingerly. (No one sees her but Little  
Brenda).

LITTLE BRENDA

Who the hell are you?

JANE AUSTEN

Huh! You dare talk to your elders  
that way, especially one of such  
renown, most notably in the Victorian  
era: I'm Jane Austen!

LITTLE BRENDA

I'm more into *Where the Red Fern  
Grows*, about two dogs and a boy.  
That's all of the depth of  
relationships I can comprehend at my  
young age. Boys and their pets.  
And unfortunately I was treated like  
a pet by a boy, actually, a man who  
should have known better.

JANE AUSTEN

Men make us their pets because they're  
afraid we won't be trained to love  
them on command, which is just one  
level below fetching. But if man  
could teach a human like a dog to  
fetch love, that would certainly be  
one trick we all would gladly perform,  
even if it takes being treated like  
a dog to do it.

LITTLE BRENDA

Well, I was treated like one without  
the trick of love. I think my father  
is one person who needs that taught,  
and I guess I saw him in my  
pedophiler.

JANE AUSTEN

It's the Electra complex all over again. You rival your mother's love for your father's. And if sex is the food from which he feeds, then from you - whom love is of the utmost need - a necessity from which the making of is what's less of love, and more of what "fucking" breeds.

The Doctor fits a laryngoscope in Brenda's mouth and inserts an ET (endotracheal tube) down her throat. The RESIDENT attaches a BMV to her ET and ventilates. The heart monitor displays a chaotic rhythm and BEEPS LOUDLY.

INTERN

She's in V-fib!

LINDA

What's that mean?!

DOCTOR

Ventricular arrhythmias can be caused by opioids, and combining them with amphetamines is not a good idea.

LITTLE BRENDA

He fucked me like I was afraid love would feel. And so became accustomed to believing his love was real.

INTERN

This could be hypokalemia due to the anorexia!

DOCTOR

We're gonna have to shock her heart into a normal rhythm.

FLATLINE. A feverish rush ensues.

DOCTOR

Damn! Code Blue! Let's shock her!

JANE AUSTEN

I never wrote a death scene, so in your own I shall write it - that you were a child to whom little was lost, except your childhood, which is the adult's cost. Fare thee well, cruel, if not curious world. You served your turn, and now so must the page turn.

The Nurse charges the defibrillator.

DOCTOR

Two hundred!

The Doctor grabs the paddles and puts them to her chest.

DOCTOR

Clear!

He shocks her. Brenda's torso jolts. Still FLATLINE.

LITTLE BRENDA

Bitch never heard a word she didn't like, except the ones that apply to our common plight, of which my teenage self may never survive!

DOCTOR

One milligram of Eppy!

LITTLE BRENDA

I'm dead! And it's all 'cause I couldn't say what I've been wanting and meaning for years. Someone will finally listen. Take my life for the love it was given.

DOCTOR

Three hundred! Clear!

A FLATLINE is heard. He shocks her. Linda screams. Still FLATLINE.

DOCTOR

Another Eppy. Three-sixty! Come on, kid, you've got more days in you. Clear!

He shocks her again.

INT. HOSPITAL - ER - CURTAINED PARTITION 2 -- CONTINUOUS

Eddie is having a grand mal seizure as an ORDERLY holds him securely, and the DOCTOR 2, NURSE 2, NURSE 3 and INTERN 2 work on him.

NURSE 2

Blood pressure is dropping: 80/40!

Amorette Love (the porn star) struts in. (No one can see her.)

AMORETTE LOVE

Oh, I know how to get your blood pressure up.

She dims the lights.

AMORETTE LOVE

Let's lay the lights down low.  
Romance, and dare I say, love, are  
on the menu tonight. A full course  
that will satisfy and satiate the  
indomitable and voracious hunger  
that a man like you has, and a woman  
like me - albeit an airheaded porn  
star - can satisfy. I'll make you  
cum so hard you won't know if you're  
*cumming* or going.

She laughs wickedly as she approaches him.

AMORETTE LOVE

(singsongy)

Pleasure has been the culprit of  
many things, escaping life is one of  
its favorite things.

NURSE 3

Core temp's at 85.

INTERN 2

Heart rate 140 with weak pulse.

She hops atop his seizing body while the staff are attending.

DOCTOR 2

Load up on Dilantin, and Valium.

INTERN 2

Cyanosis of the fingers and lips.

DOCTOR 2

It's hypovolemic shock. Give him  
Norepinephrine. Continue Lorazepam.

Amorette is riding Eddie.

AMORETTE LOVE

Woo, shake it, baby shake it! Ya  
know, I once fucked a president. He  
paid me handsomely, and he was ugly.  
His hair was a joke, like a Sahara  
sand dune. Hair asked to do what  
his brain couldn't, that is, cover  
his age with new growth. All he  
grew was old.

DOCTOR 2

The internal bleeding is the cause of his abdominal swelling. How long has he been seizing?

NURSE 2

Ten minutes.

DOCTOR 2

Status epilepticus. He could be headed for a fugue state, or a coma.

She's riding him hard. She huffs, feigning passion.

AMORETTE LOVE

We try to sate that incredible, ravenous desire to feel... loved. And orgasms are God's second best. Or is it the Devil's?

She stops suddenly and grabs his groin.

AMORETTE LOVE

Rigor mortis couldn't get him hard!

She hops off him.

AMORETTE LOVE

I don't fuck the dead, but I do fuck the lifeless souls to whom an erection is the only life that legitimizes their lack of one.

ER - CURTAINED PARTITION 1 -- CONTINUOUS

The Doctor shocks Brenda with the paddles. A beep is heard.

NURSE

Hey, we've got a beat.

LINDA

(in tears)

Oh, thank God! Thank God!

DOCTOR

Very slow heart rate, but it's a heart rate. Jill, how long do you make it that she was down for?

NURSE

About two minutes from the time you called the Code Blue.

INTERN

Blood pressure 90/60.



DOCTOR

Ok, we have a good chance here, she hasn't been down very long. Get a banana bag.

He tests her eye reflexes with his penlight to no avail.

DOCTOR

Give her Narcan every two minutes. Let's get an MRI.

JANE AUSTEN

May you find the key to life, rather than the lock wherein you dwell.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM -- LATER

Linda walks out with the Doctor. Charles stands anxiously.

DOCTOR

Mr. Miller?

CHARLES

What's going on?

LINDA

Let the doctor talk.

DOCTOR

She's stable.

CHARLES

So why the glum look?

LINDA

She's not responsive.

DOCTOR

She's in a coma.

CHARLES

Christ. Can't you just pump her stomach and be done with it?

DOCTOR

She experienced cardiac arrest.

CHARLES

Cardiac arrest? She's seventeen!

DOCTOR

Her eating disorder, we see it more often than we'd like to. The body eats itself and the heart is a muscle.

CHARLES

She's eating our hearts out! That crazy... crazy... Why didn't we act sooner?

LINDA

I don't know.

DOCTOR

We're doing everything we can. She's stable. She's got a heartbeat, it's still in bradycardia, but we've got IVs administering nutrients. She's gonna get all the care she needs.

CHARLES

Sounds like she's a goddamn senior citizen.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry.

LINDA

Thank you, doctor.

The Doctor leaves.

CHARLES

Well, what now?!

LINDA

Don't yell at me.

CHARLES

I'm not yelling at you, honey. I'm yelling at the situation.

LINDA

Well, the situation isn't a person, I am. So you can yell at it, but when you address me...

CHARLES

Now who's acting condescending?

Beat.

LINDA

We're all on edge.

CHARLES

We didn't raise her... to do this!

LINDA

She's her own person.

CHARLES

She's willful and she's gonna be writing her will soon enough.

LINDA

Will you stop with the wise cracks?

CHARLES

It's how I deal with tragedy, Linda. I try to make light of it while it's asphyxiating the life out of me!

LINDA

She's going to the ICU.

CHARLES

Christ.

LINDA

I can obviously call in tomorrow and stay with her through the night. You can take the next one.

CHARLES

What, are we gonna hold a candlelight vigil for her till she decides...?

LINDA

Let's just take it one day at a time.

CHARLES

Christ.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - ROOM 1 -- DAY

Eddie is comatose. There is an intubation tube ventilating, and IVs. The heart monitor BEEPS. Greg walks in on crutches, his leg in a cast. After a moment he addresses Eddie.

GREG

The house is so quiet. There's no fighting to make use of the fine acoustics, so we could hear our voices heightened in their acrimony. I don't know what to do. I'm all cried out. It's been two weeks and you sleep like a cherub, but I think my real child was taken by a changeling, and the real Eddie is out in the world changing things for the better, not worse, which is what we've got here.

(MORE)

GREG (CONT'D)

(beat)

I mean, you didn't lose a limb, so that's a positive. But you could lose your life: big negative, negative a hundred billion fold. I know mathematics isn't your strong suit, 'cause it's taught in that big brick building that's frequented by adolescents to learn and increase their studious capabilities and better their lives and others, of which math you abhor, 'cause you can't understand it. But you love women and you can't understand them. That's 'cause you're led by the wrong head. Instead of calculating how many zeros are in a hundred billion...

(beat)

Which a calculator can show. But the worth of our hearts no equation, nor calculation, machine or man, can ever know. So is my love for you. Hang in there, son.

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - ROOM 2 -- DAY

Brenda - in a coma, with an intubation tube ventilating, and IVs - actually looks better, having gained 15 lbs, weighing 90 lbs. Charles stands at the foot of her hospital bed.

CHARLES

I'm just shaking my head, not 'cause I can't make sense of this, which I can't, but because I want to hear the cents jingle around, so I know I still have some. 'Cause this makes no sense, my dear daughter, who we raised better than this. I mean, are you smiling on the inside to have your dear, loving father groveling at your feet, as it were?

He forces back the tears.

CHARLES

Do you just want to emasculate me the way you're making everything mean nothing, and your life is small and inconsequential, which I produced with the balls you now asphyxiate?! No, I should never have let loose through my family jewels the likes of you.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Is that what you want me to say?  
 Since degradation and disregard for  
 human life seems to be the act through  
 which your pain you portray!

INT. HOSPITAL - ICU - ROOM 2 -- CONTINUOUS

Linda puts her palm on Brenda's forehead, then brushes back her hair, and addresses her.

LINDA

I've never been where you are. You might as well be as far as a star, 'cause I can see you, but only through the night, which you're permanently in - a darkness that I don't know if you can transcend.

(cries)

Shakespeare said, "There is no good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Hate to be blasphemous, but if you should go, Brenda, there is indeed a bad and it stole my baby and my life, love and solidarity. I have these rituals that keep me upbeat, even when I'm not. I've made a life for myself, and a daughter that no other person's got, so I guess it should be fitting God wants the best for His company. And who better than a born storyteller? But don't die midway through the novel. Who will replace you? They can't. The main character doesn't die halfway in, the audience and other characters would be lost, and that's what I am: lost. And if there's an audience that cares about the characters in our life, give us an applause, and a little nudge when you see we're not hitting our marks, or in a bad light.

ICU - ROOM 2 -- DAY

Paul's sitting by Brenda, playing on his phone. She's gained another 10 lbs, weighing 100 lbs. She starts to come to.

BRENDA

Shit.  
 (coughs)  
 Uh.

PAUL

Brenda! Brenda!

BRENDA  
My God, my throat.

PAUL  
You're alive!

BRENDA  
What's going on, Paul?

PAUL  
I love you!

BRENDA  
Hey, we just started dating. Where  
am I?

PAUL  
You're in the fucking hospital. Oh  
my God!

He runs out.

PAUL (O.S.)  
She's awake!

Linda, Charles, and Charlie run in, and smother her in hugs  
and kisses.

LINDA  
Oh, my God!

CHARLES  
Oh, my God!

BRENDA  
Hey, hey, what's the occasion?

LINDA  
Oh honey, I love you so much!

CHARLES  
We all love you!

BRENDA  
What's happening?

CHARLES  
You don't remember?

LINDA  
Why would she remember? It's only  
important that she remembers us.

ICU - ROOM 1 -- CONTINUOUS

Paul runs in, sees Eddie comatose and Greg asleep in a chair with his leg in a cast, propped up.

PAUL  
Mr. Wilgus!

GREG  
Huh?

PAUL  
Brenda just woke up!

GREG  
Oh. Oh...

He looks at Eddie who's still the same.

GREG  
(wistfully)  
I'm very happy for her, for her family.

PAUL  
It's amazing.

GREG  
I'm sure they're very happy.

PAUL  
I'm sorry.

GREG  
Don't be. I just need your prayers, not your apology.

PAUL  
I am sorry though. I sold Eddie the Adderall.

GREG  
Oh.

PAUL  
I guess I'd like your forgiveness. I told him not to do too much.

GREG  
I understand. Don't let me damper your celebration.

PAUL  
Eddie's gonna get better.

GREG

I hope so.

Paul smiles reassuringly and leaves. Greg stares at Eddie.

GREG

Eddie! Eddie!

The Nurse comes in.

NURSE

How's the patient? His vitals are improving.

GREG

One day he may be a real boy.

NURSE

He's looking good.

GREG

Of course he is. He's been asleep for three weeks. More than I can say for myself.

Eddie's eyes twitch. His hand starts to move.

NURSE

Oh, he just moved!

GREG

What?

Greg rises to stand suddenly, forgetting his broken leg.

GREG

Ah! Ah!

NURSE

Could just be a reflex.

Eddie opens his eyes and stares at the ceiling.

NURSE

Oh my.

GREG

Shh! Shh!  
(beat)  
Eddie?

EDDIE

Ow. Fuck.



GREG

Ah hah!

Greg falls to the floor, awkwardly and in pain.

GREG

Ah! Ah!

EDDIE

You ok, Dad?

GREG

Am I ok? Am I ok? Yeah! Fuck yeah!  
How about you?

EDDIE

What happened to your leg?

GREG

You! You happened to my leg!

Eddie laughs.

GREG

He's laughing! Laughing is a sign  
of intelligence! You can't laugh if  
you're not conscious, not a conscious  
person!

EDDIE

What's going on?

GREG

Don't move! I'll get the doctor.  
Wait, can you move?

NURSE

Don't worry I'll get the doctor.

GREG

Here, do you feel that?

He hits him upside the head.

EDDIE

Ow!

GREG

That's for scaring the hell out of  
me!

EDDIE

Ok.

GREG  
Do you feel this?

He starts tickling his feet.

EDDIE  
Ah! Stop!

GREG  
The hell if I'm stopping.

Greg falls on him, tickling his stomach. He digs in his pocket for his phone then takes a selfie of them.

EDDIE  
Ha ha!

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR -- DAY

Several days later they are leaving the hospital. Eddie and Greg walk down the hall carrying some belongings.

GREG  
If you woulda died I woulda killed you.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - ELEVATOR -- CONTINUOUS

Brenda eagerly walks ahead of her parents to the elevator.

LINDA  
She looks good.

CHARLES  
You haven't seen her reaction when we tell her she's not going home.

EXT. HOSPITAL -- CONTINUOUS

Eddie and Greg walk out. Eddie catches sight of Brenda walking ahead of her parents. He runs over to her.

EDDIE  
Hey.

BRENDA  
Hey.

EDDIE  
So do you come this close to death often?

BRENDA  
Only when I'm around the likes of you.

EDDIE

Did you dream?

BRENDA

What, when I was out?

EDDIE

Yeah.

BRENDA

Yeah, yeah I did. It was a beautiful dream. The one I remember. About, of all things, the end of the world. But what I liked was God was in it. I guess He's waiting for the grand finale for His entrance.

EDDIE

What did He say?

BRENDA

He said that He was closing the book on us. We were all His beautiful creatures, but He was tired of seeing us kill each other and make paint from our blood and using it to color things the way we want. But it's actually at the expense of using the blood as paint from others. We're all a bunch of artists who are stealing the colors off each other.

EDDIE

What's that mean?

BRENDA

I guess it means we're greedy and we deserve to die.

EDDIE

That's fucked up.

BRENDA

Yeah. What did you dream?

EDDIE

It was some stupid stuff. About my childhood. It was, like, every relative was there though, even the ones that came before. My great granddad who designed the subways. He kept buying me trains, but he wouldn't let me play with them.

(MORE)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

He made me make something out of the tracks. My own way. "Make your path, a new and interesting journey," he kept saying, "one where what you imagine you couldn't before fathom."

BRENDA

I like that. "What you imagine you couldn't before fathom." Sounds like a nice dream.

EDDIE

Yeah, maybe it will be.

They smile and walk off.

FADE OUT.

THE END