

EXT. CHURCHYARD-DAY

On the sidewalk in front of a large Catholic church stands 22 year old JAMIE and 19 year old Charlie. Both smoke cigarettes and look tired and disheveled.

CHARLIE

Can you just slow down for one second? It's not like we have anywhere to be. We're alive right? You can stop doing the stress thing you do and stop walking nowhere so fast.

JAMIE

The what?

CHARLIE

Huh?

JAMIE

What do you mean the stress thing?

CHARLIE

I mean you're freaking out but, you know, internally. You do this thing where you like flatten your lips and blink really hard. I'm just saying **I'm** not worried, you shouldn't be either.

Jamie takes the cigarette out of his mouth and sizes her up. He then blows smoke in her face and walks away toward the church.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(calling)I'm sorry. Jamie.

On the left side of the church is a rectory. Jamie peers at it. On the right is a road and a convenience store. Jamie looks up at the church.

TITLE CARD.

Jamie sneaks up the stoop. Charlie follows.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I don't think there's mass on Monday... and I don't like the way this place looks. I feel like it's judging me.

JAMIE

I don't do that.

CHARLIE

Not you... the church.

JAMIE

I mean, I don't flatten my lips and blink really hard when I'm stressed out-which, I'm not stressed out.

CHARLIE

I've known you for four years, you absolutely do and you absolutely are. Just relax and we can actually figure something out.

Jamie, unamused, puts the cigarette back in his mouth and slips into the church.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You can't smoke inside a church.

Charlie is hesitant. Jamie leans back out and flicks his butt. She follows him in.

INT. CHURCH-DAY

Jamie passes under the arches and dips his fingers in holy water to perform a sign of the cross. Charlie is surprised. They walk down the aisle.

CHARLIE

When I said figure something out, this is not what I expected. Not from you. Turning to God?

JAMIE

Not quite. Something like pantomime.

(pause)

I'm sorry. But it's my fault that we're here. I have to be...

CHARLIE

Responsible for me? You're not my dad, you know?

They exchange a look.

JAMIE

What the fuck are we gonna do?

CHARLIE

It's really going to be fine.
There's one state between us and
home, a straight line. We will
figure it out. I'm just not that
worried about it. I'm trying,
believe me.

JAMIE

Vagabonds.

CHARLIE

Whatever we do in the interim...
I'd prefer not to do it under His
watchful eye.

Jamie looks up at the effigy of Christ. They stop at the
altar. Charlie won't look. After a while, Jamie spots the
devotional.

JAMIE

I'm gonna light a candle.

CHARLIE

Unscented absolution. Delicious.
I'm gonna find a bathroom.

Jamie turns his attention to the candles. Charlie disappears
up a hallway. Jamie looks at the virgin Mary. He looks at
Joseph. The devotional is all electric candles.

PUSH TOP OF CANDLE DOWN TO LIGHT. RECOMMENDED DONATION IS \$1

JAMIE

What kind of shit is this?

Jamie searches his pockets, find the lanyard, holds it.

He slaps a candle.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I'm not donating.

Charlie returns.

CHARLIE

It smells like a church in here.

JAMIE

These candles are fake.

CHARLIE

How revealing.

JAMIE

Did you find a bathroom?

CHARLIE

Yes.

JAMIE

Did you say it smells like a church
in here?

CHARLIE

You know. They all have that smell.
Like all convalescent homes have
the same smell. Death and
disinfectant.

JAMIE

Ah yes. Everlasting life and
disinfectant. The smell of
sanctity.

CHARLIE

A pious perfume.

JAMIE

After it warms up we should make
back for that payphone so you can
tell your mother you're alive or
whatever. Unless you can get her
the message through prayer.

CHARLIE

You want to stay in here?

JAMIE

I don't want to go back to that
diner. I really think that waitress
hated me. Anyway she was a downer.

CHARLIE

But-

JAMIE

And the coffee was watery. She said
there's no bus station in town. The
train station is defunct. It's
freezing out and nothing else will
be open for hours.

CHARLIE

It's forty-five degrees outside.

JAMIE

Charlie. You're the one that keeps telling me to lighten up and have fun. This is fun. I need to recharge. Think. We can be like two fugitives, hiding from the law in last place they suspect. The lull in the second act where our anti-heroes hole up somewhere quiet and die their hair.

CHARLIE

Two sinners hiding from God right under his nose.

JAMIE

Precisely. Maybe we can even crack the seal on next weeks sacrament.

CHARLIE

You categorically refuse to enjoy anything that doesn't follow the strictly outlined plot structure of your life. You finally want to act spontaneous and you choose the one thing that actually triggers my trauma?

JAMIE

In all fairness if I close my eyes, spin around, and throw a dart, I'm more likely to hit one of your trauma reminders than not.

CHARLIE

Fuck you.

JAMIE

Anyway, this is a Catholic church. Wasn't your mom some fringe Baptist? We're Atheists. This is but a pretty room for a nap.

CHARLIE

Yup.

JAMIE

Well, we can't keep going nowhere. We can't walk home. If we had it your way we'd be halfway to Chicago clinging to some freight train like a couple of Boxcar Children. Like nothing matters, like you didn't just enroll.

CHARLIE

A couple what?

JAMIE

Nothing.

CHARLIE

I mean, I see no reason to go home.

JAMIE

You say that now, Siouxsie Sioux, until you're dying on some bench somewhere. The punk scene isn't what it used to be.

CHARLIE

How would you know? You and your obligations. How many times did we talk about leaving town for good? Letting the world decide, instead of other people.

JAMIE

Yes, I know. I want something to do when we leave. I have two semesters left. You have an interview in... seven hours. If you don't start now, you never will. We can do what we always wanted, I can make films, you can play music. We just have to leave at the right time and for the right reasons.

CHARLIE

This seems like a pretty good reason.

JAMIE

It'll pass. How are you feeling?

CHARLIE

Sacrilegious.

JAMIE

Good.

Jamie looks up toward a loft area.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

There's an old electric organ up there.

CHARLIE

So there is.

JAMIE
 I wanna play it.
 (pause)
 What's wrong?

CHARLIE
 Are we even allowed to be in here
 right now?

JAMIE
 Of course we are. It's a church.
 God's house. He alone reserves the
 right to refuse us. Since he hasn't
 been very confrontational this
 millennium, I think we'll be ok.
 Anyway what do you care? You don't
 observe cultural norms. You have no
 shame.

CHARLIE
 Yeah but if we're not going to
 vandalize it, we're just acting
 like them and that's boring.

JAMIE
 That's art.

Jamie gets on the kneeler and begins to pray, spouting gibberish. Charlie takes out a cigarette and moves to light it before looking at Christ and putting it away. Jamie looks at her and pats the kneeler. She gets down. Jamie takes out a map and reads it.

CHARLIE
 That thing is made for children.

JAMIE
 I used to get them at every rest-
 stop as a kid. We're only about an
 inch from the railroad museum.

CHARLIE
 Those trains never move.

JAMIE
 You know, when I was a kid going to
 church with my grandmother,
 whenever I would find myself
 slipping back into this,
 comfortable position, my
 grandmother would-
 (tapping her back)
 Tap me on the back.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Unsubtly encourage me to remain upright before the lord.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah? My mother would wake us up screaming about raptures in the middle of the night-every night-after my father left her.

JAMIE

What a silly-goose.

CHARLIE

Jamie, what are you doing?

JAMIE

I'm looking for something. A car service anything.

CHARLIE

The waitress said there weren't any.

JAMIE

I don't trust her anymore than I trust her coffee. There was a sign in the bathroom that said, we aim for perfection, your aim will help.

CHARLIE

I really doubt a gas station tourist map holds the key to our egress.

JAMIE

Such big words for a drop-out.

CHARLIE

Fuck you and your cartoon map.

JAMIE

It's to scale.

CHARLIE

It's not to scale. Of course it's not to scale. Jeff could probably wire me money but it wouldn't do us any good. We might have to do it.

Jamie looks at her.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Come on. We're in it now, chapter three of the post break-up adventures. You can't be scared of a little hitchhiking.

JAMIE

This was my decision, you know. I didn't mean to get us stranded, but it was my impulsive decision. I'm not scared to hitchhike, I just don't want to look like a jackass with my thumb sticking out in the middle of town. You think you're so edgy, you think you have a monopoly on danger because you've been in a few mosh pits. You're 5'2", you're a pretty girl, they let you get out unscathed. I've been places. I've made real, consequential mistakes. This is my mess.

CHARLIE

Good job. I know. You're the one that said we need to remove ourselves from the equation. We're removed. Also, fantastically narrow of you to suggest that because I'm a small pretty girl, I'm more safe.

JAMIE

You're my best friend. You were sad. I wanted to distract you... for a night. Talk you off a ledge of self-destruction you know so well. What I didn't want to do was have you starve to death in Henry David Thoreau country.

CHARLIE

Hey, nobody's complaining about starving.

He looks at her,

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Nobody's dying. It's fine. Consider me distracted. I haven't wanted to destroy my life in at least three hours.

JAMIE

What do you call wanting to run away from everything forever with no clothes or money or plans?

CHARLIE

Liberation.

JAMIE

They could arrest us, you know?

CHARLIE

I doubt it. They don't even know who we are or what we look like.

JAMIE

Yeah, the people in this town. They can smell an outsider.

CHARLIE

Make up your mind, are you proud or not? I like being stranded.

JAMIE

I can see that but, you know, you can't actually run away from him? I'm proud, I'm happy for the adventure. I didn't think it would last 'till morning and end in rural New Hampshire, but I'm happy. But we can't make it so this break-up never happened. The unfortunate thing about life is that when something inside you changes, the outside world goes on just the same as it ever has. All the trouble we can make for ourselves won't erase the pain. And the world won't stop to wait.

CHARLIE

It's not about pain, I'm familiar with pain, she's an old friend. I feel like a bad person. I feel like if the world moves on without me it wouldn't be such a bad thing.

JAMIE

Tom doesn't feel that way.

CHARLIE

That doesn't make it better. And anyway don't lecture me about processing things healthily.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Confronting things. You haven't gone an hour without saying her name.

JAMIE

I was trying to help you by relating-

CHARLIE

And when the car was gone, I thought you were going to lay down and go catatonic-

JAMIE

I think that stress was justified-

CHARLIE

I thought I was going to have to drag you around, or call an ambulance.

JAMIE

I was stressed out. I'm over it.

CHARLIE

Oh yeah?

JAMIE

Yeah. The ticking clock of anxiety will always be there, keeping time under it all, tick, tick, the pressure to pass with my final breath. Ticking, ticking, except the bomb never goes off, no, then it would be over. It just keeps ticking until you die. That's who I am. But I'm definitely distracted.

CHARLIE

Good we're both fucking distracted. This church is still not the vibe. And I want to smoke this fucking cigarette.

JAMIE

I can get on board with that. It's still cold out there.

CHARLIE

My skin is beginning to char in here, Jamie.

JAMIE

I don't understand why you don't want the sanctuary of our lord and savior.

CHARLIE

Am I speaking Hebrew? The sun is up it's warm.

JAMIE

Alright well,

He looks at his map. Charlie takes it and rips it up.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

That wasn't nice.

She sticks out her tongue. He puts a cigarette in his mouth.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Now who sounds stressed?

Jamie holds the door for Charlie who exits. He notices a table with a sign: Take one if you need it. And an assortment of pamphlets including more maps. He takes one and exits.

EXT. CHURCH-DAY

Jamie and Charlie squint into the sun.

CHARLIE

I don't know if it's because I'm exhausted but this town doesn't feel real.

JAMIE

Like a storybook.

CHARLIE

Exactly, but...

JAMIE

With something dark beneath the surface.

CHARLIE

That's it.

JAMIE

You know, Maddie was made anxious by churches too.

CHARLIE

Yeah?

JAMIE

Yes. But she didn't have any religious trauma that I knew of. I think it was far more subconscious, metaphysical.

CHARLIE

Are you sure YOU weren't making her anxious?

JAMIE

We spent the weekend in Manhattan freshman year. I wanted to visit every church, architectural curiosity. Research. She couldn't handle it, she would start to panic.

CHARLIE

She couldn't even go in?

JAMIE

Not after a while. I think it was the space, the wood. There's something different about the space in there, it's unlike the crowded grand central. It's a contemplative space. It's waiting for you to fill it. It messes with your perception like a funhouse. Negative space is a weight on me too, but my wonder occasionally eclipses that.

CHARLIE

You're like a child that way.

JAMIE

Anyway, that should have been a big sign. It's almost distastefully symbolic.

CHARLIE

Yeah, yeah. You don't believe in signs from anyone, let alone the Holy Roman Empire.

JAMIE

No.

CHARLIE

After you broke up, did you-

JAMIE

Feel like I made the right choice?
No, of course not. But I knew we
didn't love each other. I knew it
would hurt us both in the long run,
I made a choice. But, I had been
with her long enough that it was a
big deal, it needed to end.
Besides, I was thinking about
someone else.

CHARLIE

We know.

JAMIE

You didn't have as clearly defined
ethical guidelines. But your
subjective experience can't be
invalidated, you didn't hurt him
just to do it.

CHARLIE

I'm guessing he doesn't see it that
way?

Jamie shrugs.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Jamie...

JAMIE

Can we find some coffee or what?

MONTAGE OF TOWN WAKING UP

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Where was that payphone?

TWO

CHARLIE

Hundreds of miles from home. No
friends. No family.

JAMIE

Actually, I have an aunt that lives
in this state, I think... Tell me
what he said again.

CHARLIE

I'm starting to think thats the
most important aspect of this whole
thing for you.

JAMIE

Well. It's my favorite part anyhow.

CHARLIE

He said, **I suppose Jamie knew the entire time.**

JAMIE

That's just... see... and the other thing?

CHARLIE

The other thing?

JAMIE

Yeah, after, he said...

CHARLIE

Oh, **he's more your friend than mine.**

JAMIE

The nerve.

CHARLIE

That's not really an insult.

JAMIE

The gall.

CHARLIE

It's true.

JAMIE

Yeah it's true. That's why it bears no acknowledgement. Once you acknowledge a truth, you take a stance. There's an implication that the truth-which, in truth, is objective, unbiased-is actually taking sides.

CHARLIE

Now you're in a good mood.

JAMIE

You see, there's a silent, **and therefor.**

CHARLIE

What?

JAMIE

A silent **and therefor** superfluously follows every spoken truth. Like, **He's more your friend than mine and therefor, plotted against my relationship.**

CHARLIE

I don't think he thinks you plotted.

JAMIE

Oh he does. And I didn't.

CHARLIE

Of course you didn't. I don't need you to plot for me.

JAMIE

You see he's a sexist.

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ. You're acting like you didn't see him first.

JAMIE

You were...

CHARLIE

I know, I needed to be alone. That doesn't change the fact. You didn't plot our breakup, but you were privy to the events which precipitated it... on both sides.

Charlie and Jamie arrive at the payphone near a gas station. Charlie goes for the phone. Jamie goes for a walk. There is an old man leaning against the wall outside the gas station.

JAMIE

This door is locked.

CHARLIE

Shh.

JAMIE

Why is this sign lit if the store is closed?

CHARLIE

Hi, Mom...

MAN
 (to Jamie)
 Late again.

CHARLIE
 What are we doing in New Hampshire?
 (to Jamie)
 What are we doing in New Hampshire?

JAMIE
 We were just getting breakfast.

CHARLIE
 Hear that? Well... I mean we... not
 really at the moment. I know you
 can't. I know. It just is.
 I broke up with Tom. We broke up. I
 just didn't know what else to do...
 I know he was pretty...

JAMIE
 (to man)
 Why is it so hard to walk away from
 people?

Jamie plays with his lanyard.

Eventually, the door is opened. Jamie goes in. He performs a
 sign of the cross with coffee. He finds a bus schedule,
 examines it, examines his map. Jamie Laughs.

CHARLIE
 She's stuck in the city with step-
 dad but Jeff might be able to wire
 us some money, I have to figure out
 the postal code here.

JAMIE
 It won't do any good, there are no
 car services, we checked. There's
 nothing for miles. But...

CHARLIE
 But?

JAMIE
 A bus does come through. One bus.

CHARLIE
 When?

JAMIE

A blue bus 91 stops in this town twice a day and will take us south at least to somewhere with a train station. We missed the first stop, it will be back at 2:15.

CHARLIE

Where is the stop?

Jamie smiles.

CUT TO the church. The two stand abreast on the sidewalk.

JAMIE

Are we gonna stand here for four hours?

CHARLIE

I'm against worship.

JAMIE

It's no different than the gas station. The department store. The pub with every sports channel. Remember the waitress in the diner with her conservative 'news' commentary. She refilled my coffee once.

CHARLIE

You are relentless.

JAMIE

Everybody worships. You can't escape it. If it's not one thing, it's another. Each more damaging than the last. You can choose what you worship, not if.

CHARLIE

Everyone except you, I'm assuming.

JAMIE

Well, i'm enlightened.

CHARLIE

Are you sure about that, Narcissus?

JAMIE

Woah.

CHARLIE

Tom worshipped me.

JAMIE

All gods disappoint. In that regard, you're right as rain. Let's not go down this hole again we spent about fifteen hours (talking)

CHARLIE

Maybe not like **you** worship **her**.

JAMIE

I don't worship her.

She looks at him.

CHARLIE

Jesus, you do look tired. It's almost been twenty-four hours. Go take a nap.

JAMIE

You're coming?

She looks more.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

You can't just stay out here... If you start to smolder you can run back out.

They look toward the church.

ACT II

INT. CHURCH-DAY

They pass under the vestibule. Jamie takes a deep breath.

JAMIE

There was a bathroom up that way?

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JAMIE

I'll be back.

In the bathroom, Jamie eyes a sign.

AIM FOR PERFECTION AND THE GOD LOVE AND PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU. 2 CORINTHIANS 13:12

Feeling claustrophobic, Jamie pushes open a small window. There is a small bird trapped in a thorn bush there. Jamie watches it struggle. Feeling something on his head, he looks up at the warm bulb just above.

Before the altar, Charlie gazes at the holy mother. It seems as though she cannot hold eye contact. Even with marble. Her attitude changes upon gazing up at the effigy of CHRIST. Charlie huffs.

CHARLIE

If you were real, I'd be skinny.
What I would give to be dying-on-a-
cross skinny.

Jamie finds a table in the hall with a bronze jug on it. It has a tap in the shape of a crucifix. There are empty bottles also adorned with the symbol. He picks one up.

When he comes back into the church nave, Jamie is sprinkling holy water onto his wrists like cologne.

JAMIE

His new scent: **Passion**.

CHARLIE

See that feels disrespectful.

JAMIE

I know, the prophet who saved our souls turns around and sells his own to commerce. A cheap de toilette.

CHARLIE

Can I see the schedule one more time?

JAMIE

I don't blame him.
(looking around)
Jesus is losing subscribers. He needs a corporate strategy for the good of all absolutism.

She takes the schedule and looks at it. Then the map.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I'm taking a nap.

Jamie pulls his coat off and moves to lay down on the pew but notices something. He starts riffling, looking for something and looking increasingly anxious.

CHARLIE
Lose something?

He looks up and she is holding the lanyard we've seen him hold. He looks relieved, takes it, and falls into position.
NOTE MOVE THIS TO AFTER A FIGHT AND DO BROADRIPPLE DO JAZZ HERE.

JAMIE lays in one pew, his feet up toward the vaulted ceiling. CHARLIE lay in another, wrapped in her coat tightly as though cocooned.

Jamie wakes up to Charlie singing.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
If my woman was a fire, she'd burn
out before I wake and be replaced
by pints of whiskey, cigarettes and
outer space, then somebody moves...

Jamie seems to enjoy it for a second then makes his way to one of the stained glass windows and, listening to his watch, looks out.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
We've still got an hour. It'll
come.

JAMIE
I didn't say anything.

CHARLIE
You didn't have to. I see worry set
back in like gravity to an
astronaut.

JAMIE
I just woke up. I am not worried.

CHARLIE
You're a cancer, stop being so
mercurial.

Jamie makes a face.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
You've always been mercurial, but
you usually don't lie to me.

JAMIE
I'm not lying.

CHARLIE

You are. And it is a trend. We just had this conversation... before. In the car. You admitted.

JAMIE

Lies of omission. And I didn't admit anything. You caught me.

CHARLIE

You're always telling me to be more observant.

JAMIE

I didn't think you'd point your observation at me.

CHARLIE

You never want observation pointed at you do you? What I don't get is-

JAMIE

I don't think we have time for-

CHARLIE

What I don't get is, you lied about Francesca, and Tom-

JAMIE

I told you, it isn't my place. I didn't lie. I didn't omit. I minded my business.

CHARLIE

We both know that's not possible. But the thing is it wasn't **just** because I'm friends with Bethany. It wasn't **just** to spare my feelings with Tom. And it wasn't your trademark cold shoulder either; you're still here. You still need me.

JAMIE

Awe.

CHARLIE

There's something.

JAMIE

There's nothing.

CHARLIE

The grimace.

JAMIE

No grimace. No mercurial. I'm having fun. Breaking an entering is fun. Fleeing from the law is fun. Pulling all nighters, driving until the roads are foreign, hopping the tracks, holing up in a church. Fun. Psycho-analysis, not fun.

CHARLIE

Mhm.

JAMIE

And it's got to end at some point. It's got to end, you understand. All things in moderation. We have places to be, we have futures to secure-

CHARLIE

There it is.

JAMIE

Are you trying to pick a fight with me? I'm trying to stay calm enough to get us out of here, all while devoting 63 percent of my focus toward projecting the image of blissful calm, yes because I care about you, yes because I don't want you to worry, but also, you know, because you make it seem like our friendship is contingent upon me not being uptight.

CHARLIE

You've got to be kidding.

JAMIE

You tell me.

CHARLIE

I don't believe you won't let that go.

JAMIE

Say it.

CHARLIE

I don't even remember what the word was.

JAMIE

You fucking do.

Charlie begins to giggle.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Are you laughing? This is funny?
You're a sociopath.

CHARLIE

You think I don't accept you for
who you are?

JAMIE

Fuck off.

CHARLIE

These fucking pins don't fool me,
you know. I know you measured the
distances and mathematically
balanced the placement. I know you
tape off the sole and bleach the
upper of your sneakers so they look
dirty in the precise way you want
them to. Half of me expects you to
have a back-up car parked in some
garage around this town somewhere
that you're waiting to unveil, your
disarray is just so organized, it's
hard to process our situation. But
then every once and a while I see
the deep unrest of your anxiety
engine firing away under the hood.
I was pleasantly surprised when you
said you wanted to pick a direction
at random and drive until you get
tired, but I am impulsive enough
for forty people, you're my best
friend because of your...

JAMIE

Punctiliousness?

CHARLIE

I don't know what that means but it
sounds pretentious enough to fit.

Jamie bows. He comes back up with a cigarette in his mouth.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

What's that house thing there?

JAMIE

It's called a rectory. It's where
the priest lives.

CHARLIE

Oh.

JAMIE

I have an idea. Come on.

They flick and return inside.

Jamie walks up the aisle. He circles at the front and makes his way back down the outer aisle, passing pictorial representations of the passion and ends before the confessional.

There are demarkations in Latin above each door which he doesn't understand.

Jamie chooses a door and enters. He sits on a red velveteen cushion.

Eventually, Charlie opens the neighboring door and enters the priests half of the booth. She sits in the small, modest wicker chair and faces forward as she had probably seen done in a movie.

Jamie looks through the screen.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Aren't these things typically a bit more obfuscated?

CHARLIE

Shh.

JAMIE

For like anonymity?

She clears her throat. Aggressively.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Right. Forgive me father for I have sinned. It has been...

(he thinks)

A very long time since my last confession.

Beat.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Father, I had a girlfriend. I had a girlfriend with whom I lived and we had a cat- it was my cat which I had brought along with me when we became serious. Too serious father.

(beat)

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Father, one day my ex came home with a cat of her very own that she had adopted and wished to engender into our family unit.

(beat)

Uh, the problem was that this new cat and my cat, which both of us loved dearly, did not get along. My cat was effectively forced to shelter under the couch in fear and resentment while the new pussy strutted about our apartment in wonder.

(beat)

Unlike my old cat, this new one was very brash and any chance it had to make a break for it, it took. We had to be very careful with this new cat. There were more than a few times my ex narrowly saved the thing from flying out the door into the world.

(beat)

I felt bad for my cat. My cat that we both loved so much. It takes time for an animal to earn the place of dignity in your heart. An unfamiliar cat is no more than a sentient and odorous throw pillow.

(beat)

One day, while she was at class and I was home alone... working. I- at some point, either when she left or at another time, the cat got outside. I noticed that the door was ajar and that the cat was gone. I noticed this. I needed to run out and after the cat. I could have went to look for the cat. I quite possibly, very probably could have retrieved the cat had I acted in a... timely way.

(beat)

I didn't. I found ways to hemorrhage my time. I intentionally sabotaged my chances of finding the animal because... Because, I didn't want to.

There is an uncomfortable pause.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

And I feel really bad about it... father...

CHARLIE

That's it?

JAMIE

What do you mean that's it? I feel really-that's a horrible thing (to do.)

CHARLIE

It's not even the worst thing you've done to her.

JAMIE

It is. By the time-she didn't care about Annie.

CHARLIE

Really?

JAMIE

I mean she was livid, I thought she was going to actually kill me. But she wasn't hurt by then, by then, it was dead. The cat on the other hand, **was** alive.

CHARLIE

Say four Our Fathers.

JAMIE

Four Our Fathers.

CHARLIE

Anything else.

JAMIE

Erm.

CHARLIE

Come on.

JAMIE

I...

(thinking)

Well, remember last year... when I accidentally slept with that sixteen year old.

CHARLIE

Yes...

JAMIE

Well. That's exactly what happened whenever the story is told.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Whenever the story is told, I
accidentally had sex with a minor.

(beat)

Accidentally being a (key word in
the...)

CHARLIE

Jesus Christ. You really should
have led with that. You are such a
very bad person.

JAMIE

That serious huh? Can't you
typically handle these things
without calling the supervisor
down?

CHARLIE

You can't be serious.

JAMIE

Chalk flew up.

CHARLIE

You're going to hell.

JAMIE

Nope! Not quite. Because I
confessed-I repented. And that...
is all it takes in His house.

(beat)

Your turn.

Like a cuckoo clock, the boy and girl exit and switch places.

CHARLIE

The first time I gave head, it was
two dicks at the same time.

JAMIE

No. You have to say the (thing,)
two dicks at once?

CHARLIE

Yeah. Two at the same time, I was
fourteen. Forgive me father for
I... have sinned.

JAMIE

(drawn out, incredulous)
Well.

CHARLIE
(matter of fact)
I have engaged in pre-marital sex.

JAMIE
Yeah...
(beat)
But two at the same exact time?

CHARLIE
Yeah.

JAMIE
But like-

CHARLIE
You know it was like:

She pantomimes sucking two dicks. One dick at a time.

JAMIE
Oh but that's one dick at a time.
One after another.

CHARLIE
Well, yes.

JAMIE
I was imagining two dicks smooshed
together in your mouth at the same
time.

CHARLIE
That didn't happen.

JAMIE
Damn it.

CHARLIE
I know it isn't **as** impressive-

JAMIE
That isn't a sin.

CHARLIE
I think it is.

JAMIE
Well maybe according to religion.

CHARLIE
We're in a catholic confessional.

JAMIE

I know but I'm talking about morality here.

(he pauses)

I feel really bad about that cat thing.

CHARLIE

The cat thing? That's what you feel bad about? It's not even that bad.

JAMIE

That's not the point. It feels like it. I feel guilty.

CHARLIE

Ok well... one of them was married.

(beat)

Or engaged or something.

JAMIE

One of the dicks was engaged?

CHARLIE

Yes, and I knew that and I didn't care.

JAMIE pouts.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And I feel really bad about that.

JAMIE

Mhm.

CHARLIE

I could have ruined a marriage, Jamie.

JAMIE

That's a little better, I guess. You know what I mean though, about there being a difference.

CHARLIE

Between what the King James bible says is a sin and what reasonable morality dictates? Sure, but, then how do you decide?

JAMIE

I don't know. You just don't hurt people, I think.

CHARLIE

Is that so?

JAMIE

Obviously, its more complicated.
It's like the train thing.

CHARLIE

The train thing?

JAMIE

Yeah, there's five people on the track about to be hit by a train. On an adjacent track there is one person. You can switch the track in which case, the one person will die. Or you can do nothing and five will... You knew you didn't love Tom, so you switched the track. If you did nothing and let it dissolve naturally over more time, it would have broke his heart five times as much.

CHARLIE

I don't think they're exactly the same thing. But it makes enough sense, I suppose.

JAMIE

Okay.

(then)

Lets go smoke a cigarette.

When they exit the church confessional, Charlie stops to watch as Jamie approaches the devotional once more. This time, he inserts a dollar.

CHARLIE

It's so much warmer out now.

JAMIE

I'm still cold.

They light cigarettes.

CHARLIE

I don't think this town is real.

JAMIE

It doesn't seem like it.

CHARLIE

And I don't think we'll be allowed
to leave it.

JAMIE

You're probably right.

CHARLIE

We'll just have to die here... with
our secrets.

JAMIE smiles and nods.

JAMIE

Give me more.

CHARLIE

More what?

JAMIE

Secrets.

CHARLIE

More secrets?

JAMIE

Yeah.

CHARLIE

Here's a secret: something is
irreparably wrong with me, mentally
and physically, I can't have sex...
I can't love someone. I can't let
myself be happy.

(beat)

We know this. I always self-
sabotage.

JAMIE

You and I both know that this time
is uniquely different from prior
instances of self-sabotage. This
was entirely selfless... even
though it may not feel like it
right now.

(beat)

You're a good person.

CHARLIE

Here's something: sometimes I used
to get myself off in bed next to
him while he slept.

JAMIE

Someone feels more comfortable unloading guilt away from the scrutiny of God.

CHARLIE

God gives me anxiety.

JAMIE

God doesn't exist.

CHARLIE

And the wonderful thing about anxiety is that He doesn't need to.

JAMIE

Well anyway, that's nothing. I used to sneak girls in after Maddie was asleep. We had agreed to just be friends by that point... still.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Did you ever cheat on him?

CHARLIE

No.

JAMIE

No?

CHARLIE

I made out with a bi-girl at Blanky's. I didn't tell him but...

JAMIE

Something tells me he wouldn't necessarily mind. He didn't know?

CHARLIE

He didn't know.

JAMIE

Well.

(beat)

Do I know her?

CHARLIE

She's a grad from Indiana.

JAMIE

Well she may as well not even be real. It's fine.

CHARLIE

I suppose.
(then)
She's into my fetish.

JAMIE

No way?

CHARLIE

Yeah. Amazing right?

JAMIE

Unlikely.

CHARLIE

Yes.

JAMIE

How... nevermind.

JAMIE chuckles.

CHARLIE

Oh God.

JAMIE

What? I forgot about it is all...
It all comes out under our Father's
roof.
(beat)
I hadn't thought about it in a long
time.

CHARLIE

You know, Tom was the only person
formal boyfriend I revealed it to.
It wasn't stressful or daunting. It
felt easy.

JAMIE

That's good... I took it well.

CHARLIE

You took it well but it was still
difficult to share. Anyway that's
different.

They go back inside after flicking their butts.

JAMIE

I always told you it wasn't as
weird as you thought it was.
Everybody has a thing, you're no
freak. You're human.

CHARLIE

Well, I know. It just feel slightly more difficult to articulate than other... things.

Jamie stops and looks at a framed picture of a priest.

JAMIE

You know, some people get thrown in prison for revealing certain proclivities.

CHARLIE

(looking at him and the picture)
Or discretely relocated.
(beat)
Do you think?

JAMIE

Who's to say?

They both make their way toward the front of the church.

CHARLIE

Anyway, you only understand it because your... proclivities are rooted in the same principal.

JAMIE

They literally couldn't be more alike.

CHARLIE

You're wrong. They're both about power... control. Neither are overtly dominant, it's subtle.

JAMIE

Hmm.

CHARLIE

Even with me. Your over protective. Fond of micromanagement. Sometimes you even-

JAMIE

Speak for you?

CHARLIE

Exactly. Just because it isn't sexual doesn't mean it isn't an extension of your internal grapple for control.

JAMIE
In small battles.

CHARLIE
Often imagined ones.

JAMIE
I was supposed to be introducing
you to faculty in the psychology
department around now. You need
face time with-

CHARLIE
Is this irony?

JAMIE
No. You fucked up daddy's schedule.

CHARLIE
Don't ever say that again.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
I'm through with love.

JAMIE
So am I.

CHARLIE gives him a long look.

CHARLIE
We both know that isn't true.

JAMIE
What are you saying? You watched me
swerve SAMANTHA just last week. I
haven't seen any one girl more than
twice in almost a year.

CHARLIE
You're no better than me. And
you're not done with love. You just
refuse to let yourself love anyone
because you're afraid they'll be
better than HER.

JAMIE
Hey.

CHARLIE
And you don't want to ever let go
of HER.

JAMIE
Have you given any thought to a rebound?

CHARLIE
Yes.

JAMIE
And?

CHARLIE
And as much as the thought of becoming a heartbreaker is something like a fizzy tonic, I'm not in the mood to be pressured into sex. It's really low.

JAMIE
Low?

CHARLIE
My sex drive.

JAMIE
Ah.
(beat)
Don't let anybody pressure you.

CHARLIE
Well, I wouldn't but, you know.

JAMIE
I hate that more than anything.

CHARLIE
What?

JAMIE
That, that whole thing. Acting entitled to sexual compensation. Even in relationships. There's a disgusting one sidedness that skeeves me out.

CHARLIE
TOM was like that in the beginning.

JAMIE
He was?

CHARLIE
Well, I think he didn't understand. He would be all like, **I have needs.**
(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And sometimes I would just say,
Okay let's get this over with-I
wouldn't say that-I would think it-
and sometimes, I would get half way
through and decide, **Oh, this is
nice.**

(beat)

And sometimes I would just wait for
it to be over.

JAMIE

Something about that type of thing
feels unjust to me. I can't enjoy
sex unless I feel as much or more
enthusiasm from the second party.

CHARLIE

Well, you were engaged to an
asexual person.

JAMIE

I didn't know that.

CHARLIE

But I think it was just hard to
understand. Once he sort of
realized what he was doing, he
stopped.

JAMIE

It is hard to understand. Even
though you aren't strictly asexual,
I mean, its a spectrum. And after
Maddie really understood, it was
difficult for me to grasp.

(beat)

This is what I mean about this
sleeper toxicity: you can have
yourself so convinced you're a nice
guy, a good guy who will protect
girls at all costs from all the
other dangerous teenage fuckboys,
you start to get this WHITE KNIGHT
complex.

CHARLIE

A white knight complex?

JAMIE

You're so convinced you're the good
guy that you justify your own
manipulations and jealousy and
inevitable abuse.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

All the while reducing girls in a very misogynistic way by the very notion that they are something that needs to be saved and that you're the only one who can make the right choices for them.

CHARLIE

Sometimes we just want a fuck boy for a second. Sometimes it feels good to be used.

JAMIE

And you should have the right to make that choice without sleeper toxic white knights going on their very own crusade.

CHARLIE

You know, there's a fine line between daddy and...White Knight.

He scoffs.

JAMIE

You're tricky.

CHARLIE

I try.

JAMIE

Do you think this depth of a confession has ever been committed in this church before?

CHARLIE

I don't know.

JAMIE

Or in any church?

CHARLIE

Well... I don't know about that but it feels wrong for sure.

JAMIE

A good kind of wrong.

CHARLIE

A good kind of wrong, yeah.

They sit in pleased silence.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Well. You know.

JAMIE
Huh?

She looks at him with an impish brilliance.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
What is it? Why are you looking at
me like that?

She raises her eyebrows.

JAMIE (CONT'D)
You can't just make words sound
like you have something interesting
to say and then give me a face like
I should know or its a dirty secret
I can't know and then just not say
anything.

CHARLIE
It's nothing.

JAMIE
Oh it's nothing.

CHARLIE
Yeah stupid.

JAMIE
Stupid is something. What the hell
was that look for?

CHARLIE
You're going to laugh at me.

JAMIE
What's new? Just tell me, now I'm
intrigued.

CHARLIE
I was just going to say, to suggest
that maybe we have sex in the
church.

Moment of silence.

JAMIE
Why'd you have to make it weird.

CHARLIE
I'm sorry. The thought came and the
thought passed.

JAMIE
You made it weird.

CHARLIE
We've just been stuck in here too
long.

JAMIE
Right. Well... I'm gonna go for a
walk.

CHARLIE
Me too.

ACT III

BREAK

JAMIE USES THE PHONE SO DOES CHARLIE BROADRIPPLE

JAMIE
This place looks different to me
every time I come back in.

CHARLIE
Yeah... it can have that effect.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Also...

JAMIE
Also?

CHARLIE
I called Tom.

JAMIE
What the fuck?

CHARLIE
I know.

JAMIE
No, something about the bus.

CHARLIE
Oh.

JAMIE
What did he say?

CHARLIE

Oh.

JAMIE

I mean—I'm not—you don't have to tell me but I thought he said he wasn't talking to you anymore.

CHARLIE

He said **good morning**.

JAMIE

Oh, well.

CHARLIE

And he asked if I've already slept with someone else.

JAMIE

(shocked)

You broke up two nights ago.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

There isn't a single thing you could say to that that won't exacerbate the situation. It's designed to have no right answer. The best thing you can do for him and for you... is give it some time. Let the emotions settle down.

CHARLIE

All I said was **no**. I mean I haven't so...

JAMIE

You missed the (point.) I'm going to play that organ.

CHARLIE

Do you think that's a good idea?

JAMIE

I don't care. Ideas have no substance anymore. The world isn't real, it cannot be conceptualized and nothing I can do will have any effect on that principle.

(beat)

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

So I'm going to play House of the Rising Sun on that old school electric organ because in the face of utter meaninglessness all we have are pleasant sounds and colorful images. Christos brought the stained glass, I'm gonna tickle the ivory.

CHARLIE

Ugh. **Tickle the ivory?**

Jamie tries a door.

JAMIE

Its locked.

CHARLIE

Well.

JAMIE

Why?

CHARLIE

Clearly they don't want people up there.

JAMIE

This is what I'm talking about.

CHARLIE

What are you talking about?

JAMIE

The censorship of thought and expression by the catholic church. Art isn't art if its dictated by a singular body of believers.

CHARLIE

You're over thinking this.

JAMIE

The Medici family orchestrated the renaissance by hijacking artists and using their paintings to tell people how to think.

CHARLIE

Their art wouldn't have been meaningful otherwise. They weren't philosophers.

JAMIE huffs.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Dali always said he was too intelligent to be a good painter. You really want to sit down and think about morality, you might not be able to do anything else.

JAMIE

So I'm to settle for what other people tell me? Waving gilded robes about like sidewalk sleight of hand?

CHARLIE

You're mad that I responded to him?

JAMIE

I'm not mad at all. I don't think you should let other people dictate how you feel...

CHARLIE

You're trying to dictate how I feel.

JAMIE

I'm trying to help you come to your own conclusions.

CHARLIE

Just so long as those conclusions are in line with what you believe. Catholicism much?

JAMIE

Religion is a stepping stone of morality. It can only take you so far. It's time for humanity to graduate! This room makes me sick. I wanna touch some grass.

CHARLIE

You're being ridiculous.

JAMIE

I'm not coercing anybody. I don't like to see my friends torment themselves. But right now I'm really only upset because I'd like to hear some music but all I've got is the repetitive drum beat of my own petulant thoughts... and you.

(beat)

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

We're trapped in this godforsaken place and I can't even make it worth it for my ears.

CHARLIE

Godforsaken... really?

JAMIE

The crucifix is a red herring. There is **no** god here.

A single note rings out from the untenanted electric organ.

CHARLIE

What was that?

JAMIE

It sounded like an organ note.

CHARLIE

Where did it come from?

JAMIE

G sharp maybe A flat.

CHARLIE

I don't like this. What the fuck?

JAMIE

Relax. The bells ring out on the hour, every hour. Maybe this is how that starts.

CHARLIE

That wasn't a bell.

JAMIE

Well.

CHARLIE

That was the piano.

JAMIE

It's an electric organ.

CHARLIE

What time is it?

JAMIE

11:17. Look it was nothing.

CHARLIE

What the fuck?

He looks wonderfully bemused. She looks genuinely horrified.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

JAMIE.

JAMIE

(sarcastically)

Yes, dear?

CHARLIE

I can't do this right now.

JAMIE

Can't do what?

CHARLIE

Have a religious crisis.

JAMIE

Charlie god isn't real.

CHARLIE

You can explain that then?

JAMIE

Just because I can't personally explain it does not leave the existence of a divine intervention as the only possible cause.

CHARLIE

I'm not doing this again.

He chuckles loudly.

JAMIE

Lord, it's me, your son, James, been a long time.

CHARLIE

Stop that. Why are you having fun all of a sudden? This isn't fun.

JAMIE

Why would god be here?

CHARLIE

We're in a church.

JAMIE

Yeah, but...

CHARLIE

The last time this happened I suffered in a world of religious anxiety for three weeks. Three. I'm not ready to do it again. I'm not ready to confront the possibility that god is real. Not right now. If god is real, that means I can be judged.

JAMIE

We're all being judged. All the time.

CHARLIE

You don't understand.

JAMIE

I don't.

CHARLIE

No. You didn't grow up with my mother.

JAMIE

Your mother is very sweet.

CHARLIE

Now she is. To you she is. For the first thirteen years of my life she was a fundamentalist dictator who instilled fear of the tribulations in us as flippantly as one makes children hold hands when crossing the street.

She walks past him and steps up to the altar looking at the statue of Christ.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

No. No you're not real. You can't be real. If you were real I'd be skinny.

JAMIE

Ok. Well. We'll just say it was a ghost, alright? Is a regular ghost better than God?

CHARLIE

No.

CHARLIE promptly exits the church. JAMIE rolls his eyes and follows after her.

THEY WALK AWAY UP THE ROAD THE BELLS START TO RING.

JAMIE

Relax it's the normal bells. They
go off every-

THEY RUN BACK TO THE CHURCH JUST AS THE BUS PULLS AWAY

55

EXT. SIDEWALK-DAY

55

Walking back toward the church.

JAMIE

I hate this town.

CHARLIE

Me too.

JAMIE

Look, if there is a god he's
certainly looking out for us.

CHARLIE

Do you think so?

JAMIE

Of course not.

CHARLIE

This whole thing is weird. I don't
like it. I can't shake the feeling
like someone is watching. I'm sorry
I lied to you.

JAMIE

It's ok. I'm sorry I didn't tell
you I went on a date.

CHARLIE

You're a secretive person.

JAMIE

(stopping)
I saw the fucking cat.

CHARLIE

(stopping)
What?

JAMIE

I didn't just miss the cat. I saw
the cat walk out the door.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

I saw it. I could have stopped it,
I could have caught it but I
didn't.

Beat.

CHARLIE

Come on.

She leads the way.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Why didn't you tell me?

JAMIE

I don't know. It wasn't noteworthy.

CHARLIE

Oh is that it? It wasn't
noteworthy.

JAMIE

Yeah. It wasn't meaningful.

CHARLIE

You won't be taking seventeen year
old Angelica to dinner with your
grandparents, then?

JAMIE

(through a sigh)
I don't think so, no.

CHARLIE

Why not? You're lonely. Why not
find someone? What are you afraid
of?

JAMIE

You know, I introduced a girl to my
family once- I was introduced to
that same girls family once and do
you know what happened?

(beat)

Before long, we moved in together,
we got engaged-were to be married.
I got paid salary-nineteen years
old-a desk job, a news paper. But
time breaks down all resolve. The
toothpicks holding up all morality
and sense of self splinter and
dissolve.

(beat)

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

She knew my family and I knew hers-ingratiated. I knew some of them so well that at the precise same moment I fell out of love with this girl, I fell in love with her little cousin. And that's when my life became miserable. You don't get to just walk away-I'm not-that's not to (diminish)-but you can't walk away, there are logistics, you have to disassemble an intangible thing now and I don't ever want to build one of those up again.

(beat)

So I'm just going to keep making art. That's all. I'm going to make art and when I get bored I'll have sex with barely legal girls who want to be veterinarians some day all the while acting like a teenager myself for the rest of my time.

CHARLIE

You are lost.

JAMIE

I am found. The most I can hope for is that someday somebody will want to pay to see my art and then those barely legal would-be-vets become barely legal French would-be-models.

CHARLIE

Mhm.

JAMIE

Love is a distraction. It takes away your time and eventually your enjoyment.

CHARLIE

And it feels better than anything if you let it. And it can make you somebody you don't want to be and it's contingent upon sending another soul out to sea. But time takes away your time and everything distracts from something else. Enjoyment only matters because it is fleeting.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You didn't want me to lead him on
but what are you (doing to all
these girls?)

JAMIE

This is what I'm talking about.
Morality. It's a construct.
Relationship ethics. This comes
from within. I'm honest-I'm
transparent in my dealings.
Transparency lifts away
responsibility. You didn't do
anything wrong because the concept
isn't real unless backed with
intent. You were transparent and
you did what was true to you and
that's all that can reasonably be
expected. That's morality.

CHARLIE

You're afraid you'll wrong
somebody. But people feel wronged
whether you do or don't.

(beat)

Its why it no longer means anything
to me. But it could mean everything
to you.

CUT TO:

JAMIE

I'm sorry.

(beat)

I disagree by the way.

CHARLIE

With what?

JAMIE

With what you said earlier. Living
isn't living if there isn't a big
foundational what if underneath
what you're doing.

CHARLIE

This should be good.

JAMIE

I don't think you need a **what if** to
derive meaning from existence.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

In fact, I think it's the
fundamental flaw in any of your
reasoning during this breakup.

CHARLIE

Oh it's good.

JAMIE

I'm serious.

CHARLIE

Hi serious, I'm listening.

JAMIE

I need to preface this by saying
I'm not changing my opinion.

CHARLIE

You rarely do.

JAMIE

But regardless, the singular flaw
in your logic which created
anxieties where there were none, is
that you saw your relationship as a
train on tracks. A clear
destination in mind and though you
can halt the cars for as long as
you want, the tracks will always be
there and thus the only two options
remain, follow them or derail.

CHARLIE

I haven't the foggiest idea what
you're saying.

JAMIE stops to finish his thought and she stops to hear him.

JAMIE

I'm saying you view things,
specifically relationships as
moving toward something and if the
likelihood of it not ending
successfully outweighs the present
enjoyment, you think that means it
isn't worth doing.

(beat)

Some things don't need a what if to
be meaningful. Sometimes a
relationship is just a
relationship. It doesn't need to be
love and it doesn't need to be
moving toward love.

CHARLIE
 (looking back)
 We're here.

57

INT. CHURCH-DAY

57

JAMIE gets an idea and walks up to the altar.

JAMIE
 And when he had opened the seventh
 seal, there was silence in heaven
 about the space of half an hour.

And I saw the seven angels which
 stood before God; and to them were
 given seven trumpets.

And another angel came and stood at
 the altar, having a golden censer;
 and there was given unto him much
 incense, that he should offer it
 with the prayers of all saints upon
 the golden altar which was before
 the throne.

CHARLIE
 Are you serious?

JAMIE
 And I saw a star fall from heaven
 unto the earth: and to him was
 given the key of the bottomless
 pit.

And he opened the bottomless pit;
 and there arose a smoke out of the
 pit, as the smoke of a great
 furnace; and the sun and the air
 were darkened by reason of the
 smoke of the pit.

CHARLIE
 Stop.

JAMIE
 And there came out of the smoke
 locusts upon the earth: and unto
 them was given power, as the
 scorpions of the earth have power.
 (MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

CHARLIE

STOP. I don't want to fucking hear it.

JAMIE

It's poetry.

CHARLIE

To me its prophecy.

JAMIE

Come on! You're an atheist, this stuff is so far removed from reality-

CHARLIE

I'm an atheist out of fear. Do you have any idea what this exact POETRY did to me as a child? Have you ever walked around your house at seven years old looking for your family, afraid they'll be gone, afraid they had been raptured without you.

JAMIE

Been raptured?

CHARLIE

I was seven! Been raptured. Gone. Whether that means they had the seals of god upon their foreheads and were welcomed into EDEN or had been dragged into the pits by a seven tailed scorpion doesn't matter. What matters is that they're gone.

JAMIE

Ok, I'm sorry. Its just a book, it has no power over you now.

CHARLIE

Yeah well I don't need to sit and listen to it anyway.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Its designed to have power of you
and I'm not going to sit and listen
to it. I could have this crisis at
home.

JAMIE

Oh come on this isn't about divine
intervention.

CHARLIE

JAMIE the fucking organ played
itself. Are you going to act like
you didn't hear it? Are you really?

JAMIE

I heard it. It wasn't so
significant an occurrence for me.

She scoffs.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

And I don't think it would be for
you either, if it weren't for...

CHARLIE

For what?

JAMIE

For all your other anxieties
meeting. You're mourning, here.
It's grief.

CHARLIE

So I'm crazy?

JAMIE

I didn't fucking (say that.)

CHARLIE

No, I'm crazy, your god is nice.
Your god forgives shitty
girlfriends.

JAMIE

My god? I don't (have a god.)
Shitty girlfriends- what are you-?

CHARLIE

I can't have a functioning
relationship. I use people. He lost
far more than I did. I don't even
feel guilty.

JAMIE

You feel guilty for not feeling guilty. Look there are circumstances. You're no more a bad person for your hold over him that Annie was for me. The circumstances- their- life is for the individual and sometimes lives line up and sometimes they don't.

CHARLIE

Circumstances-you were engaged to her cousin.

JAMIE

Oh we're doing this now?

CHARLIE

And TOM too! There were so many things- so many reason, I wouldn't even say out loud. It wasn't a matter of him not wanting the same things I wanted, I could work with that, he didn't want anything!

JAMIE

That's fine. There you are. Nothing is black and white, here. You can feel both ways.

CHARLIE

(gesturing at Christ)

But that's not how they teach you! How do you find meaning in that? If its subjective. And I still feel irrationally jealous every time you mention Annie because despite not being romantically interested in you, I know that the second she does come back into your life, you'll forget about me. I know I shouldn't feel that.

JAMIE

And that's the part that matters. Feelings aren't held to structure, they defy that by nature. Its our capability of evil that makes us human. It's what we know that matters and what we do. Did you knowingly lead him on? No. Not with utter certainty, because of your own complexities.

CHARLIE

You didn't know you were hurting Maddie?

JAMIE

She fucking hurt me.

CHARLIE

Too many choices. And you're a fucking hypocrite.

JAMIE

I fucking chose that. Satan is the hero in this fiction. God is only ever an antagonist. You needn't be afraid of rapture, we'll finally be in good hands.

CHARLIE

Why should we even try then? Why make new relationships? Why do all this work to hold on to existing ones?

JAMIE

The trying is the point. You're a better friend than ANNIE ever was.

CHARLIE

That and her being a first choice aren't mutually exclusive. And that's okay, I'm not saying that out of spite, you knew each other for years before I even existed to you. And there was a reason you fell in love with her so what's stopping **you** from trying?

JAMIE

First choice? Come on.

CHARLIE

I didn't mean it like that.

JAMIE

I'm not good enough.

CHARLIE

Shut up.

JAMIE

It's true. I shouldn't have loved her like I did-do-but, I do.

(MORE)

JAMIE (CONT'D)

And I'm not good enough and the ethics are overwhelming, it's logistically fucked.

CHARLIE

You're the one saying it's self defined.

JAMIE

Well...I have nothing to offer.

CHARLIE

Every girl you meet falls in love with you.

JAMIE

She's different.

CHARLIE

If she's worth anything she wouldn't expect anything more from you than attention and time. What does any one need other than that?

JAMIE

I don't know, the best version of myself.

(beat)

The only reason you get the disservice of having me not at my best is because you're already here and I'm selfish.

(beat)

I need you and I'm selfish.

CHARLIE

Speaking as a real person with agency in this friendship, you're amazing as you are. You're a little lost and I have a million unanswered questions about you but that's what makes you even better. You deserve to be in love and to be loved. It's drawn out. Out of concern for your sanity, I think you should let it go. A year is too long to be holding on. You're tormenting yourself, and maybe that's your right but... Let go.

JAMIE

Ow.

She walks away.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

What? So I can be like you? Afraid of a little lasting pain? You revel in the temporary sting, it's the stuff that sticks around that gives us meaning! But it doesn't matter because I have let it go.

CHARLIE

That's why you clutch that stupid lanyard to your chest every time some little thing goes wrong?

JAMIE

Ow.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry.

JAMIE

Well, I guess just learn from my mistakes then and let him go while you can.

(beat)

Allow him to do the same with you. And he never will. You don't have to love him. Just like you don't have to believe in this... institution.

He turns his back on her. She walks out of the church.

CUT TO:

58 EXT. CHURCHYARD-DAY

58

She steps out and clutches the railing.

CHARLIE

You know, when I was a kid, I used to step outside on days like this. When the sun is high and the clouds are fluffy and dripping with liquid gold. The air is still and the sun is tangible. The clouds are so high. I used to step out and look up at them, tracing the rays, finding patterns in the shape of the clouds.

(beat)

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

And I would let all the ambient noise from my plane of existence fall away-distant cars and nature sounds-I would bit by bit, tune out the world around me until that painterly sky eclipsed my view and my existence.

(beat)

I would patiently wait for the sound of the trumpets. Trumpets ringing out from the heavens. Trumpets to let you know it will all be over soon.

JAMIE

I didn't know.

CHARLIE

I know you didn't. It's alright. I just can't hear scripture anymore.

JAMIE

I promise you there's a rational explanation for everything. God can't be real Charlie. Our construction of this empire is societal tool first and human hubris second.

CHARLIE

Yeah.

JAMIE

Are you alright?

CHARLIE

No.

JAMIE

What's wrong?

CHARLIE

My chest hurts.

JAMIE

You're having a panic attack. Come on, lets go for a burger.

They stand up to leave. JAMIE stars down the stairs but CHARLIE stops.

CHARLIE

I need a second alone inside.

JAMIE

Okay.

CHARLIE goes inside. JAMIE waits for her outside. He smokes a cigarette and smiles in the afternoon sun. We see flashes of the statues inside the church. They are looking right at us. The confessional, the devotional, the holy water. Then we are back on JAMIE from inside the church, the front door propped open. He steps up the steps and stands in the doorway in slow motion. REVERSE SHOT shows CHARLIE in the empty church turn around from in front of the altar and start down the aisle out. From the altar we watch her prance along in slow motion to JAMIE. As we follow, we now see people sitting in the pews. The first two pews have a woman on the grooms side and a man on the brides. Further along, there is another woman, older and angrier looking in the grooms side pew. On the bride's side, two frat type boys smirking. There is another set of pews, on the grooms side, a tough looking old man; on the bride's side, an old woman clutching her crucifix. Lastly, a couple little girls on the grooms side and a couple little boys on the bride's. All giggling. The boys throw paper balls at the girls who stick out their tongues. On JAMIE's face we see him smile again. OVER his shoulder we see CHARLIE making her way out through the vestibule. The church behind her is empty. She dips her fingers in the holy water and then into her mouth, sucking it off. She meets him and they head off down the steps together.